

Senate Newsletter, Spring 2017

This newsletter covers Senate and Faculty Assembly activities from June 1, 2016 to May 19, 2017. More detailed information about the Senate, Faculty Assembly, and Special Faculty meetings can be found in the minutes on the Faculty Senate webpage.

First, I want to thank all of the faculty members who volunteered their time and energy this past year working on the task forces and committees, the Senate, and the Faculty Institutes. Without your efforts, no progress would have been possible. I also thank President Stroble and Provost Schuster for agreeing to work with the faculty on initiatives that we hope will enhance Webster University's future.

Faculty Institutes, the Faculty Priorities Initiative, and the 2016 Faculty Survey

The focus of the 2016 Fall Faculty Institute was Webster University's "Past, Present, and Future." Faculty members presented on 1) how Webster grew over the years (D. Hellinger), 2) Webster's financial and enrollment trends through May 2015 (G. Renz), 3) a model for thinking strategically about Webster's future (D. O'Bannon), and 4) the international campuses (K. Jenkins, D. Hellinger, W. Rosenblum). Breakout sessions were held after those presentations and the notes were distributed to the faculty by email on October 17, 2016.

The breakout sessions identified many different types of concerns. However, no attempt was made to identify priorities at the Institute. To get a better sense of which concerns were perceived to be the most pressing, faculty assembly members were asked to "tell us what you think are the two or three most important issues at Webster that the faculty should work on over the next year or so." About thirty faculty assembly members responded to the survey, which was distributed both by email and at the November 29th Faculty Assembly meeting.

Roughly 54 different issues were raised, but the following issues were raised by more than one person (the number of responses in parentheses):

1. Increase student enrollments; better recruiting; better student retention (5)
2. Increase consultation / transparency in administrative decision making (4)
3. Concerns about the financial situation and stability of our institution and prospects/plans for a realistic adjustment to our loss of revenues (3)
4. Better marketing of academic programs (3)
5. Increase faculty compensation; more competitive faculty salaries (2)

These concerns are similar to concerns raised in last year's "Report of The Faculty Priorities Initiative." Areas of faculty concerns in the report included "Concerns with University Finances," "Consultation / Transparency in Administrative Decision Making," "Marketing of Academic Programs," "IT issues" involving classrooms and faculty computers, and the "Global Citizenship Program."

The key concerns identified in the 2016 Faculty Survey and the "Report of the Faculty Priorities Initiative" are being addressed in part by the new initiatives discussed below. For example, "increasing consultation and transparency" may be partially addressed through the activities of the new Finance, Marketing, and IT-Faculty advisory committees. Information

technology concerns may be partially addressed through the new IT-Faculty committee. Global Citizenship Program (GCP) concerns will be addressed through the review of the Global Citizenship Program. Marketing and student enrollment concerns will be addressed by the new Marketing Advisory Committee. In addition, student enrollment was the focus of the Spring 2017 Faculty Institute at which two panels and the keynote speaker Rob Parrent, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, discussed recruiting, admission, and retention issues. These initiatives are described in more detail below.

Increasing Consultation, Communication, and Transparency in Financial, Marketing, and Information Technology Decision Making

Finances

On December 12, 2016 Provost Schuster and Senate President Renz announced they had agreed to form a permanent Finance Advisory Committee comprised of faculty members and administrators, including Provost Julian Schuster and Chief Financial Officer Ana Karaman. This committee is intended to increase collaboration and communication between the faculty and administration on important financial issues. In February 2017, Provost Schuster and the Senate agreed on a charter for the Finance Advisory Committee. The agreement is in the endnotes.ⁱ

For the current academic year, the faculty committee members were the members of the Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee (Jeff Carter, Debbie Psihountas, Allan MacNeill, and Doug O'Bannon) and the Senate President, Gary Renz. The Finance Advisory Committee met for the first time with Provost Schuster and CFO Karaman on March 28, 2017. The Senate's goal is for this committee to meet regularly in the future.

