Dean's Performance Review and "State of College" Report
From 2/1/2018 to 10/8/2019
Scott Sprenger, Dean of the Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities

Introduction
The PPM requires a performance review of college deans every two years. As part of the renewal process for a second four-year term, the Provost’s Office has requested a report (below) on the state of the college and my professional activity as dean since my last review in early 2018. The provost is conducting this review earlier than normal because she is stepping down at the end of fall 2019 and wishes to complete the review before her departure.

My Philosophy and Role as Dean
I remain enthusiastic about serving as dean of the Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities and I am optimistic about the future of our disciplines at Weber State University despite steep downturns in arts and humanities enrollments nationwide. Having been personally transformed by a public university, I can think of no nobler or more exciting job than collaborating with faculty and staff colleagues to deliver on the university and college mission.

That said, our challenges remain formidable as we are called upon by the administration to balance three competing considerations: 1) growth, 2) affordability, and 3) high-quality academic programming. The university’s new departmental and college reporting templates, in fact, have been designed by the Provost’s office as a way to measure our optimization of these tradeoffs. Luckily, our college anticipated this new direction three years ago and has been hard at work reinforcing our strengths while finding resources for promising new curricular directions.

While the dean’s role has traditionally been to manage the college’s resources and operations, the current higher education turbulence requires much more, including constant vigilance of external threats and a strategic vision and planning culture to seize new opportunities and to chart a viable course into an uncertain future. With swiftly changing market conditions, and increased scrutiny by students and employers of the value of a college degree, it is important to remain informed of external conditions while identifying proactive solutions to surmount the many challenges.

From a governance perspective, my top priority is to work with all faculty and staff on shared priorities and aspirations in a spirit of mutual respect and transparency. It is also to articulate a shared vision, mission and planning process that positions the purpose and value of the arts and humanities for the university, the local community, the broader national context and, above all, for the lives and careers of our students. One of the pillars of the university’s mission is "access"; the college’s mission is to "teach students to excel." Combining these two apparently contradictory missions, we might say that our college’s underlying philosophy is to meet students at their unique levels of preparation while seeking individualized ways to help them realize their fullest potential for excellence in whatever path they choose.

One of my other chief goals as dean has been to ensure that all of our departments maintain cutting edge curriculum that serves all students (associates, bachelor’s, MA) and that leads to viable graduate outcomes. To this end, we have worked strategically during the past two years to build new degrees that combine deep learning in the liberal arts with technology and professional skills; we have adopted new advising strategies and tools to help retain students on their path to a degree; and we have created and clearly signposted viable career pathways for arts and humanities majors via an emphasis on internships and professionalizing skills and earlier, evidenced-based career advising.
Administrative Responsibilities

I am grateful to share day-to-day responsibilities with, and to be well-supported by, an associate dean, the dean’s office staff, and the college’s five department chairs and two M.A. directors. At the same time, the dean is ultimately responsible for the direction and oversight of the Lindquist College, the tasks of which include: management of: the dean’s office staff, the Council of Chairs, the advising office staff, the director of the Val A. Browning Center and staff, the college’s three buildings and equipment, performing arts venues and art gallery, the college’s and departmental budgets and accounts, college IT, undergraduate programs and curriculum, the hiring of faculty and staff, the College tenure and promotion process, the college’s faculty development program, the college’s advisory (AHA!) board, alumni and fundraising activities, oversight of Browning Presents! and the Hurst Artist-in-Residence programs. As a member of several university committees, subcommittees and task forces, I have attended and/or actively participated in the university senate, the university dean’s council, the provost’s academic planning task force, the digital literacy task force, the committee on salary and benefits, the committee on public/private partnerships, the committee on student transitions, several search committees, and the Lindquist College “working group #3” (on college-specific career resources and pathways), and the university economic development committee.

