

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Joseph H. Dreisbach, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: November 6, 2017

RE: Academic Affairs Report for November 2017

1. Updates and comments from the Interim Provost:

- a. Fall Open House Events. Please accept my thank you to all who chose to give up their Sunday mornings to meet prospective students and their parents during the events. Our internal numbers reveal strong student interest (some data on Open House attendance during the past three years is shown below). These are good indicators. But the national situation for recruiting undergraduate students is one of constant change and growing pressure. It seems that the University is positioned well to be successful in this environment.

Open House Attendance, Fall 2015-17

2015	Oct- 984	Nov- 1035	Total	2,019
2016	Oct- 1012	Nov-943	Total	1,955
2017	Oct- 1016	Nov- 998	Total	2,014

- b. EPII Update. I noted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee that I reached the conclusion that it is not prudent to proceed with implementation of the EPII curriculum component as recommended by the Faculty Senate in Motion #13 2016-17. The curriculum “add on”, as presented in the Motion, to the existing general education program will, by necessity, require important resource allocations for implementation. The best approximation (EPO and EPD combined into single courses, 24 student class limit) I have available is that implementation will require a minimum of 6-7 new FTE faculty, and almost surely more, to do this effectively.

The University operating budget has been flat for the past four years, and the stresses on planning and budgeting, including addressing the cost of education, grow. As a result, it has been an increasing challenge to maintain the total full-time faculty numbers while reallocating positions to programs, across the colleges, where there is growth and opportunity for development. New positions are not available for fall 2018, and the generation of new positions beyond fall 2018 is a great uncertainty.

Therefore, for financial reasons alone, it would be very imprudent to move forward. The situation is rendered more complex because of the modest enrollment for the entering class of first-year students in fall 2017. It will certainly be a very difficult process to develop and balance the 2018-19 University budget.

Over the past few months, a good number of new and important conversations have been developing around general education. This is a very, very good thing. It is the result of the Faculty Senate becoming more engaged with GE oversight, including incorporating the Conference Committee on Curriculum into its curriculum committee structure. I note my appreciation to the Senate for moving into this important world.

Conversations from different groups reveal that there are many “moving parts” with respect to the status of GE at The University of Scranton. Topics such as a structure for GE oversight and management, the obvious need to develop a more robust assessment of the program, are two of the many issues at the forefront. The need to develop more knowledge about the effectiveness of our GE program seems to be a prerequisite before moving forward on a major investment, of faculty time and resources, in the program. Concerns about the coherence of the existing program and how this impacts its overall goals, have also crossed by desk. In addition to these internal discussions, there are also many external conversations about the nature of general education in American Higher Education, and how GE is understood by prospective students. All this and more suggests that it is time to review the University’s general education program in a comprehensive way. (I note that our GE program is titled *Curriculum 2000* and it is now over 20 years since implementation).

I encourage the Senate to continue its conversations and, perhaps, begin a comprehensive review. The specific pathways to be taken for GE development in the future will be identified and led by the next provost, the president, and the Senate leadership. But this is a very good time to plan and engage in a review. Committing to a major GE “add on” would, in my opinion, compromise the potential for the broader conversations of overall GE review and development.

The goals of “EPII”, to advance our students’ communication skills, are noble. From our visitors who have been invited to speak about “EPII”, I have come to learn that the concept of *Eloquentia Perfecta*, to develop one’s communication skills so to advance the common good, is much richer. I can only hope that the new administration will be fully supportive of incorporating the concept into the University’s GE structure in some way. In the meantime, I have reserved modest funding to support departments and individual faculty who wish to pursue *Eloquentia Perfecta* as a pedagogical element in their repertoire of abilities and program elements. I thank those who have worked to develop the “EPII” discussion. There is some uncertainty about whether, when and how the program will be advanced. But the pedagogies could be advanced now and I wholly encourage those with interest to do so. Thank you again for those efforts.

- c. Program Discontinuation Status. In September, the University administration presented program discontinuation proposals for a set of major programs from each of the colleges. Although most of these proposals have generated discussions about the substance of discontinuation, one and perhaps a few more have been focused more on process. Program discontinuation discussions are never pleasant, but the fact that so many faculty have focused on the substance is a strong indicator of the professionalism of our faculty. That level of credibility is essential for both faculty and administration while engaging is

some of the most difficult work that is part of shared governance. It bodes well for the difficult discussions that will inevitably befall us in the coming years.

