

## **REPORT TO THE PROVOST: STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE EBERLY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES—May 4, 2007**

The West Virginia University Strategic Plan was completed in 2005 and provided a guide for the university's future growth and development through 2010. I was appointed Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences in spring of 2005, and upon that appointment decided, based upon my interviews at WVU, that it was important for the college, departments and programs to have strategic plans that complemented the University Plan. Therefore, during the summer before I arrived as Dean, I asked each departmental chair or program director to send me a bulleted listing of what he/she perceived to be the department/program's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the future. Once I received this information, I had a phone conversation with each of the chairs and program directors to discuss their perceptions that had been delineated. In addition, during my first month at WVU, I met with each of them in their offices to further discuss the material they had sent me.

Given the information I had on the college and the fact that I had been appointed as a member of the Provost's Strategic Plan implementation committee, I began drafting a college strategic plan using the goals of the university plan. This "draft" plan was shared with the Provost, all department chairs and program directors, the associate deans and the assistant deans, and, of course, with the faculty at the fall 2005 faculty meeting. Input was solicited and changes were made in the plan based upon the advice given by the various constituencies. At the same time the college was drafting its plan, I asked each department and program to develop a short plan based upon the university and college plans. Those plans were received in the Dean's office during spring semester of 2006. However, some departments such as Political Science continued to develop aspects of their plans such as modifying and assessing their curriculum into the 2006-2007 academic year. Moreover, within a year after the University Strategic Plan was developed, the college, departments, and programs were operating with plans that were modeled and followed the university plan.

Once these plans were in place, it became critical to ensure not only that the plans set priorities for the ECAS but also that these priorities were implemented. One theme throughout these plans and was also heard as a theme during the SWO analysis was the need to increase graduate stipends. This is needed to recruit quality graduate students and to ensure good teaching in the undergraduate classes taught by graduate assistants. To this end the university has increased graduate stipends with university funding, but the ECAS has added approximately \$400,000 to the stipends for our graduate students. In addition, departments have also contributed funding to increase graduate stipends from their entrepreneurial accounts.

At the end of each academic year department chairs, program directors, assistant and associate deans are asked to do a self assessment of their previous year's goals, and then the Dean will evaluate these self assessments. Based upon last year's assessments, all of these ECAS administrators are continually working to implement their plans. Much of

this has been made possible by hiring new faculty which is the most critical priority for the college and is Goal Two of all the plans (recruitment and retention of faculty). We continue to work on the latter—retention of faculty—and we have only had four faculty to leave us in the last two years. In addition, we have worked diligently on Goal One of the plans (recruitment and retention of quality students). ECAS developed an enrollment management plan that sets targets for our college enrollments through 2010, and we are pleased to report we are ahead of our yearly targets. In terms of Goal Three of our plans, we have established a college wide task force on technology that ask each department to create a technology plan that emphasizes classroom use of technology. Those plans have been completed and are now being implemented. We also established a college task force on extended learning, and we are now implementing the recommendations of that group (Goal Three of the University and College plans). At least once, if not more during the academic year, the chairs and program directors report at the monthly administrative meeting on the progress they are making toward implementation of their strategic plans.

In terms of Goal Four with its emphasis on research, we have hired a grants coordinator for the college with funds reallocated from another staff position, and we have worked to increase funding in the social sciences and humanities through the establishment of two college task forces. Finally, in terms of Goal Five we have a major emphasis on reaching out to the K-12 public school system in West Virginia. The Department of Mathematics and English have both had major initiatives in this area, and in order to continue to build on their efforts we have added additional faculty in math education and hired our first tenure line faculty members in English Education and Biology Education. Our goal is to work to generate external funding related to our efforts with K-12.

Finally, in the summer of 2005 we compiled our first annual report for the college. In this report we have outlined our college strategic plan and reported accomplishments for each goal, objective and strategy for the first year. We are currently in the process of compiling our second annual report, and it, too, will report on the accomplishments toward the college strategic plan over the past year. The annual report also allows each of our programs and departments to report on their accomplishments in addition to reporting on the research and external funding of our faculty.

In total, we use our strategic plans on a daily basis to make decisions based upon the priorities of the plan. I am so pleased when I hear a chair, who was not enthused about creating a strategic plan, now make decisions based upon whether a new hire really fits within the parameters of the departmental plan and priorities.