So far, my time at Weber State University has been extremely positive and even inspiring. Despite the Lindquist College being palpably under-resourced, under-staffed and with faculty constantly stretched thin, I have nevertheless observed since my arrival a unique and across-the-board commitment by faculty and staff to the university’s open-access mission and a deep devotion to helping students realize their goals and aspirations. This commitment is visible in everything we do, and I am sincerely honored to be a part of the college and WSU community.

Confronting Initial Personnel and Resource Challenges, Implementing Solutions

1. Turnover and personnel changes. I mentioned in my previous report, that upon arrival, the dean’s office had lost key employees during the summer before my arrival, including the budget specialist, the development director, and the Office of Cultural Affairs presenter. These departures translated into a significant loss of experience and institutional memory from which it took time to recover. It also created a lot of initial burden due to the many searches, the piling up of dean's office work due to the lack of personnel and/or delayed progress due to new-hire learning curves. Fortunately, the five department chairs, the advising office, Associate Dean, Becky Jo Gesteland and PR/Marketing Director, Christie Denniston were all instrumental in helping me to gain my initial footing after a difficult start.

Since those opening months, we have had a stable, high-functioning dean's office. Becky Jo, and now Amanda Sowerby (Becky Jo stepped down to take the leadership of CCEL), deftly managed the very disruptive changes in the university scholarship process and allocations, have provided excellent oversight of the ranking tenure process, have overseen the college curriculum process, and much more. Christie Denniston has been a close ally in developing a Lindquist College marketing and PR strategy that emphasizes our collective philosophy of combining deep learning in the liberal arts with viable career pathways. With the taglines “expecting the unexpected” and now “access to excellence” we have tried to capture the conundrum generated by our twin priorities of embracing all students no matter what their level of college preparation (access) and the active cultivation of our students’ full individual potential (ascending to excellence). Christie’s tireless work has included a revamping of college branding, the launch of the college’s first cohesive website, the creation of new professional-level printed materials, the expansion of PR and marketing into KUER radio and highway billboards, the management and monitoring of social media, the ongoing overhaul of the departmental websites for improved visibility and "search engine optimization," and much more. With seven years of experience in the dean's office, Christie brings extremely valuable insights, experience and vision to the dean’s office team. In addition, Chrissy Stice has invested time in fully learning WSU's budget systems and processes and is instrumental in helping me manage our resources, overseeing the audit process, working to ensure legal compliance with purchasing rules, and simplifying inter-departmental transactions.
One of the biggest challenges at the outset was the absence of a Development Director. After the departure of Yulia Volkanova, and with four failed searches due to salary challenges, I was for the better part of two school years without a development director until we finally landed Brent Parkin. With Brent’s arrival, I have been able to shift the bulk of the work of planning AHA! Board meetings and managing donor cultivation and fundraising back to the advancement office. I currently work closely with Brent in bi-monthly visits to donors, both locally and nationally. It is difficult to calculate the precise amounts we have received for the College because many of the donations are legacy gifts and some donations are ongoing or renewals. That said, we collected more than $900k in annual gifts last year, and are waiting on pledges of around $600-700k for the creation of the Matthew S. Browning Design Center.

As for the Office of Cultural Affairs (now Browning Presents!), there is still no salary to fill the lost director position. In the meantime, I have personally managed and provided the underlying vision for this office (which is to bring to campus fewer, but higher-level performers and speakers, have them work with faculty and students in short residencies, and amplify the Lindquist College’s stature across the state and beyond. Last year, we brought the Sean Jones Jazz Quarter, Ronan Farrow and The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge while this year we have invited: The Alicia Olatuja Jazz Quintet, The Dance Theatre of Harlem and NYT columnist, David Brooks.

Finally, in the wake of the discovery of sizeable Val A. Browning Center budget shortfalls and the departure of the previous director, we undertook a 360-degree external review and audit of the VBC, restructured over the course of the following year the VBC budgets, staffing/operations and director’s role, and we creatively enhanced the director’s salary in order to make a professional-level hire for the director role. The current director, James Craig, and a new front and back office staff have been in place a little over a year with dramatically improved results. The operations by all accounts are currently well managed, and the budgets are balanced, with excess profits we have addressed much-needed VBC stage and equipment improvements.

