

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Tracy M. Stewart, Ph.D.
Interim Provost/Senior VPAA

DATE: May 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs Report for May 2025 (Revised)

1. PROVOST UPDATES

- The Artificial Intelligence draft policy received in-person and survey feedback. It was vetted at Cabinet April 8 and the UGC (University Governance Committee) on April 10. The presidents of the Student, Staff, and Faculty senates were to bring it to their constituents and submit an electronic vote back to UGC by May 15.
- Dr. George Aulisio, Dean of the Library, will be supervising the Director of the Innovation, Design, Education, and Application Center (IDEA Center) in Weiss Hall. A position description has been submitted to HR.
- Collaborative work across enrollment, student life, and academics on the Retention Working Group has led to many intentional interventions this spring. We will be taking a list of identified areas for improvement and gaps into a retreat after commencement. We will create prioritizations and time frames for quick, short term (12-18 months), and long-term initiatives. Where appropriate, working groups will be formed.

2. SEARCHES UPDATES

- **Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs**
The process of identifying our next Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs has begun. The consulting firm was on campus the week of April 28th and had listening sessions with multiple constituent groups. The position will be advertised nationally in late June/early July.
- **Associate Provost**
Dr. David E. Marx announced his intention to retire after 38 years of service, on July 1. Faculty have been elected to serve on the search committee. Fr. Marina has appointed Liz Garcia (Chair) and Carolyn Berry to represent administration. Staff Senate leadership have put out a call for two professional staff representatives. The job description should be posted the week of May 5.
- **CAS Associate Dean**
The Search Committee chair for the reconfigured CAS Associate Dean position has reviewed applications and invited 3 candidates to come for on-campus interviews. We hope to have the interviews concluded by May.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MAY 2025

The University Planning Committee (UPC) is continuing to develop our next University-wide strategic plan. Several important milestones are moving forward.

Review of campus input and identification of emerging potential strategic directions.

Priorities previously identified from campus-wide input include: renewed emphasis on *civic, civil and ethical learning, engagement, and leadership*; student *access, enrollment, and success*; dedicated focus on *graduate, distance, international and other learner populations*, whose pathways and needs differ from our traditional undergraduate model; mission-oriented, sustained support for institutional planning in the areas of *diversity, equity, and inclusion, and sustainability; belonging, resilience, and wellness*, including mental health, for students, faculty, and staff; and expansion of *community-oriented programming and services* in line with Weiss Hall. Across all of these areas, members of the University community have repeatedly emphasized the need to appropriate resource our planning activities, and to improve collaboration, transparency, and cross-departmental communication, and reduce procedural barriers that may limit our ability to meet our goals. The UPC has been mindful of these issues in considering the new plan, and also in its discussions about nearer-term priorities under the current plan (more on this below).

The UPC will hold a retreat later this month to discuss and discern amongst these potential priorities and prepare an initial full draft strategic plan that will outline specific intended outcomes, resource implications/needs, and other operational stewardship details. We anticipate sharing a draft strategic plan with the campus community in early fall, and the new plan launching in early 2026.

Sustained efforts on the current Strategic Plan, supporting transition to the next.

The priorities identified by the UPC this spring are detailed below. The Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness is working with campus leadership to coordinate and document the work done in each of these areas, and crosswalk activities to relevant areas in the new strategic plan draft. Progress in these areas will provide valuable evidence in preparing for our upcoming Middle States Self-Study and AJCU Mission Priority Examen.

Revised University Vision Statement.

A strategic planning process is a natural moment to engage members of our community in developing a fresh, future-oriented shared vision for the future, a need emphasized throughout our campus input sessions. Considering how much our community has changed over recent years and the extraordinary challenges facing higher education, there is now perhaps even greater importance in coming together in support of an inspirational University-wide vision. To undertake this project, the UPC formed a subcommittee to develop and propose a potential new vision statement. This draft statement will be shared with the University community as part of a broader strategic planning update prior to the close of the semester and will then be refined and included in the draft strategic plan package slated for community review in early fall.

Next steps

The Strategic Plan 2025 timeline outlines upcoming milestones in this process. The University my.scranton platform and www.scranton.edu/strategicplanning2025 web site will be important

information sharing vehicles to keep members of the University community apprised of progress. In addition to planned discussion with the Board in early fall, we welcome additional input.

