PROVOST INITIATIVES AY 2010-11: INITIAL MUSINGS

Objectives

This next academic year I hope will end with the following observations:

- Western is more visible and influential in the region and nationally, and freer from the machinations in Olympia. Our academic work, teaching, research and service is better understood, and financial support enhanced through federal and foundation grants, initial campaign gifts, and regional educational and corporate partnerships.

- The Academic Division has established a core set of multi-faceted directions that encompass the best work of our faculty, students, and staff. (See list below of responsibilities.) These directions are forward thinking, critical to our region, worthy of support, and compelling to participants and potential supporters. They are consistent with Western’s mission, brand, and established track record so those can fuel the directions going forward. They serve to catalyze important scholarship and relationships – internally and externally.

- The academic division has more and higher quality information available regarding how students progress toward their degrees so as to foster timely degree completion among students seeking such, and inform decisions about course scheduling, faculty hiring and other resources.

- The academic division has fully integrated new software and achieved a more transparent and decentralized budget process. These, combined with collaboratively designed processes for operating and capital budget requests, create an opportunity for meaningful input within the academic division and influence from academic leaders and shared governance groups, particularly the Senate.

- Relations with the UFWWU are strong and shared understandings exist that will serve our mutual interests well as we enter bargaining. Morale among staff in the academic division has been sustained and even strengthened in some instances because people feel appreciated for the work they do and operate within a network of strong interpersonal relations. This sense of appreciation and connection extends to all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds and personal preferences.

- The University has leveraged its accreditation efforts to advance understanding of Western students’ outcomes, improve general education, and bring greater coherence to our plans for the future.

- All recommendations from white paper committees have been evaluated and implemented as appropriate and two new task forces have completed this work:
  - Feasibility Study of Digital Archives.
  - Nursing (Consideration of a nursing program offered through EESP).

- Multi-year plans for IT and Academic Space (including lease space) have been developed, influenced by campus input, and endorsed by key governance groups.

The Stewards

This ambitious agenda will require strong leadership from our division. In order to advance some key boundary-spanning strategic directions, I have asked various members of the Provost’s Council to assume the role of stewards for these various directions. These will be my/campus’s ‘go to’ people for follow up and coordination in these various areas. They will bring their wisdom and organizational skill
to bear on behalf of these strategic directions. This does not mean, however, that the initiative is ‘in a particular college’; instead I wish for each of these to be (and many are already) multi college/unit collaborations. These are directions for which our University is or will be known. They are critical for the comprehensive campaign, accreditation, attracting and retaining students, faculty and staff, and University’s movement toward ‘best in class.’

The emerging strategic directions and campus stewards of those efforts are:

- Teacher Quality (incl Teach Washington, C2C, etc): Stephanie Salzman and Dan Guyette.
- Social Entrepreneurship (Ashoka, ethics, leadership, etc): Brian Burton and Joe Garcia.
- Green Energy (incl renewable energy, solar collectors, green transportation): Brad Smith and Arlie Norman.
- Coastal Resources and Environment (CREW): Steve Sulkin and TBD.
- Global Awareness and Action: Roger Gilman and Brent Carbajal.
- The Arts in Communities: Dan Guyette.
- Student Progress (bottlenecks, curricular changes): Steve Vanderstaay and Bill Lyne.
- Improved Information (student/faculty/budget): Ming Zhang, Deb Jusak, Barbara Fasser.
- Strategic Usage of Academic Space: Francis Halle and Chris Cox.

The responsibilities of stewards will be slightly different in each area, but generally the responsibilities of stewards are:

- Inventory currently or potentially strong contributors.
- Stay in communication with those contributors regarding their activities.
- Work with contributors to advance these directions and minimize roadblocks.
- Identify and promote opportunities for collaboration that would enhance quality and impact, and/or achieve efficiencies.
- Be campus spokesperson or advocate for this direction when such is needed (e.g., UPRC discussions, decision packages, campaign).
- Provide an annual report on this direction to campus through provost that includes inventory of activity and a SWOT analysis.

**Shared Stewardship**

There is a strategic direction I hope all of us will contribute to and lead whenever the need arises: the education of the public on the value of higher education and of a strong liberal education to communities, economies, and individual graduates.