Developing and Implementing a College-Wide Strategic Plan
Beyond resolving initial personnel challenges upon arrival three years ago, the college also had to confront the sudden challenge of enrollment and budget declines. In the absence of a strategic plan, the Lindquist College immediately undertook a planning process that rigorously inventoried our opportunities and challenges and proceeded to establish a set of seven priorities designed to leverage Weber State University’s unique mission, programs and assets. With some minor revisions since the original launch in 2017, the foundational vision and mission can be summarized under 3 key rubrics: 1) Access to Excellence: we provide access to students of all abilities while remaining committed to academic excellence; 2) Curriculum and Teaching: we design programs and advising practices for traditional and non-traditional students with a renewed emphasis on high impact teaching and on student success initiatives via certifications, associates degrees, and CTE pathways; and 3) Graduate Outcomes: emphasize the powerful combination of liberal arts learning and professional skills (technical, entrepreneurship, management) for active civic engagement and enriching, sustainable careers.

Recent Topline Results of Strategic Planning Implementation:
Priorities 1 & 2. Recruitment and Retention. After two years, we are seeing measurable results, moving from a 2-3% decline in 2016 to significantly better year-on-year college enrollments. Last school year, we yielded a 6.1% increase in overall student headcounts (SCHs); a 0.4% increase in budget related, while self-supporting programs had a 32.9% increase. In the “majors” category, we increased 7.3% in primary majors while this fall our enrollments continue to grow modestly. Currently, we are one of two WSU colleges registering year-on-year enrollment growth. And I’m convinced that these results point to a well-designed plan and active and ongoing implementation by various Lindquist College offices, committees and individuals.
Priority 3: College-specific career resources and strategies. In conjunction with Career Services, we developed infrastructure for internship development and professionalizing experiences and have increased participation across the college annually by around 15%.
Priority 4: Updating Curriculum. We have created several new “hybrid” programs that leverage WSU’s dual mission by combining the liberal arts with tech or business skills. See details below.
**Priority 5: Faculty recruitment and retention.** We have emphasized faculty retention by stepping entry-level salaries by $1000 per year (moving from entry-level salaries at $50,000 in 2016 to $53,000 for next season of hires, increasing faculty development funding by 25%, and creating a college-level faculty development program. With the idea that student diversity will come with a diverse faculty, we have emphasized - and successfully hired for - faculty diversity, with a majority of hires the past two years being women and/or ethnic minorities.

**Priority 6: College PR & Marketing.** We have continued to develop a robust, college-level marketing strategy, updated college and departmental websites, created new college and departmental program collateral; produced new marketing videos; are using Browning Presents! and the Hurst artist-in-residency to project the college's profile in the community and beyond; we are leveraging a blend of social media; and partnering strategically with arts and humanities organizations to co-brand.

**Priority 7: Space, Equipment and Technology.** For the past two years, we have committed significant R&R and "year-end" capital funding to update classroom furniture and technologies, renew computer labs and equipment, improve lighting and sound technologies in the VB Center of Performing Arts. There is much more to do with the space / tech category as we are entirely out of space in all three of the college's buildings; we have a $2.5m backlog of repairs and equipment needs in the VBC; we will soon need a professional-level sound recording room at a price of approximately $1m. To relieve pressure for our BFA students, we have leased four studios in The Monarch in downtown Ogden on an experimental basis. We have also hired architects to conduct a space analysis and propose ideas for expansion across the entire college.