Strategic Planning Timeline: Spring through Fall 2025

TIMELINE	CAMPUS ACTIVITY	BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPC reviews campus community input, emerging themes/potential directions, and other materials. UPC, President check-in on planning timeline, and discern any needed adjustment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning Update, including emerging themes/potential directions from community input, shared with Board of Trustees.
January – April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed updates to process/timetable presented to UPC; UPC endorses changes. Discernment of current strategic plan priorities. Process to review, revise University vision underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 21: Board of Trustees receives Strategic Planning Update, including timeline adjustments.
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPC continues new strategic plan development activities; May 22 retreat. Additional collaborative discussions with UPC, Cabinet. Work on current strategic plan priority areas moves forward as led by assigned stewards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 9 – Board of Trustees receives Strategic Planning Update, including progress on established milestones and proposed next steps.
Summer 2025:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft new plan documents prepared for fall community review. Progress updates on current strategic plan priorities from assigned stewards. Analysis/themes from departmental plans, challenges, opportunities from Annual Planning and Reporting Cycle. Final Strategic Plan 2020 progress report prepared. August Retreat: UPC reflection on final 2020 progress report, other summer inputs. Refined draft plan prepared, previewed with President's Cabinet. 	
Fall 2025:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refined draft of new strategic plan shared with University Community, for review, feedback. Revisions incorporated. Final proposed plan shared with University Community ahead of submission to Board. Centers for responsibility, timelines and priorities, targets, and evaluation/ assessment measures, established. President, President's Cabinet and Board of Trustees approves new plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates TBD. The Board of Trustees receives strategic planning update, new strategic plan materials for review, feedback, and approval.

4. FACULTY SEARCHES

To date we have hired ten new faculty and searches continue. Below is the list of faculty hired:

Margaret Lakomy	Visiting Assistant Professor	Chemistry
Nathan Henceroth	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Marlon Toro-Alvarez	Assistant Professor	Criminal Justice, Cybersecurity & Sociology
Swathi Ragulan	Assistant Professor	Counseling & Human Services

Samantha Scott	Faculty Specialist	Theology/Religious Studies
Sangita Saha	Assistant Professor	History
Beatriz Fontoura	Assistant Professor	Chemistry
Yun Yu Sara Chan	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Jacob Zoromski	Visiting Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Albert Turano	Faculty Specialist	Operations & Analytics
Megan Ossont	Assistant Professor	Nursing

5. FACULTY APPRECIATION CELEBRATION

The Faculty Appreciation Day Celebration was held on April 25th. The Provost Enhancement Awards and the Faculty Senate's Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award were presented. We also recognized the faculty members who will be retiring after this academic year.

Provost Enhancement Awards	
Excellence in Scholarship and Teaching	Billie Tadros, Ph.D.
Excellence in Scholarly Publication	Nathaniel Frissell, Ph.D.
Excellence in Scholarly Publication	Roy Domenico, Ph.D.
Excellence in University Service and Leadership	Teresa Grettano, Ph. D.
Excellence in Advancing Global Learning	Cyrus Olsen, Ph.D.
Excellence in Advancing Interdisciplinary Study	Professor Marleen Cloutier
Excellence in Advancing Interdisciplinary Study	Professor Sylvia Orner
Excellence in Integrating Mission and Justice Into the Curriculum	Will Cohen, Ph.D.
Excellence in Community-Based Learning	Jessica Nolan, Ph.D.
Excellence in Adapting Classic Principles of Jesuit Pedagogy into the Curriculum	Professor Donna Witek

Faculty Senate's Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award

Wesam Alramadeen, PhD Operations & Analytics

Retirees Honored	
W. Andrew Berger	Physics & Engineering
Lori Burch	Counseling & Human Services
Dona Carpenter	Nursing
Ann Culp	Nursing

Marian Farrell	Nursing
Jamie Meilan del Rio	World Languages
Richard Klonoski	Philosophy

6. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

- Summer Grants 2025**

The Faculty Development Board has awarded the following summer grants:

