

April 24, 2006

TO: Campus Community

FR: Strategic Planning Implementation Team
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RE: **Strategic Plan Letter 1: An Update on Enrollment, Financial Planning, and the Academic Plan**

As you may be aware, the WVU Board of Governors approved West Virginia University's strategic planning document at its September 2005 meeting. A copy of WVU's 2010 Plan, Building the Foundation for Academic Excellence, may be viewed at [<http://www.wvu.edu/~acadaff/>].

Since the beginning of October, the Implementation Team has been meeting nearly weekly to initiate the multiple actions that the Plan embodies. A progress report was provided to the Board of Governors and the Faculty Senate in February. As part of the implementation process, the Team will provide reports to the campus community periodically. This is our first report.

As a prelude to the contents of this report, you will find:

- Reference to a salary increase for 2006-07 for faculty, staff and graduate students
- Enrollment targets for individual colleges and schools, as well as strategies to enhance academic quality
- Establishment of three new task forces: Graduate Education, Advising and Career Placement, Administrative Infrastructure for Research
- Establishment of an Honors College
- New program to attract National Merit Scholars
- New center to support academic-based service learning and volunteerism
- New advising office to mentor students for prestigious fellowships
- Major investments in classrooms and technology across campus

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Enrollment Goals and Financial Stability

The 2010 Plan includes an appendix identifying West Virginia University's enrollment goals for 2010. A 30,000 student body is the target; this total includes 1500 students at Potomac State College and at least 600 undergraduate students enrolled in distance education programs. This spring semester, the University's Enrollment Management Council and our national consultant met individually with each dean to set out an enrollment target for each college and school. It is important that each college contribute appropriately to the institutional target. Further, as the institution grows, we will strive to enhance the quality of the student body, both undergraduate and graduate students. Our college's leaders have responded with exceptional openness and commitment to their target goals.

Why is enrollment so important? Quite simply, student enrollment drives the University's financial plan, which is also included in the appendix of the 2010 Plan. It is through our enrollment plan that we have the ability to build a stronger academic foundation for excellence.

The financial plan is predicated on a 2% increase in state-appropriated general revenues to be used for faculty and staff salaries. The 2% is not in the FY07 budget. The legislature did fully support the annualizing of last year's average \$900 pay increase and provided funding for the annual increment for faculty. Other special projects were also supported by the legislature and Governor. Any new revenues for general operation must again come primarily from tuition and fee increases, underscoring the critical importance of enrollment to the financial stability of the institution. With limited state revenues and tuition and fees becoming the primary source of new revenue, WVU's revenue base is becoming more like a private institution each year. Our purpose, however, remains the same: as the state's flagship land-grant university our mission is to deliver high quality academic and service programs while focusing on student-centeredness, recruitment, and retention. It is critical that all campus personnel recognize that each has a responsibility to contribute to our mission.

It is important to emphasize that student recruitment and retention does not mean that we lower our academic standards so that we will have more students enrolled. In fact, we believe that the quality of education we already deliver along with some new initiatives will result in even better qualified students attending WVU. We do not see increasing student enrollment and enhancing the quality of our educational programs as mutually exclusive goals. We have achieved both over the last several years.

Salary Increases and Other Investments

An average 3% annual salary increase (performance-based for faculty; schedule-based for staff) is part of the financial plan through 2010. With increases in fringe benefits, this will be a significant expenditure. Depending on our enrollment levels for the Fall Semester, the University plans on implementing the 3% average increase as noted above for faculty and staff effective October 2006.

A plan to increase graduate student stipends is also being implemented. Each year for the next four years, the minimum stipend will increase by \$600. This increase is a joint commitment by the central administration and the leadership of our deans.

We also intend to push forward with a new 10-year Campus Master Plan, which goes to the Board of Governors for approval in the fall 2006 semester. We must continue to upgrade the campus facilities, including the information technology infrastructure, to have the facilities needed to attract new faculty and to recruit the very best students.

Finally, it should be noted that in response to the growth in enrollment, some 50 new positions have been committed across the campus to better serve our students.

Comments on the Academic Plan

Aligning College/School Plans with the University's Plan

Just as the development of the strategic plan was a collaborative process, so too is its implementation. The Implementation Team began its work by thoroughly reviewing the goals of the 2010 Plan and then initiating a series of written exchanges with the dean of each college and school.

In November, the deans responded with a written analysis of their college/school as related to the five goals of the 2010 Plan.

In December, the deans laid out plans to incorporate strategic planning in their college/school, involving faculty and staff to align their college/school with the 2010 Plan. Strategic planning and all that it entails must become part of the day-to-day work of every campus community member. In essence, as the financial base for WVU begins to look more like that of a private institution, we need to think strategically in our decision making and with an eye toward academic quality, the very best service delivery, and fiscal responsibility.

