WVU’s 2010 Plan, “Building the Foundation for Academic Excellence,” is now familiar to faculty, staff and administrators throughout the University.

The plan guides decision-making and helps prioritize among the many competing opportunities for institutional investment. The 2010 Plan is comprehensive in nature but focused on the importance of maintaining and enriching the strong academic core of WVU.

The high-quality education available to WVU students and resulting value of a WVU degree has led to record enrollment this fall. In surveys of students and parents, respondents cite the reputation of academic programs as the most important factor in deciding which school students will attend.

Students are choosing WVU over alternative institutions because of the availability of contemporary curricula based within the colleges. Excellent classroom teaching and numerous opportunities for faculty-student interaction provide students with the education they need for success in and out of the classroom.

The second strategic goal of WVU’s 2010 Plan emphasizes the importance of recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty to build the foundation for academic excellence. The faculty have ownership of the development and delivery of student-centered curriculum. Interaction between faculty and students stimulates the University’s teaching, research and service missions.

During this period of growth, it is critical that WVU remain nationally competitive for highly qualified faculty. The institutional commitment to a strong faculty results in more dynamic graduate and undergraduate education and increases the national reputation of WVU. Staff fulfill many critical roles at the institution, and students and faculty rely on them to study and teach effectively. All staff assist in recruiting and retaining students through their dedication and professionalism.

As the economic structure of the University changes, tuition from student enrollment helps fund academic innovation, infrastructure projects, and operating costs. The pay raises for faculty and staff, effective Oct. 1, are possible because of record student enrollment.

The WVU 2010 Plan implementation team invites you to learn more about the WVU 2010 Plan by going online (http://www.wvu.edu/~2010plan/).

WVU is investing heavily to enhance its academic reputation. New opportunities for students, including the Center for Civic Engagement and the Honors College, and to the campus, such as classroom renovations designed to facilitate faculty-student interactions, are only a few examples of the investments made during 2005-06.

This article was submitted by the 2010 Implementation Team: Gerald Lang and Lawrence Hornak, co-chairs; Mary Ellen Maze; Christopher Plein; Laura Brady; and Terry Nebel.

Revised salary increase welcome, but much remains to be done

Prior to my presentation to the Board of Governors Sept. 8, I was asked: “Why the forums?” The answer can be found in the July Staff Council meeting, when members suggested approaching President David Hardesty for his approval to hold a classified staff forum.

The three forums held Aug. 8 gave classified employees the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding salaries, decreasing state general revenue funding and the zero-step lawsuit. Most important was a discussion about the lack of state funding for the 2001 classified staff salary schedule.

As a result of the forums, staff in attendance approved of Staff Council’s request to support a $6.5 million pool of money toward the funding of the 2001 salary schedule for the 2007 fiscal year and the remaining $6.5 million in 2008.

The BOG had previously approved a 3 percent pool during the June meeting. This salary plan would provide about $2.4 million for staff. With the forum data shared with WVU administration, I believe this provided enough information for a revised salary plan to be considered by the BOG.

In August, the BOG approved a salary plan based on the marginal revenue from the growth in enrollment at WVU and our regional campuses. No state funds were appropriated for salary increases in 2006.

Each campus is authorized a 4.2 percent pool (an increase from the original 3 percent) for classified staff. A pool of 4 percent was approved for both faculty and nonclassified employees.

The staff salary increase plan is based on:

- A percentage of 20.54 percent of the difference between current salary and proper placement on the 2001 schedule
- No staff receiving less than $1,000 unless the increase amount exceeds placement on the schedule
- Employees making less than $20,000 receiving an additional amount up to $500 but not to exceed their placement on the schedule. This provided for a minimum guarantee of up to $1,500 for those making less than $20,000 per year and who are below their placement on the schedule.
- A total 67 percent of classified staff either receiving $1,000 or a pro-rated $1,000 if employed nine months or working less than the standard 37.5 hours weekly.

Considering the availability of funds, this is the best increase staff has received since the implementation of the 2001 salary schedule. There is much work ahead to meet classified staff’s goal of fully funding the schedule by 2008.

During the forums, classified employees were encouraged to send letters and e-mail to me in support of a $6.5 million pool. The intent was for me to take these with me in support of Staff Council’s position during my Sept. 8 presentation before the BOG.

As of Sept. 8, I had received 112 letters and 361 e-mails from staff asking the BOG to support full funding of the salary schedule by 2008.

I believe this board is supportive and understands the need to take a more active role in staff salary plans. The board and its chair are committed to addressing staff and faculty salary funding. I believe that with their support you will see improvements in 2007.

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