Dr. Mehmet Bastug	<i>Cyber-Threats and Cyber-Attacks: What Everyone Needs to Know (Book Project)</i>
Dr. Melanie Caughey	<i>Suitability of Information About Gifted Education in Special Education Textbooks</i>
Dr. John Deak	<i>Development of evaporation rate measurements for the determination of soft molecular aggregate structure and inter-aggregate interactions in liquid solution</i>
Dr. JoyAnna Hopper	<i>The Effects of COVID-19 on Combined State-level Environmental Agencies</i>
Dr. Geng Liu	<i>Hydrodynamic Effects of Seal Whiskers' Bending and Tapering Features on Flow Sensing</i>
Dr. Farshad Merrikh-Bayat	<i>Design, Construction and Data-Driven Control of a Lab-Scale Wind Turbine with a New Algorithm</i>
Dr. Marc Shapiro	<i>Rabbi Saul Berlin and His Forged Work of Jewish Law</i>
Dr. Janice Voltzow	<i>Mechanical properties of the shells of mussels</i>
Dr. Hank Willenbrink	<i>Performance Crime and Performance Justice on January 6, 2021, and Beyond</i>

- Clavius Funding 2025-2026**

The Faculty Development Board awarded two Clavius Grants:

Dr. Krisy Elrod/Dr. Meghan Heeder	<i>Exploring the Intersection of Eating Disorders and Spirituality</i>
Dr. Andrew LaZella	<i>The Ethics of AI and Emerging Technology</i>

7. GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Forecast for Summer 2025 Study Abroad

About 32 students plan to study abroad at partner universities this summer.

About 26 students plan to go on faculty-led study abroad courses this summer. The schedule for faculty-led study abroad courses for Summer 2025 includes:

Germany	Dr. Michael Azar	Theology/Religious Studies
Greece	Dr. Joan Grossman Dr. Andrew Venezia	Kinesiology
Spain	Dr. Michael Jenkins Dr. Sinchul Back	Criminal Justice
Uganda	Dr. Cyrus Olsen Dr. Marc Seid	Theology/Religious Studies and Biology

8. FULBRIGHT UPDATE

We are waiting for the Fulbright award winners for the 2025-26 year to be announced. We have two students at the semi-finalist stage. We have two students at the semi-finalist stage. One for Study/Research in Norway; and one for an English Teaching Assistantship in Taiwan.

9. CURRICULUM

Course Change

	Date Posted
HIST 321: American Ideas and Culture I	3/26/25
HIST 322: American Ideas and Culture II	3/26/25
THTR 221: Scene Painting	3/26/25
THTR 251: Intermediate Acting	3/26/25
THTR 252: Voice and Speech	3/26/25
THTR 253: Stage Combat	3/26/25
THTR 311: Directing I	3/26/25
THTR 331: Set Design for Theatre	3/26/25
THTR 351: Advanced Acting	3/26/25
THTR 411: Directing II	3/26/25

Program Change

Mechanical Engineering	3/28/25
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10. UPDATES

- Dr. Budash, an assistant professor who joined The University of Scranton in 2019, earned membership to the American Occupational Therapy Association's Roster of Fellows. She's one of 62 new Fellows who earned the distinction at the organization's Awards and Recognition Ceremony, held April 5.
- University of Scranton students majoring in criminal justice, cybercrime and homeland security or sociology will have the opportunity for internships at the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office through the new Crime Analysis and Investigation Program announced today. Guided by University faculty experts, the student interns will work alongside professionals in the District Attorney's Office to investigate cybercrimes, analyze crime and related data, and offer evidence-based guidance for best practices.
- Douglas M. Boyle, D.B.A.'88, professor and chair of the Accounting Department and director of the University's Ph.D. program, and Daniel P. Haggerty, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Philosophy Department and director of the University's Special Jesuit Liberal Arts Honors

Program, recently co-authored a paper on philosophy and professional ethics that earned the prestigious 2025 Curt Verschoor Ethics Feature of the Year. Selected by the Institute of Management Accountants' Committee on Ethics and Strategic Finance, the article "Aristotle and Accounting: Building Virtue to Fight Fraud," was written by Dr. Boyle, Dr. Haggerty, and Dana R. Hermanson, Ph.D., of Kennesaw State University.