

## **Faculty Assembly**

April 16, 2013

Library Conference Room

Ralph Olliges, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order.

### **Announcements**

Ralph announced that there would be a Faculty Social this Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. in the Alumni House.

Ralph stated that the Faculty Assembly is pleased to have administration attend to speak to us on issues that came up at the April 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Assembly. He then turned the floor over to President Stroble.

### **A Summary of Remarks by Dr. Beth Stroble, President**

Dr. Stroble stated that many questions were raised at the April 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Assembly after the administration left the room. Had the administration been present, they could have addressed these issues. Out of respect for having been asked that they not attend the assembly, they only stayed briefly.

She started by going back four years when she arrived at Webster and spoke about the journey we have been moving along together. An inclusive, engaging atmosphere that welcomes each other into the conversation is an important aspect that we are trying to achieve. When she arrived, she embraced the Webster Vision 2020 goals with the faculty and anticipated building Webster as a more successful place for all of us. Our work is not finished as there is much more to accomplish.

In summer and fall of 2009, concerns with the strategic plan were brought up. Focus needed to be on academic quality to meet the assessment standards of the Higher Learning Commission as we were not meeting this goal. Improving academic quality was a primary focus during her interview. General education also needed to be redesigned and questions were raised as to whether or not we had an adequate number of full-time faculty.

There were also concerns of not having an attractive compensation to be able to hire the first choice of faculty, the stalling of the campaign to add scholarship dollars for students and to build the endowment, as well as Webster and Eden not reaching an agreement about shared property. In 2009, faculty/staff had received a \$1,000 addition to their base pay to help defer increases in health premiums; at the same time, it was learned that performance awards were awarded to the top administrators. Dr. Stroble looked back over historical data and on the average faculty/staff received 3% or less; whereas, the top 5-6 administrators were given bonuses totaling \$200,000. That practice has not happened since Dr. Stroble has been here. In 2010, we launched a comprehensive benchmarking study (Mercer Study) to enable data-based adjustments to compensation. Two cycles of adjustments have been made.

Since she has been here, the University community has accomplished the following: Student Ambassadors, Global Leadership Academy, Global Leaders in Residence, the opening of the Ghana campus, a new location for the Vienna campus, the opening of the East Academic Building to add needed classrooms after 20 years of renting space at Webster Groves High

School, among others. Let us not undersell ourselves in what has been accomplished. There is much work still to be done.

In this difficult economic time, 1% raise is the reality of this year's salary pool. We need a better revenue base in order to offer more than an embarrassingly small 1% raise.

We want a Science Building and it will take all of us working together as a community to make that a reality. We need to come together and work towards moving forward and building our enrollment. By turning on each other and saying devaluing things about each other, we will not stand a chance. The Town Hall for the Working Groups was given as a wonderful example of 300 plus colleagues working together for the greater good. When we return this fall, we will build on that foundation to put together a strategic plan that we can all feel good about to make this the best university for faculty, staff, students and the community. We all need to work together; it takes a community to build things. If we band together, we can create a stronger base for our future.

### **A Summary of Remarks by Dr. Julian Schuster, Provost**

Dr. Julian Schuster then took the floor and thanked President Stroble for her words.

He stated that it was great to see how many people showed up today. Despite differences of opinion, we do come together and listen to each other and do so without any preconceived notion of what is right and wrong.

There are numerous examples of what has been working well: Webster is an all Steinway School, we have our first Endowed Chair, and we received the largest individual grant in the history of the University. With a University that is 100 years old, the aforementioned items have taken place in the last three years under President Stroble.

Improving academic quality is one thing that emerged out of the strategic objectives of the University as well as continuous improvement of operational efficiencies.

The number of full-time faculty (220) is approximately 25% higher than what it was (178) and this increase has happened in two years. We have secured our first choices in faculty hiring and have secured them by working hand in hand and not stepping on each other's toes. We have worked on faculty compensation. We are listed as 24 in our overall academic ranking. This is more of a true picture of how we compare to other institutions in terms of salaries, benefits, retention rates, etc.

In the draft document of the April 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Assembly minutes that Provost Schuster received, there was a question as to why we are making a bold statement in enrollment when national trends are going down. Provost Schuster stated that national averages are projected to go up in all categories from 18 to 35 years old. The most dynamic growth is achieved in the age group above 25 years old. The 18 – 22 year old category is also growing. In the last five years, Webster has not grown. From 2006/07 – 2012, the total number of credits has not grown. The only way to support academic salaries is to raise revenue. The entire increase in our budget came from increasing tuition and we can no longer do that. We need to align revenue growth with course structure and grow enrollment and we have the capacity to do that.

Provost Schuster has always gone on record that relevant data will be shared with faculty. He then discussed the compensation comparison figures. Four years ago, there were five or more

cars leased by the administration. Today there are only two cars leased – one for the President and the other for the Provost.

Provost Schuster stated that Dr. Gunderson would work with the Faculty Senate or any other body that wanted to further investigate the financial data provided to the assembly today. Provost Schuster spoke to the statement that bonuses were given to directors whose campuses were not performing and have flat enrollment. That is simply not the case with one exception at an international campus where one director received a one-time payment.