For the complete strategic planning "progress report," please go to this URL: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uWReyU1xZrlvLiH0SuaM-OeZpKdTbBgc/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uWReyU1xZrlvLiH0SuaM-OeZpKdTbBgc/view)

**The Financial Results of Strategic Planning:** Over the course of 16 hours of meetings with the provost and seven deans, we analyzed the strategic plans of every academic unit on campus for the purpose of allocating funding for new faculty lines. Last year, A&H received: 1) salary for a new tenure-track professor of film and 2) a named professorship (Ambrose Amos Shaw professorship) that includes $20,000 supplement for a localization position in Foreign Language. This year we received salary for a tenure-track position in data analytics/visualization to be situated in COMM.

The upshot is that due to our successful planning and measurable growth, the Lindquist College has received significant new salary funding over the past two years. In addition to provost office funding, we also received around $85,000 from Perkins Funding for equipment for our new Theatre Tech CTE pathway and for a second round of coding campus for Lindquist College students.

**How do we explain the College's success?** Although recruitment and retention are top priorities in our college strategic plan, we have also benefited from the university's efforts, with special support given by the Purple Carpet and Starfish initiatives. At the college level, we have continued to hold local events with high school counselors, CE students, high school leaders, and alumni. Individual departments have begun recruiting off campus, and we have also gotten better at using data to respond to student demand and to eliminate bottlenecks in scheduling. The advising office has been actively reaching out to students, conducting focus groups to learn how to better retain students, and improving communication to keep student attention focused on the essentials. In addition to this, we have also put significantly more resources into PR and Marketing, and Christie has been executing on all aspects of our marketing plan to attract and retain top-notch students. Finally, it is outstanding faculty members, staff and advisors who have the biggest impact on students and their desire to pursue the arts and humanities.

**Some Supporting A&H Statistics:**

**Figure 1.** Notice the downward pressures on enrollments across the entire university while the Lindquist College is keeping ahead of other colleges with more than a 1.5% increase in Student Headcounts (SCH) over last year.
**Figure 2:** This table shows the growth of each department over the past two years, with an impressive grand total of 5.5% for undergraduate (FTE) enrollments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Select Reporting Level</th>
<th>% Change in FTE</th>
<th>% Change in Major Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>WSU Overall</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>-6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-7.1%</td>
<td>-6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td>-8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3:** This table shows the growth in student participation in Internships and Professionalizing Experiences as measured by their registration in an internship course. My time at WSU started in 2016, which coincided with the "trough" in the middle of the graph. The steady recovery (of 15.4% during the past year) is no doubt related to the internship infrastructure we immediately put in place in 2016:
Other College Updates and Improvement:
The **AHA! College Advisory Board**. The purpose of this board (composed of donors and "friends of the college") is to advise the dean's office and to help with public relations and fundraising. In order to keep the board members informed of "cool stuff" happening in the college, I have been calling on faculty and students to do brief presentations at board meetings. To date, each of the departments has showcased its outstanding work and fundable projects. We also hold a couple of special receptions and events for the AHA! Board to keep them connected to the Lindquist College. This was especially challenging during the two years without the assistance of a development director. As for the future, we continue to work on the board becoming a more active fundraising arm of the College, expanding membership and changing the composition to diversify membership. The AHA! Board has been generous to the Lindquist College in large gifts and also in support of the AHA! Awards to faculty, staff, students, alums and friends of the Lindquist College.

**Hurst Residency**. Artist residencies are unique and extremely valuable asset for recruitment and retention of students and faculty. They are also a terrific example of high impact teaching, a networking opportunity, and a source of inspiration and insider knowledge. To improve an already great program, we created a faculty and community advisory board for the planning and vetting of residencies. We have also worked to boost the profile of guest artists to attract the attention of the public (for events) and of prospective students. Last year, we had the internationally renowned artist Jane Kim on campus for one month to work with students and alums on the Monarch Migrating Mural project, Spanish novelist Espido Freire, world-renowned poet, Tyehimba Jess, John Rickford to screen his documentary, Talkin' Black in America, and more. This coming year we have Susanna Castleden, a famous Australian printmaker, Ada Limon, a nationally renowned Latinx poet, and Ruth E. Carter, the costume designer for Black Panther, Amistad and other well-known Hollywood films.

