

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Michelle Maldonado, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: March 1, 2024

RE: Provost Report

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING UPDATE

The Education Committee of the Board of Trustees met on Thursday, February 22nd and approved the language changes in Section 5.1, 6.0, and Appendix III of the *Faculty Handbook*, that were approved by the Faculty Handbook Committee, the faculty and the FPC. The language clarifies that access to materials uploaded to the University system regarding, evaluations, and tenure and promotion will be granted to the appropriate individuals within one day of the submission deadline.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The University will begin the planning process for our next Strategic Plan this Spring semester. The University Planning Committee will take the lead in planning, and the May Academic Affairs Town Hall will be an initial venue for the faculty to contribute to the planning process.

HEDS SURVEY

Last Spring, the Provost's Council for Diversity and Inclusion administered the HEDS Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey. The Survey asked students, faculty, staff, and administrators about their perceptions of the University's climate and how the University supports diversity and equity, as well as their experiences with discrimination and harassment at the University. The Council administered the Survey to obtain a better understanding of the extent to which the campus climate supports diversity and equity, and to inform and improve support, policies, and practices at the University related to diversity and equity, including those to prevent or respond to discrimination and harassment.

A subcommittee of the Council worked on drafting a narrative summarizing the results. We encourage you to review a copy of the most recent [2023 Campus Climate for Equity and Diversity at the University of Scranton: Narrative Summary](#), which includes a link to the data. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are University priorities and supported by our Catholic, Jesuit Mission and Values.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

I want to thank the academic departments for submitting their proposals for new programs earlier this month. The administration will be reviewing these proposals and will follow up with faculty in the next two weeks.

Our license with Gray expires March 29, 2024. At the Academic Town Hall earlier in February it was suggested by a faculty member that the administration engage in the scanning process independently and then propose academic programs to departments as possible areas of program

development. The administration feels this would not only violate the curricular process, but also be contrary to the spirit of shared governance that has shaped our collaborative work with the Gray tool. The Deans and Provost's Office remain available to academic departments that would like to continue to engage the Gray tool in the next few weeks until our license expires, and we encourage everyone to continue to take advantage of the Gray data.

LAUDATO SI'

I am thrilled to announce that Elizabeth A. Johnson will be joining us on **April 17th** to give a talk entitled: "Jesus and the Earth: Seeing Christ through an Ecological Lens" at **6pm in the Moskovitz Theater**. A summary of her talk is below. Dr. Johnson is distinguished Professor Emerita of Theology at Fordham University in the City of New York, a past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, an award-winning author, the first woman to receive a doctorate in theology from a Roman Catholic pontifical university, and the recipient of fifteen other honorary doctoral degrees in theology, divinity, and the humane letters.

Summary: At the center of Christian faith is the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom people love and follow as their Savior, Emmanuel, God with us. What has this got to do with the Earth, its land, water and air, and the diverse animals and plants that network the planet with ecosystems of life? For the most part, many would say "not much." In our day the ecological emergency raises that question with new vigor. Pursuing it can lead to surprising insights.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS

Two seniors and one alumnus submitted applications for Fulbright Scholarships to spend the 2024-25 academic year overseas. On January 25, we learned that two of the three applicants have been selected as National Semi-Finalists for Fulbright. Unfortunately, the third applicant was not selected to move onto the next round. The two Semi-Finalists' applications have been forwarded to the host countries, where Finalist award decisions will be made in late Spring.

- Shelby Traver, a Political Science, and International Business double major, has been selected as National Semi-Finalist for Fulbright study in Rwanda. Her project proposal is entitled "The Secondary Effects of the Rwanda Gender Quota on the Bureaucracy and Legislative Staff."
- Adrian Laudani, a member of the class of 2018, has been selected as National Semi-Finalist for an English Language Teaching Assistantship in Spain. She has proposed to teach English at the secondary level in either Madrid or Malaga. Adrian received a bachelor's degree in Counseling and Human Services from the University of Scranton, served in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps after graduation, and received a master's degree in International Studies from the University of San Francisco in 2023.

Special thanks are due to the members of our Campus Fulbright Committee for their assistance in interviewing and evaluating the applicants during the Fall semester. The panel included Dr. Michael Alison, Dr. Tata Mbugua, Dr. Jong-Hyun Son, Dr. Habib Zanzana, and Dr. Sinchul Back. We are also grateful to those faculty members who prepared language reports and wrote letters of recommendation on behalf of our students.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Ethics Across the Curriculum

The application deadline for the first round of faculty development grants has been extended to **March 8, 2024**. You can find the application

here: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/ethics_across_curriculum.shtml

Faculty Internal Research Funding Program

The deadline to submit a proposal for internal funding of scholarly research activities is Thursday, **March 28, 2024 by 4:30 pm**.

