

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Tracy Stewart, Ph.D.
Interim Provost/SVPAA

DATE: March 7, 2025

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs Report to the Faculty Senate

1. Board of Trustees Update

The Board met on February 20 and 21, 2025. Amongst other action items (tax forms and honorary degree recipients) the Board approved the GE revision – the Ignatian Core Curriculum. We heard from an AJCU advocate who updated us on the Dear Colleague Letter, Executive Orders and pending budget bills (and potential impacts on higher education). There was a presentation from HCRC related to the development of a Strategic Enrollment Management plan.

2. Artificial Intelligence: Draft Institutional Policy Process

With the approval of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, George Aulisio gathered other peer institutional AI policies and drew from those to create a draft. The draft has been reviewed, and feedback has been provided from cabinet, TAG, and IT. George and I are working on revisions, based on feedback, and will have the next iteration available for your review before the forum. Please look for an email with a link early next week.

There is a faculty only forum for you to provide feedback and ask questions on March 13, 11:30-1:00. We will have two more open forums for faculty, students, and staff on March 26, 11-12 and March 28, 2-3, as well as a chance to provide feedback electronically if you cannot attend any gathering.

3. Winds of Change or Potential Change from Washington

As information, Executive Orders, Dear Colleague Letters, FAQs, and budget processes unfold, we are working to find ways to stay informed, understand implications, react appropriately, and keep the university community informed, all while remaining committed to the Mission. I have called impromptu leadership meetings, including faculty leadership. Father Marina is striving to send out weekly email updates. In response to requests, Fr. Marina and I will be holding drop-in sessions for faculty and staff to come with questions, feedback and concerns about the political events and their potential impacts on the University of Scranton.

4. Searches

The search committee for the reconfigured CAS Associate Dean is now staffed and the search committee will meet the first week of March to begin their work. Committee members are:

- Dean Victoria Castellanos (chair)
- Dr. Murli Rajan
- Dr. Brian Snee, Faculty Representative

- Dr. Patrick Orr, Faculty Representative
- Dr. Satya Chattopadhyay, Faculty Representative
- Ms. Maria Stephen, Student Representative
- Ms. Rosemary Termini, Staff Representative

CIO search: as of March 7, 2025, two of three finalists have come to campus for interviews. The last finalist was unable to keep his appointment due to flight delays. It is uncertain if or when that will be rescheduled.

Thanks to each search committee for their efforts in their work to fill these vacancies.

5. Graduate Studies

- *Graduate Assistant* - applications were due for priority consideration on March 1. As of March 4, there are currently 966 applications for review for the fall 2025 semester. Faculty have been asked to review and submit their decisions prior to May 1.
- *Graduate Assistant Information Sessions - Virtual* - there were 4 sessions held virtually on different days and times of the week (12pm, 1pm, 7pm, 8pm). Approximately 40 students attended over the 4 sessions
- *A Graduate Social* - is planned for March 28 in the Graduate Student Hub in McGurkin Hall. Plans are being made for graduate students to socialize and get to know their peers across colleges.
- *Online Course Migration* - Ninety-nine percent of all online (previous Risepoint) courses have been migrated to our Brightspace Learning Management System. Spring H2 begins March 24, 2025. Both students and faculty currently have access to these courses.
- Faculty have been asked to export information they would like to export from Engage prior to March 15, 2025.
- *Graduate Studies Catalog* - A call for updates to the graduate studies catalog has been sent to academic departments, deans offices, and student support offices for the 2025-2026 academic year.

6. CAS Updates

- Zoom interviews for the full-time staff position in CAS just occurred, a few on-campus interviews should follow.
- FRAP (Faculty Research Allocation Program) Applications were due on February 17th and are now being reviewed by the Dean. Faculty will be notified no later than April 15th.

- Fiscal Planning for FY25-26 is underway within CAS. The Dean's Office is grateful for the department chairs/program directors and CAS departmental administrative assistants who have just submitted additional information about anticipated spending this year to inform the planning for the coming year.
- In support of student success this Spring 2025, all CAS students on probation were assigned to meet with CAS professional advisors in addition to their faculty advisors to provide additional support.
- During the fall, CAS department chairs and program directors provided input as to their greatest resource needs to the Dean. The advancement priorities that emerged from this solicitation were in CAS Student Research, Experiential Learning, and Equipment. As a result, and in collaboration with Advancement, the Dean will be sending a letter to all CAS alumni in April naming these as the CAS priorities amidst some of the usual 5/06 scholarships and funds related to CAS.
- Impact Reports were submitted in December for the following concentrations (Data Science Concentration, Legal Studies), programs of distinction (Magis, SJLA, and University Honors Program), as well as First-Year Writing. The Dean and Associate Dean met with all program directors (current, and in some cases, incoming) to discuss feedback on next steps. Then all program directors will respond to that feedback in a now standardized form in March. These reports serve as a form of assessment of said programs.
- Alpha Sigma Nu acceptances and membership dues have been collected. We look forward to the induction ceremony on Sunday, March 30th.

7. Faculty Searches

To date we have hired 4 faculty

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Dr. Margaret Lakomy | Visiting Assistant Professor | Chemistry |
| • Dr. Nathan Henceroth | Assistant Professor | Political Science |
| • Dr. Marlon Toro-Alvarez | Assistant Professor | CJ, Cybersecurity & Soc. |
| • Dr. Swathi Ragulan | Assistant Professor | Counseling & Human Services |

8. OSSS/CTE Report for Faculty Senate: March 2025

Spring 2025 CTE Programming for Faculty, Spring '25 sessions:

- Talking About Teaching: Supporting Neurodiverse Students in the Classroom, Additional TBD
- The Autism Spectrum On-campus
- Talking About Teaching: AI In Your Classroom
- Talking About Teaching: Ignatian Pedagogy
- Safe Zone Training

Large increases in student accommodations have necessitated continuous improvement to our CTE/OSSS testing initiatives and modifications to Accommodate and Brightspace.