**Building Capital Equipment Budgets**. One of the oddities of Weber State University is there is essentially no inventory of capital equipment and no fixed budget to cover maintenance and updating of capital equipment. Such expenses have traditionally been covered by course fees, unallotted salary funding and R&R funding (essentially a holding account for unused unallotted salaries). The problem with the current budgeting system is that due to the lack of inventory, we have no idea how much is required from one year to the next, and therefore no clear budget visibility to plan. We are also often on the radar of state auditors due to the way course fees have been used to cover capital equipment—for which course fees were not originally designed.

In order to be on solid footing when the current course fee structure changes (and likely excludes capital equipment from its purview), I have undertaken a complete inventory of all Lindquist College capital equipment, the life cycles of the equipment and their associated replacement costs. We have plotted this information in Excel on a 30-year time window to discover the precise annual amounts needed to replace/maintain/update our equipment. We have just completed the study of E-Hall; we’re currently working on the Kimball Visual Arts Center; we will then proceed to the VBC. Our initial result is that the annual amount needed for E-Hall alone is $188,000 while our capital equipment budget is around $50,000 for the entire college. You can see the challenge.

**Annual Faculty Activity Reports or FARs**. Last year we switched from the paper FAR to a Qualtrics form in order to extract and sort useful reporting data. Based on faculty comments, the document was edited. Version 2.0 is now ready for distribution.

**Faculty annual reviews & annual raises**. Having a number assigned to an annual performance is an annoyance; yet it is required by WSU when merit pay is involved. In addition to the numerical rating, I also attach a letter with some personalized comments on annual performance. We have tried to make the process as honest, equitable, and generous as possible but we are also open to suggestions if faculty have concerns.

**Lindquist College Faculty Development**. We continue to hold a series of four college-level meetings for new faculty members, the result of which is a personal "faculty development plan" to help new faculty optimize the
three areas of responsibility (teaching, research, and service) and to chart a clear course to tenure and beyond. We are in the process of creating something analogous for new staff members and college administrators.

**Faculty Development (Travel) Funding.** We have recently experimented with boosting the traditional $1000 for conference or research travel to $1250, and, on the suggestion of Working Group 5, we are offering the option of doubling the funding in a given year at the price of forgoing funding for the following year. As we bump up against the budget limits of faculty development funding, the COC and I have decided to prioritize allocations to 1) attendance at conferences where the faculty member is giving a presentation or is an officer of the organization and 2) research trips or conferences papers that lead to publication. If there is no publication (or forthcoming publication) after four research trips or conference presentations, we will ask that faculty members forego further college-sponsored travel to work on a peer-reviewed publication.

**Faculty grant-writing resources:** The past two years I have offered $600 to faculty members who attend an OSP grant-writing workshop and who write a grant proposal for submission. We have had one significant grant awarded from this process so far: $165,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to improve business language instruction in the Foreign Language Department.

**The Dual-Language Immersion "Bridge" Program:** The program, which was designed to bridge high school students to college-level foreign language study, is experiencing rapid growth across the state and in our region. The Lindquist College has been one of the state’s strongest supporters of the program, but we are concerned about resource demands left uncovered by the State of Utah.

**Beverly Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program:** This program, directed by Tamara Goldbogen, is poised to experience explosive growth in Davis County over the next few years, which will require more space and more resources. It will also bring exciting opportunities to our arts students in the form of internships and careers. I am working with the College development director and President Mortensen to address the management of the projected growth.

**Support of College Faculty and Student Events.** One of the joys of the dean’s position is open access to all of the wonderful events. I have enjoyed attending and supporting more than 300 events annually. I also regularly do welcomes and/or introductions when asked.

**Interdisciplinary Programming.** The Lindquist College continues to lead out on interdisciplinary initiatives and community engaged learning. We have offered the most WSU courses; our faculty continue to develop the most CEL designated courses; and I continue to organize Browning Presents! events to align with CCEL themes and Honors Program initiatives. We also created a virtual “interdisciplinary” department within the Lindquist College in which to situate the new Film Studies program and future interdisciplinary projects.