President's Fellowships for Summer Research

This program provides students with the opportunity to engage in an intensive research project with a full-time faculty mentor during a ten-week period in the summer. The deadline to submit applications for the President's Fellowships for Summer Research is **March 8th**.

PROVOST COMMITTEE ON ACDEMIC POLICY & COMPLIANCE (PCAPC)

The PCAPC continues to

- Review requests for exceptions to block scheduling
- Work on language with the APC on the:
 - Discontinuance of an Academic Program
 - Ph.D. Policy
 - Faculty-Led Study Abroad Policy
- Revise the Credit Hour Policy
 - Include doctoral program language
- Review changes to the
 - Key Federal Policy changes
 - MSCHE new standards and substantive changes
- Work on the Religious Observance Policy language

FACULTY SEARCHES

Faculty searches continue into the spring semester. To date we have hired three new faculty.

Chi Hou Lei	Assistant Professor	Physics & Engineering
Michael Catalano	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Megan Heeder	Assistant Professor	Theology/Religious Studies
Mehmet Ali Yetim	Assistant Professor	Management, Marketing & Entrepreneurship
Anna Jaskiewicz	Assistant Professor	Economics, Finance & International Business
Jinqing Liu	Assistant Professor	Education

OSSS UPDATE

The total number of students with requests for accommodations is 695. Out of those 695 students, 316 are considered Neurodiverse.

OSSS Fall Statistics

Tutor Requests	1308
Tutoring Sessions	3868
Drop-In Tutoring Sessions (Math, Chem, Phys)	440
Success Sessions	120
Academic Coaching Sessions	667
Writing Center Clients	380
Writing Center Consultations	1044
Accommodation Requests	140
Exams Proctored (total)	1876
Final Exams Proctored	519

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Growing from a conversation with faculty and administrators about new external funding opportunities related to the AI workforce, I would like to invite faculty to a discussion on Artificial Intelligence. Distinctive from conversations regarding AI and how it relates to pedagogy, this dialogue will focus on AI outside of the classroom. In the spirit of making our time together productive, please be prepared to share a few lines on your interest in developing research, educational opportunities, and training related to AI. The forum will be held on **March 27th at 4:15pm in DeNaples 406**. For faculty who cannot attend the event please feel free to share your interests in writing, and I will include them in the broader summary of the forum that I will share with faculty.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Study Abroad

During Intersession 2024, 102 students participated in study abroad.

- 69 students participated in University of Scranton faculty-led study abroad programs. Course destinations were:
 - Galapagos Islands – Biology
 - Brazil – Health Administration
 - Dominican Republic – Occupational Therapy
 - Ireland – Nursing
 - Ireland – International Studies.
- 33 students participated in our study abroad partners' programs held in Italy, Ireland, Japan, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

In the Spring 2024 semester, we have 27 students studying abroad on semester-long programs.

- The students' host university sites include Barcelona (4 students); Madrid (4); Florence (5); Rome (5); Milan (2); London (3); Edinburgh (2); Buenos Aires (1); and Tokyo (1).

International Students

New Spring Enrollment:

- New Degree Seeking Graduate Students: 32 from India (30), Pakistan (1), Kenya (1)

- New Exchange Students: 3 graduate students and 5 undergraduate students from India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Spain and South Korea.
- We have 1 research scholar from the Philippines and a Short-term Scholar from the Philippines is expected to arrive in March. Both scholars are working with Dr. Gerard Dumancas from our Chemistry Department.

Returning Spring Enrollment:

- Degree Seeking: 186 students
 - Graduate 175
 - Doctorate: 3 from Saudi Arabia and Italy
 - Master's: 172 from Canada, China, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, The Bahamas, and Vietnam
 - Undergraduate: 11 students from Cayman Islands, China, Dominican Republic, India, Ireland, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, Vietnam
- Exchange Students: 1 undergraduate student from Taiwan
- Exchange Scholars: 2 visiting professors from Taiwan and Japan
- Fulbright TA: 4 scholars from Argentina, France, Germany, and Tunisia

UPDATES

- More than 40 of our DPT students were selected to present their group research projects at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) national meeting in Boston. The meeting is the premier physical therapy conference in the U.S.
- The Hayes Family Science Competition for High School Physics and Engineering Students is scheduled for April 18, 2024. The theme for this year's competition is "energy and motion".
- **Breakfast with the President and Provost**
This Spring semester we will continue our monthly breakfasts with the President and Provost. Spaces are limited and we ask faculty to sign up by emailing provost@scranton.edu. Please only sign up for one breakfast. The remaining dates are March 20 and April 9. These breakfasts are an opportunity for faculty to share interests and concerns with the administration in an informal setting.