At the December 12th meeting, Chief Financial Officer Karaman discussed Webster's consolidated 2015-16 financial statements and the financial challenges facing the university. The Senate, Finance Advisory Committee, and Senate President have asked the administration for financial information on the metropolitan and military extended campus sites, the Webster Groves campus and St. Louis sites, and the international campuses. However, we have not received any information to date. Senate President Renz also asked Provost Schuster to make Webster's current and future budgets publicly available, but he has not agreed. However, some information about the 2016-17 budget can be found at webster.edu/finance-and-administration/resource-planning_budgeting/opcapbudg.html.

Marketing

At the November 29, 2016 Faculty Assembly meeting, Rick Rockwell, Vice President and Chief Communication Officer for Global Marketing and Communications (GMC) and Senate President Renz announced that the administration and the Faculty Senate had agreed to form a permanent Marketing Advisory Committee. This committee, comprised of faculty members and marketing staff and administrators, is intended to increase collaboration and communication between the faculty and administration on important marketing issues. In February 2017, Provost Schuster and the Senate agreed on the charter for this new Marketing Advisory Committee. The agreement is in the endnotes.ⁱⁱ

For the current academic year, the faculty members on the committee were Gary Renz, Eric Rhiney, Julie Palmer, Hemla Singaravelu, Ted Green, and Terry Sullivan. The Marketing Advisory Committee met for the first time on March 24, 2017. The Senate's goal is for this committee to meet regularly in the future.

Information Technology and Academics

For the past couple years, a few faculty members have been working with Information Technology (IT) to address technology problems affecting faculty, including classroom technology and faculty computers. IT has addressed many of the problems that were identified. However, problems remain and new problems will undoubtedly arise.

To help improve collaboration and communication between IT and the faculty, the Senate and interim Chief Information Officer Margie Muthukumar have agreed to create a new IT-Faculty committee. The faculty members on this committee will be appointed by the Senate. Currently, Mike Hulsizer, Ryan Gregg, James Robey, David Werfelmann, DJ Kaiser, Gary Renz, Jim Curtis, Ralph Olliges, and Joe Roberts are on the committee.

The committee charter has not been agreed on yet, but IT and the faculty members met on April 6, 2017 to discuss the committee's charter and membership, as well as issues relating to WebNet+. As with the other committees, our goal is to meet regularly as well as when necessary to address specific problems.

Review of Bias Incident Reporting Form and Procedures

At the December 12, 2016 Special Faculty Meeting, Provost Schuster discussed the Bias Incident Reporting Form that was announced after an incident at Webster. Acknowledging some faculty members' concerns, Provost Schuster said the Bias Incident Reporting Form and related procedures were not intended to restrict freedom of speech or negatively impact the classroom. Provost Schuster and Senate President Renz announced the formation of a task force that will include faculty members that will review, and if necessary revise, the Bias Incident Reporting Form and related procedures.ⁱⁱⁱ

The faculty members on the Bias Incident Reporting Form task force are Jeff Hughes, Dani MacCartney, Anne Geraghty-Rathert, Elizabeth Risik, and Tom Cornell. These faculty members and Gary Renz met with Provost Schuster on April 4, 2017. The full task-force that includes representatives of the staff, students, and administration will meet in the future.

Proposal to Reduce the Minimum Required Undergraduate Credit Hours to 120 Credit Hours

Professor Dan Hellinger proposed that Webster reduce the minimum number of credit hours for undergraduate degrees from 128 credit hours to 120 credit hours.^{iv} On November 3, 2016 the Senate formed an ad hoc task force to investigate this proposal. Currently, the task force consists of Dan Hellinger, Stephanie Schroeder, and Susan Heady. Other faculty members are encouraged to join the team if interested in the proposal.