Daily support for faculty and student in all areas of, and related to, Brightspace are ongoing. Resources continue to be an issue.

The CTE is heavily involved in the conversion of 110+ Wiley online courses to Brightspace and development of new ABA, NURS, SLP online courses and programs. CTE serves as the technical and instructional “lead” for our instructors and technical liaison for Collegis contractors. Those courses are 99% migrated. In order to enhance support for our in-house programs, Brian Snapp is becoming certified for the Quality Matters Online Course Design Rubric. The rubric is optional.

CTE, in conjunction with the Academic Support Committee to the Faculty Senate, will be conducting an investigation into potential gender bias in student course evaluations. We are currently working with our IT Department to harvest anonymized and randomized data from roughly 8 years of evaluations.

The OSSS is collaborating with The Center for Career Development on a workshop series specifically for students registered with disability services.

- Session 3: Interview Skills SP 25

On March 3rd the OSSS introduced Walk-In Academic Coaching 5 days a week to support time management, study skills, organization/planning, etc.

OSSS Spring '25 (through week 7)	
General Subject Tutoring Sessions	Clients: 342, Total Sessions: 1211 (same YOY)
Writing Center Consultations	Clients: 130, Total consultations: 234 (same YOY)
Student Success Specialist	Gonzaga + AP - Total meetings: 36
Academic Coaching Sessions	260 (303 this week last year)
New Disability Requests	Total 140 (17% of 1st year students)
Total Registered w/ Disability Services	Total: 461
Disability Specialist Coaching	35-40/week
Exams Proctored	493 (same YOY)

9. Weinberg Memorial Library Update

- *2025 Environmental Art Show - Call for Art* – Submissions are open to the public and we encourage submissions by University of Scranton students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Deadline for submissions is March 28, 2025. For additional information visit: <https://sites.scranton.edu/library/2025/01/28/2025-environmental-art-show-call-for-art/>
- *2025 Environmental Art Show: Engaging with the Natural World* will be held in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room on the 5th floor of the Weinberg Memorial Library from April 7-17th during Library operational hours. Free and open to the public. Join us at a Preview Event being held on Friday, April 4th

from 5pm-9pm in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room to preview this year's art submissions and contribute to a Public Art piece which will be added to the display on the 7th. Light refreshments will be provided.

- *In conjunction with the Jesuit Center, the Library will feature an exhibit of library books and other items related to St. Oscar Romero (1917-1980). St. Romero was serving as archbishop and was martyred by a government "death squad" while celebrating mass during the El Salvadoran civil war on March 24, 1980. He was canonized in 2018. The exhibit will be hosted in the Heritage Room.*
- *The Library will host a Faculty Scholarship Exhibit in April. Please watch for a call for scholarship from Dean Aulisio after spring break.*
- *The book ordering deadline for Academic Departments is March 14, 2025. Requests to Purchase Media or secure Public Performance Rights should be directed to Dean George Aulisio for the remainder of the Spring 2025 semester. Please contact him via email at george.aulisio@scranton.edu.*
- *Hope Horn Gallery - The Art Gallery and Weinberg Memorial Library have launched an online Art Catalog called University Art Collections. While a work in progress, the well-developed catalog provides information on University Artworks and can be accessed here: www.scranton.edu/UniversityArt.*
- *Schemel Forum - The vast majority of the programs are free and open to students, staff, and faculty. The remaining programs can be accessed here: <https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/schemel/index.shtml>. Students, staff, and faculty are asked to register in advance here: <https://forms.office.com/r/5CEe33e6jt>*

10. Other Updates

- Eighteen undergraduate students, four recent graduates and seven professors will present research at the 2025 Eastern Psychological Association conference in Philadelphia on March 5 - 9. In total, 13 research posters and papers will be presented by University of Scranton students and professors.
- Bernard Schanzer, M.D., and Henry Schanzer, J.D., will present "A Twin Tale of Survival in the Holocaust" for The University of Scranton's Judaic Studies Institute Lecture on Wednesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the Pearn Auditorium of Brennan Hall. The Schanzers will tell their story of survival, which was made possible through the help of a righteous non-Jew.
- On March 12th at 5:00 pm the Slattery Center presents a Lecture: "Ethics in The Good Place" presented by Todd May, Ph.D. Pearn Auditorium, Brennan Hall. Call 570-941-4700 or email sarah.kenehan@scranton.edu

- A group of graduate students is making a difference in the lives of first responders. For the past decade, occupational therapy students have been fundraising to provide service dogs to those in need. This year, their efforts are focused on helping Scranton Police Detective Kyle Gilmartin, who was critically injured in the line of duty last year. Over the years, the committee has successfully fundraised for 10 service dogs through community events from bake sales to baseball games.
- The University of Scranton Accounting Department ranked No. 2 (tied) internationally for accounting education research published in peer-reviewed accounting journals during the most recent six-year period, according to the 2024 Brigham Young University Accounting Rankings just published. This is the [fifth consecutive year](#) the University's Accounting Department was ranked among the top research publishers in the world in the prestigious Brigham Young University Accounting Rankings.