Transparency and the importance of it were discussed. Budget meetings are open to everyone. All deans, two faculty, student representatives, WSA representatives, staff and administration (20 or more in total) were invited to participate in the budget process. The process is not just a meeting behind closed doors where certain people decide where the money goes. It is a participative process. With that in mind, one of the Board of Trustee's members remarked that the FY 2012 budget process was the most transparent that he has ever participated in.

In response to whether or not the hiring freeze includes the Assistant Provost for Student Affairs and Athletics – another person who is part of Student Affairs has resigned to go to an international campus and that position will not be replaced. The Assistant Provost position is addressing the challenges of retention and should not be perceived as a safe harbor for someone.

Provost Schuster stated that the academic program review document has been completed and will be beneficial to all.

Provost Schuster stated that when Joe Stimpfl was Chair of SFB, he always found a way to meet with Provost Schuster to present issues. He sent a message to SFB to see what can be done to restore the legitimacy of the process, but stated that we should not expect a major shift in compensation as there is no money available for that.

Administration will look at enrollment in the fall and make midyear salary adjustments, if possible. We need to continue to cooperate and communicate with one another on the vital issues of the university. He also stated that we should not forget our staff when looking at salaries as they are the lowest paid of all.

Provost Schuster turned the floor over to Dr. Greg Gunderson.

### **A Summary of Remarks by Dr. Greg Gunderson, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**

Dr. Gunderson shared a draft copy of the FY 2014 budget and stated that it is not final as it has not yet been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Overall budgeted net revenue is only down \$400K from the prior year. If we meet enrollment, we will have a tuition reserve of \$2.3 million in place. Investments were made to protect the cost of benefits so that they would not increase. Travel and entertainment not related to faculty development funds has been decreased.

CPI Salary Calculations did not include health care costs. Historically, health care costs would have been affected as is the case with peer institutions. \$280K to-date or 1.6% of salary has gone towards Mercer adjustments. At this point, any salary below median should have been corrected. Approximately, \$280K = 1% of total compensation = \$1 million.

## **How has the budget been allocated?**

From the slide shown, the following actual operating expenses (per Audited Financial Statements) 2008 – 2012 were given. Total operating expenses grew 19%. Expenses for instruction grew 29%; whereas, F & A grew only 13%.

As CFO, Dr. Gunderson is here to facilitate efforts. In response to the statement made at the April 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Assembly that the past CFO was more transparent, Dr. Gunderson stated that he wants to leave the CFO position better than it was. He has always met with the Faculty Senate when he was asked to and meets regularly with the deans. If it is felt that he should be doing something differently, he asked that he be made aware of that. He will work twice as hard to be transparent.

Provost Schuster declared that the most important thing is where we are headed as a University. We need a new strategic vision for the University to maintain relevance in the national and global arena.

Dr. Stroble stated that, “Now, it is up to us how we navigate the short term process with the unhappiness. We need to re-engage with one another on how to make it better in the future. We will build on the good work from the Working Groups and all of the other community activities that have taken place and let that be the foundation as we move forward in the fall as part of our strategic plan. I am counting on all of us to be a part of that.”

## **Questions**

Ralph stated that he will send out the financial PowerPoint presentation to the Faculty Assembly.

At this point in the assembly, faculty were given the opportunity to ask questions or to make statements.

**Q:** One issue that has come up over and over again is that we wait until the last minute to have the Salary and Fringe Benefits discussion. Can we start that dialogue at the beginning of the year to have information early to allow us all to better come up with a solution?

**R:** The statement was made by an SFB member that SFB understood in the first five minutes of their meeting with Provost Schuster that they were not in negotiation. There were many postponed meetings, etc. and SFB would like clarification. Provost Schuster stated we need to work together to make the joint proposal to present to faculty. Negotiation comes from two sets of eyes and the community deserves the better attitude toward this issue. Administration will provide the best possible deal to all.

**S:** A declaration was made that raising tuition is becoming more and more difficult. As we look at strategy to raise enrollment, it would be wise to look at smart growth. Investing in existing programs is smart growth, but do not ignore new programs as well. Hope that future endeavors are looked at from the smart growth perspective.

**Q:** The question was asked as to how blitz branding is going?

**R:** Barbara O'Malley stated that it is thought that there will be an improvement. Traffic to the website is monitored but we are not able to capture that traffic as far as enrollment is concerned.

We are working on measurement pieces and how to link traffic to the website and translate that information into number of enrollments.

**S:** In speaking about improving academic excellence, it was mentioned that we have diverse faculty on paper that may not conform to traditional assessment parameters for faculty evaluation. There are those faculty that return calls to students and take the extra time to work with students, but may be published less. It is hoped that faculty who choose that path are rewarded as well.

**R:** Provost Schuster stated that it is up to faculty to evaluate their colleagues based on the needs of this institution. We are not striving to become a Research I institution. Balance is everything in administrative leadership as well.

International campuses are growing and are no longer “toddlers.” They are or have become self-sufficient. We have an impact and relevance outside of the Webster Groves community.

Ralph thanked the administration for attending and sharing information. He will share information when SFB has another document and will call another Faculty Assembly at that time.

With no further business, the assembly adjourned at 4:32 p.m.