**Coding Camps for A&H Students:** We have received a total of $47,000 from Perkins the past two years to fund creative “coding camps” for Arts & Humanities students. This is in partnership with EAST and for the purpose of helping students gain much-needed coding skills and curricular incubation. So far, the reviews have demonstrated that the camps have been a success.

**Public Humanities/Town and Gown.** Since my arrival at WSU, I have been named to the board of directors of Utah Humanities (the state chapter of the NEH) and to Weber County’s Creative Alliance and Ogden First Arts. I have worked with each of these organizations to promote the arts and humanities in our community, to forge ties with new stakeholders, and to reinforce our campus’s town and gown efforts. I mentioned above that we have rented space in the Monarch Building in the 9 Rails Creative District because we are out of space on campus for our BFA students and because many of us think that collaboration between Weber State University and the Ogden City’s Creative District will prove fruitful.

**Curriculum Development.** The Lindquist College has been busy with the creation and updating of curriculum
grounded in the crossover philosophy of combining liberal arts with technical skills. Some of the new programs launched last year (2018-19) include: BA Spanish Translation, Sound Production/Recording Minor, AS and AA options in Workplace Communication & Writing. And this fall 2019, we have launched: BA Film Studies, AS Theatre Tech, AA Localization, Minor Literary Editing, Minor Music Studies, and a “Certificate of Proficiency” in: ASL, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Jazz Studies and Music Entrepreneurship. We have also expanded our traditional forensics program into individual events and other forms of college debate.

**Advising.** I meet regularly with the Lindquist College advisors on ways to improve college advising and on developing an internal strategic plan and metrics for better retention and smoother pathways to graduation. In early 2019, the advising team and I traveled to a 3-day NACADA Assessment Institute in Phoenix to learn from peers and to work on this project.

**Graduate Programs:** The Masters of Professional Communication continues to have robust enrollments and graduate success stories. Masters of English has seen a downward trend in enrollments over the past few years, but is suddenly on the upswing due to various curricular tweaks and renewed attention to recruitment strategy by the new director.

**Teaching.** It is important for me to stay connected to teaching and to students. Last year, I was able to teach an Honors class, Making Sense of the News in spring 2018, and this fall I’m teaching a cross-disciplinary course titled Gothic Marriage in British, American and French Literature. It’s exciting to be back in the classroom.

**Research.** I also think it’s important for dean to actively engage in research and writing. In 2017, I co-published a book chapter on the global liberal arts titled “Study Abroad, Abroad: Leading the Global Liberal Arts in Paris,” at the American University of Cairo Press; I presented a paper titled "Balzac and the British Gothic Novel" at Oxford University in spring 2018, which was accepted for publication as "Balzac et le roman gothique anglais" in the French journal, Année Balzacienne; I wrote an Introduction titled "Writing in the Humanities at Weber State University" for the new WSU 1010 Composition textbook; I was recently invited to a weeklong Cérisy-la-Salle conference in France next summer; and I am nearing completion of a book titled Balzac, Desire After Religion: a philosophy of subjectivity for the secular age for Michigan State University Press

**Top Eight College Goals for the Coming Year**
1. Focus attention on supporting existing programs and setting new programs on solid foundations
2. Gradually adding resource-neutral CTE pathways and associate degrees
3. Figuring out ways to better address the needs of non-traditional students with different scheduling and online courses
4. Lock in funds for the Design Center and launch its programming
5. Work on having college assessment comply with the new standards
6. Develop our next marketing plan around the idea of Access to Excellence
7. Finish our college advising plan and focus on implementation
8. Find funding to support faculty lines in high growth areas (DOVAD is next in line)

Thank you for reading this report. I thoroughly enjoy working with the faculty and staff of the Lindquist College, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as dean.

Scott Sprenger
Dean of Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities