Welcome to AA’s final newsletter for fall semester, 2018. What follows are a few updates on ongoing initiatives and projects.

Looking Forward to Working with our New President!

Those of us in the Provost’s Office are thrilled with the selection of Dr. Brad Mortensen as WSU’s new President. During his time as Vice President for Advancement, Brad has worked very closely with academic areas, familiarizing himself with program offerings so as to represent those offerings to legislators, donors, representatives of business and industry, trustees and regents; he’s also taken time to get to know faculty, staff, and students so as to fully understand strengths and needs of the institution he serves. He’s supported numerous strategic initiatives (digital literacy, Town/Gown partnerships, strategic enrollment planning, teaching excellence awards, and so on) that have produced positive results for WSU as a whole. We look forward to continued enrichment of WSU’s academic mission with Brad at the helm.

Dean Searches

The Social & Behavioral Sciences College and the Moyes College of Education both are searching for new deans to start July 1, 2019. Search committees met early in fall semester, drafted and posted ads, read applications, and currently are engaged in Skype interviews with those candidates who made it through the paper screen step. Each committee will have completed their Skyping by the middle of next week, at which time Malissa Jones will set up on-campus interviews for finalists in both searches. Those interviews most likely will occur in the first couple weeks of spring semester.

University Planning Council

The late fall meeting of UPC offers attendees an environmental scan. This past Tuesday, December 4, 2018, that scan included: 1) a report from Brad Mortensen on “The University of the Future,” based on a recent team trip to Arizona State University (ASU), which is intensely involved in on-line education; 2) a video produced by Pam Perlich and others at the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, predicting population growth and change in Utah (but barely mentioning counties north of SLC); 3) a conversation with Norm Tarbox about changes in the governance of higher education in Utah; and 4) a discussion with Dianna Able of WSU’s Counseling Center about student mental health programs and challenges.

Academic Master Plan Committee Members Meeting with College Department Chairs

Over the past couple weeks, a posse of Academic Master Plan committee members have joined the Provost in meeting with department chairs and deans from the Colleges of Science, Arts & Humanities, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Health Professions, and EAST to discuss what AA will be requesting from
chairs in this spring’s reports from departments. The Colleges of Education and Business are scheduled for their meetings in early spring 2019.

Last spring, having been provided five years of historical data about their programs from the Institutional Effectiveness Office and a long list of questions from AA, most chairs responded (understandably) by using the data to justify what they had been doing. Reviewing the reports, the Provost and six “Super-Readers” realized that the data and prompts provided had pushed chairs into a retrospective, rather than prospective, stance.

We scheduled recent meetings with college chairs to get a sense of what worked well for them last year, what changes we need to make for this year, how we can encourage report writers to look toward the future, and how we can make the process as easy—but also as useful—as possible. In general, we hope writers will use the reports (now titled “Strategic Analyses”) to project 3-5 years in time, imagining what their areas’ best contributions to the institution are (under the general headings of Value, Affordability and Growth). Making these contributions often entails meeting challenges, and we want report writers to feel comfortable discussing those challenges—and proposing creative solutions to them.

By early spring semester, AA intends to have a draft template prepared for this year’s reports, as well as to come to a determination of exactly what data will be provided and a firm date for getting that information to chairs and deans.

Student Complaint Process

Have you taken a look at the new web page that provides information on Student Petitions, Complaints, and Grievances? AA encourages you to do so at https://www.weber.edu/complaint/

The process has been streamlined and the website offers students clear instructions on how to follow that process. Associate Provost Eric Amsel has been visiting with colleges to share information—but don’t wait for Eric to show up; take a drive on your own by visiting the site.

Attachment