There have been flaws in announcing the programs and notifying the program faculty. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that the administration has proposed program discontinuations. I know of no pleasant way to present these notifications. Understandably though, the process of initial notification and discussions impacts how the faculty view their roles in the process. Although I have made clear that there are no individual faculty whose employment is threatened with these proposals, the thought of a program being discontinued has been disconcerting for some. The processes will be crisper and clearer in the future. The following points are important for everyone to understand:

- a. The discontinuation proposals are just that: proposals to the program faculty. Although careful thought has gone into determining which programs to identify (i.e. very low enrollment, little student application or interest history, no employment threats, opportunity for faculty to advance other academic programs through their disciplinary work and no faculty retrenchment), there has been no final decision about actually discontinuing any program.
- b. The formal consultation period is intended for program faculty to advise the deans about program details and issues that go beyond the initial rationale to propose the program for discontinuation. This is the time when faculty input will shape positions for and against discontinuing the program.
- c. If a decision to discontinue a program is made by the administration (or any other group) then the program must be presented to the Faculty Senate for its review and comment. The Senate has indicated that it will have questions that go beyond the curricular impact. A discussion about these matters should be part of the process.
- d. Individual faculty who feel they may be impacted by the proposal must understand that they always have access to their dean. This access should never be limited and the conversations should happen whenever a faculty member has ideas, thoughts or concerns about their role in academic programs. This way-of-working is part of our University culture and we will always maintain it.

I will not close by saying I look forward to more conversations about program discontinuation for that would be a false statement. I can only hope that those faculty who understand why this happens in the life of an institution of higher learning have confidence that the process is one that is honest and engaging. For the faculty who are perplexed and upset, and perhaps cannot identify the need, I ask you to look at the state of affairs in higher education in America. Today, schools in even better situations, actively review the collection of academic programs, investing and divesting in order to maintain the quality of its offerings where there is student interest. This work has become essential for the welfare of the University.

- d. New Academic Development and Implementation Process. The Senate Executive Committee was provided with the Process which is designed to mitigate the administrative bureaucracy in advancing a new academic program, or a major revision that requires substantial resources, from concept to implementation. The process accommodates the existing Faculty Senate curriculum review and approval process and is designed to lighten the responsibilities of the proposers in the early stages of development. Deans have a copy of the Process and have been asked to share this within their Dean's Conference.
- e. Open Forum with the Interim Provost/SVPAA and the Senior VP for Finance and Administration. An opportunity for questions, comments, discussions is scheduled for Friday, 17 November 2017, 2 – 3 pm in Brennan Hall 502. My plan it to have at least one more of these sessions during the spring semester.
- f. Inclement Weather and Expectations. The administration will review weather conditions and campus conditions during inclement weather events. Decisions regarding campus opening are based on general travel conditions and the physical state of the campus, and the general weather forecast as the time of the decision (normally 5:30 am). Please be aware that every individual must make decisions to travel, or not, based on the conditions that impact their personal situation. The Office of Human Resources and the Office of the Provost will release a general communication to the campus community in the next week regarding these matters. Basically, individuals who determine that their travel is unsafe need to communicate their absence as soon as reasonably possible to their supervisors, students, or faculty so informing them of their situation. (The D2L LMS should be the system in place for faculty informing students of an absence). In turn, the faculty or supervisors are asked to provide appropriate consideration to those who fear to travel for personal safety reasons.

2. Physician Assistant Program:

The University has entered the process for developing a Physician Assistant (PA) masters degree program. The process would lead to an Accreditation-Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Following the acquisition of program faculty, including potential for current UofS faculty to engage in the program, the University will plan for the first entering class in August 2020. Of course this is pending acquisition of Accreditation-Provisional status at the March 2020 ARC-PA meeting.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status that is granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as presented in the plan, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards. The status is also applied to a program holding accreditation-provisional status when it appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

In the event that provisional accreditation is not received, the program will not commence. The program is masters level and does not affect any undergraduate pre-PA programs or other undergraduate programs.

3. New Programs:

The Panuska College of Professional Studies plans to submit the following new program proposals

- B.S. in Health Promotion
- B.S. in Population Health Management
- Executive in Nurse Leadership MSN

4. Rank & Tenure

The rank and tenure process, as stipulated by the *Faculty Handbook*, is underway. Department and deans will be presenting their evaluations of the candidates during the month of November. The Board on Rank and Tenure membership has been finalized as the initial orientation briefing occurred on 6 November.

5. Faculty Searches

We are currently searching for 16 tenure track faculty positions. The link to the listings are posted on the Provost's website at <https://universityofscrantonjobs.com/>.

6. Faculty Handbook Committee Updates:

Course Scheduling – 4.4 - Dean Mensah, Dean Pellegrino, Dr. Roberts and Dr. Dzurec have agreed to serve a subcommittee to look at Handbook language referring to the course scheduling process.

Service Criteria – 20.2 to 21.1

Dr. Dreisbach, Dr. Van Dyke, Dr. Dalgin and Dean Pellegrino will review certain element of the language that describes the service criteria.

7. Rankings

The University placed at #73 among some of the most elite colleges in the nation in a new ranking that combines an average score from national “best college” guidebooks with an average score based on student review posted online. The 2017-18 ranking, published online by College Consensus, a college ranking and review aggregator, also listed the top 10 schools in each state and we ranked #7 in Pennsylvania.

The University at #138 for student engagement; #193 for student outcomes; and #214 for an “overall” ranking of more than 1,000 colleges based on analysis of 15 individual performance indicators. The ranking, published by *The Wall Street Journal* on Sept. 27, is intended to measure student engagement and outcomes as well as the resources provided in support of education.

