

Dear colleagues,

The introduction of a summer University Assembly follows President's Council's recognition that too many important things happen in the summer months (especially with respect to enrollment, retention, and budget) to justify the gap between campus-wide meetings in May and October.

Because a summer meeting is especially difficult for many to attend, President's Council compiled some key take-aways from this week's meeting, which we offer below. Please check with a supervisor, dean, or vice president if you have any questions. We'll also follow up on all of these items when we reconvene in the Fall.

ENROLLMENT

As the Strategic Enrollment plan indicates, we are in a competitive enrollment environment which we know will only get more challenging leading up to 2024-25, the year when major demographic transitions are expected to hit institutions of higher education across the country.

As you may recall from May's University Assembly, our entering class is a bit smaller than anticipated, although the revenue per student is higher than projected. As we do every year, we are monitoring enrollment closely. This year's entering class is registering at a slower pace than preceding years which is making it difficult to pin down the size of the class. For this reason, our enrollment numbers on the 10th day of the semester (the date universities formally report the official number of enrolled students) will be important to monitor.

BUDGET

We are addressing one systemic budgeting issue this summer: a past accounting practice that we have corrected for after President Belton tasked our new Associate Vice President for Finance, Patrick Gehring, with helping us better understand why we have been unable to build unrestricted resources despite significant fundraising and endowment growth. We have been able to partially offset the consequences of the past practice within the financial aid budget--thanks to changes in the Washington State Need Grant, revisions we enacted to our financial award matrix last year, and because we built a contingency into the budget.

In addition, campus leaders have been hard at work this summer, collaboratively identifying areas for potential savings, new revenue, and new ways of organizing our work. While we will continue to move quickly to implement changes (both temporary and permanent) that will help us achieve a balanced budget this year, our focus remains on

developing a multi-year approach to identifying and implementing growth opportunities and efficiencies.

Our budgeting process must be dynamic to meet the realities of enrollment management in higher education today. It is no longer sufficient to set a budget in November and assume that it will remain unchanged through May or September.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

We have made several organizational and personnel changes, creating greater efficiencies and, in some cases, eliminating positions.

The search for a Vice President for Administrative Services has been canceled. Instead, administrative services will be split into two areas: Finance/Business Operations, led by Associate Vice President for Finance Patrick Gehring (reporting to the President), and Administrative Services (Human Resources, Facilities, Information Technology, and Risk Management) led by Teri Phillips as Chief Operating Officer, reporting to the President. Gretchen Howell, Director of Human Resources, will lead Human Resources.

Ardys Curtis is now our Chief Information Officer (CIO), reporting directly to Teri Phillips. Having a CIO will allow us to be more efficiently structured and focused on information technology going forward.

University Relations and the Office of the Provost are collaborating to create an Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects. Following a program review by the National Council of University Research Administrators, we will soon move forward with hiring an experienced director and appropriate support personnel. This is an exciting investment in faculty development, and will also generate revenue for the university.

Another organizational shift aligns our institutional research efforts more directly with the Office of the Registrar. We have dissolved the Office of Institutional Research and appointed Kevin Berg to serve as Associate Dean for Institutional Research and Records. In that role, he will lead our institutional research efforts, help us attend to issues like data integrity and security, and assist in providing vision for the Office of the Registrar. Kelly Poth will be our new Registrar, reporting to Kevin.

In a related move, Karen McConnell, Dean of the School of Education and Kinesiology, will assume the additional role of Accreditation Liaison Officer while we complete our Year 1 report due September 15.

Many thanks to Patrick, Teri, Gretchen, Ardys, Kevin, Kelly, and Karen for their continued exemplary service to this university.

NEXT STEPS

We will continue to invest in new programs, program expansions, and the recommendations brought forth in the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

We will also continue to work with our consultant on our pricing sensitivity analysis, with a final report expected in early August which will help inform our pricing/revenue going forward (2021 and beyond).

The draft university strategic plan will be shared with the campus for input and feedback this fall, with the goal of finalizing the plan by the end of the calendar year. This plan will inform strategic investments, annual fundraising initiatives, and campaign priorities.

We are open to all of your ideas and welcome your suggestions for efficiencies and revenue growth, not just now, but on an ongoing basis. Please share any ideas with your supervisor, director, dean, or vice president. As President Belton offered during our meeting, he welcomes conversation with you directly, too.