The Faculty Assembly meeting on February 7, 2017, was devoted to discussing the pros and cons of the 120 credit-hour proposal. The notes from this Faculty Assembly meeting can be found on the Senate website. Currently, among other things, the task force is seeking information from the administration about the financial impact of the proposal, how the proposal would affect double majors, and whether it would affect retention and four-year graduation rates. The task force is wants to investigate whether students experience greater stress due to requiring 128 credit hours to graduate and how to transition to a 120 credit-hour requirement if approved.

Task Force on “Blended Education”

“Blended education” refers to combining online and on-ground education or to a shorter, more intense delivery model. The Administration thinks that blended education may increase enrollments at military and metropolitan sites. Blended education has already been implemented in some Webster colleges and schools. In November 2016, the Senate decided to create an ad hoc task force to review existing blended education programs at Webster and other universities, as well as analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different blended education methods. The task force is comprised of faculty members and administrators. Basiyr Rodney and Debbie Psihountas volunteered to be the faculty members on the task force. The task force submitted a report to the Senate on March 22, 2017.

Review the Global Citizenship Program

The Global Citizenship Program (GCP) has not been evaluated or reviewed since it was approved around 2010. Yet, the Global Citizenship Project Task Force recommended in its November 2010 report that the GCP be evaluated every 6 years.^v In addition, many faculty members have voiced concerns with the GCP design, implementation, and possible impact on transfer students, both recently and in the context of the last year’s Faculty Priorities Initiative. The “Report of the Faculty Priorities Initiative” reported that faculty members expressed concerns about the way GCP is “administered and assessed,” the “influence of the GCP on students’ overall education,” and whether it “drains the ‘spontaneity’ and ‘discovery’ from the learning process.” (“Report of the Faculty Priorities Initiative,” p. 19.)

In light of the original GCP task force’s recommendation for a review every six years, the concerns raised in last year’s Report of Faculty Priorities Initiative, and recent faculty concerns regarding the GCP, the Senate decided to form a task force to review the GCP. This task force will work with the Senate’s Global Citizenship Program Committee and the administration. On February 2, 2017, the Senate approved a charter for the ad hoc Global Citizenship Program Review Committee, which is in the endnotes.^{vi} The review includes, but will not be limited to, determining if the Global Citizenship Program is meeting its original and current goals, examining the program’s implementation and its outcomes, and suggesting modifications, if deemed necessary.

The current Global Citizenship Program Review committee members are Terri Reilly, Larry Baden, Basiyr Rodney, Bill Lynch, and Gary Renz. Other members may be added in the future. The Global Citizenship Program Review Committee has met several times with members

of the GCP committee: Stephanie Mahfood, Carla Colletti, Bruce Umbaugh, and Victoria McMullen to discuss the GCP review.

Compensation

This spring the Salary and Fringe Benefit committee met several times with Provost Julian Schuster, CFO Ana Karaman, and Chief Human Resources Officer Betsy Schmutz. The meetings resulted in the administration offering 1.5% raises for satisfactory performance. We feel this demonstrates the administration's commitment to faculty and staff during tough times.

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1. Purposes of the "Finance Advisory Committee"
 - a. Communicate to the Administration the faculty's interests, concerns, opinions, and recommendations regarding important financial matters, including, but not limited to, budgets.
 - b. Provide advice and recommendations to the Administration regarding important financial matters, including, but not limited to, budgets.
 - c. Communicate to the faculty the Administration's plans, interests, concerns, opinions, and recommendations regarding important financial matters, including, but not limited to, budgets.
2. Evaluation Criteria for the "Finance Advisory Committee"
 - a. Was the faculty given sufficient notice of important financial decisions to provide meaningful input?
 - b. Did the faculty receive relevant information regarding prospective important financial decisions in a timely manner?
 - c. Were the faculty's ideas considered seriously by the Administration before it made important financial decisions?
3. Faculty Membership on the "Finance Advisory Committee"

For the remainder of the current academic year, the faculty members on the committee will be the Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee (Jeff Carter, Debbie Psihountas, Allan MacNeill, and Doug O'Bannon) and the Senate President, Gary Renz.