In other national rankings published recently, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Scranton # 6 among the “Best Regional Universities in the North” and #18 as a “Best Value Regional University” in its category. In national rankings, *U.S. News* placed Scranton's programs in

accounting #17, finance #17 and entrepreneurship #22 in the country, and its business school #183 in the U.S. *MONEY* magazine ranked Scranton #206 among the 711 included in its “Best Colleges For Your Money,” a national list of schools determined to deliver the “best value” and *Forbes* ranked Scranton at #249 in their list of “America’s Best Value Colleges” in the nation.

In addition, The Princeton Review listed Scranton in its 2018 edition of “The Best 381 Colleges,” ranking Scranton among the nation’s “Best Science Labs” (#9), “Best Campus Food” (#15), “Everyone Plays Intramural Sports” (#18) and “Most Religious Students” (#20).”

8. Curriculum Approvals:

Course Change	Date Posted
ENTR 362: Business Foundations for Entrepreneurs	4/5/17
ENTR 363: Applied Business Foundations for Entrepreneurs	4/5/17
ENTR 372: The Entrepreneurial Mindset	4/5/17
ENTR 373: Business Creativity and Innovation	4/5/17
ENTR 374: Entrepreneurial Resource Acquisition & Mgt.	4/5/17
ENTR 375: Family Run Business	4/5/17
ENTR 477: The Entrepreneurial Business Plan	4/5/17
ENTR 478: Social Entrepreneurship	4/5/17
FIN 251: Introduction to Finance	4/12/17

9. CTLE:

Faculty Services

The new Faculty Development Specialist, Dr. Amy Simolo, has had a productive start to the semester. She has met with academic chairs and deans, and attended several academic department meetings. Dr. Simolo has created and distributed 2 email newsletters, one each in September and October. She has offered 3 workshops (Flipped Classroom; Low Stakes Practice, High Stakes Success; Engaging Students in Metacognitive Tasks), with another to follow in November (Developing Holistic Rubrics). Dr. Simolo has conducted classroom visits and met with faculty one-on-one regarding pedagogical approaches.

Student Services

The services provided by the CTLE have increased sharply over the last few years, yet the quality and student satisfaction have remained consistently high. The assessment results for our tutoring services accessible on the CTLE website are indicative of this trend.

Tutoring has seen a large increase this semester, with requests reaching an all-time high of 1737, a 14% increase over fall 2016. During the 2010-2011 academic year, the number of requests (fall and spring semesters combined) was 1785. The number of students requesting tutoring in fall 2017 has, for the first time, surpassed a quarter (25.4%) of the undergraduate population.

The Writing Center has seen similar increases: 531 visitors (30% higher than last fall) and 67 consultations (24% over fall 2016). The number of students with disabilities receiving

accommodations through the CTLE has gone up 58%. As a result, the number of exams invigilated by the CTLE increased by 16% this semester compared to the same period of fall 2016.

10. ORSP Update:

ORSP announced the availability of funding to promote high-quality faculty-mentored experiences in research and scholarship for undergraduate students. Proposals are expected to support new and ongoing faculty-student research projects that focus on the creation of an UG research/scholarship experience for the student resulting in the student learning outcomes, such as inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning.

11. College Updates:

Kania School of Management

- Abhijit Roy, D.B.A., professor of marketing, management and entrepreneurship in The University of Scranton's Kania School of Management, concluded his three-year William and Elizabeth Burkavage Fellowship in Business Ethics and Social Responsibility.

College of Arts and Sciences

- Dr. Yamile Silva, Department of Latin American & Women's Studies and Department of World Languages and Cultures has been named president of the academic organization International Association of Women's Studies in Hispanic Literature and Culture.
- Azzan Yadin-Isreal, Ph.D., professor of Jewish studies and classics at Rutgers University, will present "The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen" at the University of Scranton on Thursday, November 9th. The program is sponsored by the Weinberg Judaic Studies Institute.

Weinberg Memorial Library

- The Heritage Room is hosting an exhibit "Scranton and World War I." The exhibit is a cooperative effort with the Lackawanna Historical Society. The exhibit was mounted in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Historical Association annual conference which was held at the Radisson October 12 through October 14.
- Weinberg Library Special Collections recently digitized nine volumes of early student records, dating from 1904 to 1955. The earliest material includes class reading assignments and grade books. We also digitized a volume of World War II campus newsletters, which are often consulted for alumni genealogical research. Finally, 26 volumes of penmanship periodicals, 1884-1938, from the Zaner-Bloser Penmanship Collection were digitized and will be added to our online collections. The Zaner-Bloser Collection is our most popular online collection.
- In partnership with the Department of Nursing, the Weinberg Memorial Library now hosts the University of Scranton Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Scholarly Projects Collection (<http://www.scranton.edu/library/dnp>). Scholarly project papers and posters prepared by graduating DNP students are preserved in the Library's digital repository, and the results of their work will be freely available to a global audience.