As noted previously, a progress report was shared with the Board of Governors and the Faculty Senate in February. That report contained much of the information noted in this memo.

In March, each dean responded to a series of questions related to Goal 1. Their reports focused on identifying college experiential learning opportunities and new retention strategies, as well as plans for improving graduation rates and marketing programs of national reputation. Each college is beginning to quantify its baseline and establish targets for 2010. This exercise begins the process of uncovering the critical elements that will improve our measures of success.

Newly Formed Task Forces

Each of the above reports has been most useful in identifying issues, challenges, and opportunities. In some cases, the similar issues identified by different colleges indicated a problem of institutional importance.

As a result, three separate task forces have been or will be established.

1. The Provost's Task Force on Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience will be chaired by Larry Hornak and Fred King.
2. A Joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs Task Force on Advising and Career Placement will be co-chaired by Cheryl Torsney and Tricia Petty.
3. The President's Task Force on Administrative Infrastructure for the Research Enterprise will be co-chaired by Vice Presidents Weese and Weete.

The charge and composition of each task force are located at [<http://www.wvu.edu/~acadaff/>].

Outline of the Report Card

An annual Report Card is one way to measure progress and demonstrate accountability. It is the institution's assessment document where we share with the campus community and external constituents both our achievements and areas in need of improvement. Using this process we can examine our quantifiable data and develop new strategies to improve our outcome measures of success.

The Implementation Team has worked to establish the framework of the Report Card for the 2010 Plan. That document was shared with the Board of Governors and is also available for review at [<http://www.wvu.edu/~acadaff/>].

Some Actions To-date

Several actions have already occurred as a result of the 2010 Plan. Several are outlined below as examples.

1. Honors College. To aid in recruiting high-quality students, the Honors Program was reorganized as the Honors College. The College will function much as the Honors Program did. No degrees will be awarded by the new College, but the College will reexamine how it supports honors students. The new status as a College helps convey the recognition associated with the distinction of being an Honors student.
2. New Scholarship Program. A new scholarship program is being instituted to attract more National Merit Scholars to WVU. In addition to a direct scholarship,

- a unique part of this program will be the opportunity for two study-abroad experiences. Each student will have the opportunity to participate in an expense-paid spring semester study-abroad trip through Student Affairs in their first year. Between their junior and senior year, each student's college will offer an expense-paid study-abroad experience. We believe these experiences are unique and will set WVU apart from other institutions. This effort is consistent with our effort to recruit outstanding students.
3. Center for Civic Engagement. The Office of Service Learning has been reorganized as the Center for Civic Engagement. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina indicated that our campus needed a way to support student volunteers who want to serve our community and society at large. The new Center will continue to support academic-based service learning as well as volunteer efforts.
 4. Fellowship and Graduate School Advising. Through the Honors College, we are establishing an advising office that focuses on preparing undergraduate students for prestigious fellowships and graduate school. This is a two-fold initiative. WVU has a strong tradition of its students competing at the very highest levels nationally. This office will help identify prospective students and work with key faculty advisors to help prepare students for the fellowship application process. Similarly, many of our students are focused on graduate and professional school. Here the effort will be to provide generic information to students sooner so they can plan better for their post-baccalaureate education. This new advising function will focus on encouraging students to think about their career pathways throughout the undergraduate experience.
 5. Faculty Compensation Initiatives. The 2010 Plan recognizes that to recruit and retain high-quality faculty, WVU must strengthen its compensation plan. The salary discrepancy between WVU and our peers is currently greater than at the end of Senate Bill 547. To help rectify this discrepancy, a program was initiated to recognize continued academic achievement of faculty at the professorial rank. The aim of this program is to make a difference for those who consistently work at a level of meritorious performance. This year, 92 individuals in the general university benefited from this program and will receive a 7.5% increase for the 2007 fiscal year.
 6. Classrooms and Technology. Goal 3 of the 2010 Plan focuses on enhancing the educational environment for learning. As part of the renovation of academic facilities, new classrooms are being developed that encourage learning in other ways beyond the traditional lecture. Even in the lecture environment, new technology is being installed to enhance the educational process. Newly designed classrooms will be part of the Allen Hall, Ogelbay Hall, and Brooks Hall renovations. A new classroom building will be added to Ogelbay Hall. Additionally, this year nearly \$1,750,000 will be invested to renovate classrooms. For each year of the next four years we anticipate investing \$1,000,000 in

classroom enhancements throughout the campus. This estimate does not include investments that college/schools will also make.

Across our campus, it is clear that all colleges and schools are making strategic planning a part of WVU's values. Our future as an institution depends on our commitment to serve students by providing a quality education. It is through the goals of the strategic plan that West Virginia University can build academic excellence and achieve greater national recognition.

The Implementation Team thanks the campus community for their support and active participation.