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1. Purposes of the "Marketing Advisory Committee"
 - a. Communicate to the Administration the faculty's interests, concerns, opinions, and recommendations regarding marketing matters, including marketing budgets and marketing strategies.
 - b. Provide advice and recommendations to the Administration regarding marketing matters, including marketing budgets and marketing strategies.
 - c. Communicate to the faculty the Administration's plans, interests, concerns, opinions, and recommendations regarding marketing matters, including marketing budgets and marketing strategies.
2. Evaluation Criteria for the "Marketing Advisory Committee"
 - a. Was the faculty given enough time and notice in advance of important marketing decisions that the faculty had enough time to fully consider the decisions and provide meaningful input?
 - b. Did the faculty receive relevant information regarding prospective important marketing decisions in a timely manner?

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- c. Were the faculty's ideas seriously considered by the Administration before it made important marketing decisions?

3. Faculty Membership on the "Marketing Advisory Committee"

For the remainder of the current academic year, the faculty members on the committee will be Gary Renz, Eric Rhiney, Julie Palmer, Hemla Singaravelu, Ted Green, and Terry Sullivan.

iii Renz announced the task force to the faculty by email as well: "As announced at Monday's meeting, President Stroble and Provost Schuster have offered to work with the Faculty Senate and others on campus to form a task force to review, and as necessary modify, Webster's Bias Incident Reporting Form and all associated procedures and policies. The goal is to find mutually agreeable processes that best protect the interests of Webster students, staff, administrators, and faculty. The task force, to be formed in January 2017, will include members of the administration, faculty, staff, and students." (*Email from Renz to Faculty Assembly on December 14, 2016.*)

iv Dan Hellinger's resolution: "Resolved: Recognizing the minimum required for a bachelor's degree of many area institutions is 120, the Webster University faculty believes we should review the longstanding minimum requirement of 128 credits. We believe Webster's policy on minimum number of credits for an undergraduate degree should reflect consideration of the number of factors, including what is in the best interest of students; practices by similar institutions; recruitment implications for full time, part-time and transfer students; financial implications; and the need for some programs to require a higher number of credits. We suggest that a small task force composed of administrators with relevant responsibilities and faculty appointed by the Senate be established to review the policy and make a recommendation for consideration by the faculty at one of the Spring Assembly meetings. Should the recommendation be to lower the minimum, the task force should also provide a proposal for the transition, in particular in regard to how this change may apply to currently enrolled undergraduate students."

v "The Global Citizenship Project Task Force recommends that the Global Citizenship Program be considered a starting point rather than an eternal requirement in all its details. The Task Force recommends, as part of the process for assessing the Global Citizenship Program, that the Program be evaluated every six years. . . . The aims of all such periodic review shall be to maintain the quality of the Global Citizenship Program, insure that the Program and its component parts are accomplishing their goals, and to modify the Program to improve its educational value. The Global Citizenship Program Review Committee should be expected to report to the Faculty Assembly in at least the second and fifth year of program implementation." (*The Global Citizenship Program: A Report of the Global Citizenship Project Task Force to the Webster University Faculty Senate, November 2010, Bruce Umbaugh, Professor of Philosophy and Director, GCPTF, p. 34, emphasis added.*)

vi "Mission and Scope of the Global Citizenship Program Review Committee

The Faculty Senate formed an ad hoc Global Citizenship Program Review Committee to oversee and coordinate a complete review of the Global Citizenship Program. This review will include, but is not limited to, determining if the Global Citizenship Program as currently implemented meets the program's original and current goals, examining the program's implementation and its outcomes, and considering whether the program's goals and implementation need to be modified in light of our experience. This Senate review committee will seek input from, and coordinate its activities with, the existing Global Citizenship Program committee and other relevant individuals and groups. The Global Citizenship Program Review Committee will provide the Faculty Senate with a report of its findings.