Dear Colleagues,

*From the Provost’s Sampler*

- **Central Today – Must View Daily Reading.** Over the years, faculty and staff wonder how can we achieve optimal communication? There is a reticence to put multiple email announcements regularly in everyone's inbox. One can assume that many of these announcements, publications, awards, news, opportunities, and celebrations would be unread. About two years ago, after much testing, one communication per day – the Central Today – was posted. Faculty, staff and administrators had input into the design and content and the result has been a good mixture of need to know common announcements and news stories. Central Today is accessible to anyone who wants to post an event or announcement. The At the Heart of It columns are announced and linked on Central Today because it is our common source of communication. If the AHOI columns were sent out on faculty list serves it would be excluding the staff, and that is unacceptable. I find much in Central Today for which to be grateful for the information it provides. This week I am going to include in the supporting documents Valerie Chapman's excellent summary of some highlights from 2014, “CWU Year in Review: Highlights of 2014.” Highlights are a difficult challenge because there is much more material than one can reasonably include in a brief article. However, Valerie does a wonderful job of providing the range of our community activities and the high quality of achievements.

- **Searches Updates.** There is a new Dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies, Dr. Paul Ballard has been appointed as CWU’s new dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies to start on April 1. Paul completed his doctorate and master of Education degrees at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He comes to CWU directly from Metropolitan State University of Denver, where he served as associate dean in the College of Professional Studies and as acting associate vice president for Enrollment Services. I want to thank the current dean, Connie Lambert for stepping up and serving for three extra months – it is much appreciated. We also welcome Stacey Robertson, new dean of the College of Arts and Humanities who joins us on February 1st. Please keep your eyes on Central Today for announcements on the extended International Studies Executive Director search for candidate visits in early February.

*At the Heart of It: “Budget 101 (c): A Brief Primer on Cost Reductions”*

One of the five budget processes (see AHOI column - 10/20/14 1:6) in ASL this year is reducing costs. Done fairly and well, streamlining functions can reduce costs.

As you will recall, CWU developed a multi-year budget flight plan, approved by the Trustees that was predicated on state tuition law that placed some authority to increase tuition in the hands of governing boards. While some public universities raised their tuition as much as 20%, Central planned a more measured incline for student tuition increases. Our flight plan worked very well--until the legislature suspended the law, creating the budget gap we've been struggling to fill.

We proudly are an access-based with a strong commitment to academic quality. The cabinet firmly believes that the wage adjustments bargained for faculty and classified staff is critical. That's why—even in the face of a dramatic turnaround by the state legislature—we are not considering reducing these salary increases! We have quality faculty and classified staff and will
continue to support and enhance their situation to the best of our ability. Toward that end, we are working diligently to find a way to increase staff compensation, when funding allows.

Fortunately, we also have a president who is helping us to understand our capacity to generate the funding we need by leveraging our educational experience and knowledge. Please view the supporting document, "Optimizing Institutional Budget Models," to understand that the many institutions in North America are adopting elements of this stewardship of tuition and state funds.

Thus, the main ASL focus this year has been strategic financing, which is why change is happening much more quickly than normal. In his 2015 State of the University Address, President Gaudino mentioned the importance of ensuring that overhead costs have been thoroughly analyzed in order to deploy as many resources as possible to direct student services, particularly academic instruction. As one non-ASL example he mentioned the I-CAT project that already has saved time, materials and real costs to Central.

Academic and Student Life (ASL) is contributing revenue enhancements, cost savings, and budgetary reductions to carry out our responsibility. Our primary goal is to minimize impacts to students. One important focus area is student retention that will both enhance revenue and student success. Another significant ASL cost reduction is the optimization of course scheduling and course loading. The associate deans are working with chairs and departments to refine plans for course optimization and more intentional program planning, based on multiyear analyses of course capacities. For example, if three sections of a course are taught in a single term with a capacity of 30 and each section fills out at 20, then consolidating the course sections to two could allow a survey or a gateway course to be taught instead.

Clearly, the pattern of students enrolled in the courses provides good information for departments to better plan cycles of course offerings. Another result of this activity is that we actually are posting four-year schedules on which students can base their academic planning. Students who want to change majors, for example, can estimate what will be the timing, trajectories, and costs. The posting of the four year course scheduling will not only result in cost reductions but in better advising practices by our faculty advisors and professional advising center. Why is retention a cost saving? Student retention optimizes instructional costs, auxiliary services, and, most important, it fulfills our promise to the students who should be graduating (see AHOI column 10/27/14 1:7 on Student Advising and Student Retention). The Provost's Council has been discussing other measures to keep true to our values, while adapting to new budget realities, including academic retention initiatives.

I recently came upon a CWU survey conducted during one of the first dramatic state disinvestments in 2008-2009. The survey was conducted during winter/spring terms of 2009. How thoughtful and at times prescient were the comments! 559 people made suggestions and the suggestions were reported in a summary: Facilities (48 suggestions), Information Technology (36), Academics (94), Administration/Staff (110), Miscellaneous (167). A few examples:

**Summary of Cost Savings & Revenue Generating Suggestions Received**

*Some excerpts:*

**4/27/2009**

85. Consider having the CWU Kent program moved to/subsumed under the CWU Des Moines program

86. Consider creating a degree that takes into account work experience to attract older nontraditional students

**5/4/2009**

88. Evaluate awards to determine value added to the university
89. Perform cost analysis to determine if the FTE generated by extended degree centers covers the overhead costs at those locations

5/25/2009

91. Consider establishing three colleges based on common responsibility and function

Some of the suggested changes or ways of looking at change already have been implemented and some were reviewed and not accepted for implementation. Certainly these suggestions deserve more scrutiny as we proceed with cost reduction planning in the future. In any case, the ideas of both cost reductions and revenue enhancements are crucial, and have a history of being taken seriously at Central.

Until next week . . .

Marilyn

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Comments can be conveyed to Provost@cwu.edu

Supporting Documents:
“CWU Year in Review: Highlights of 2014”
EAB: Optimizing Institutional Budget Models
EAB: Periodic Table
Summary of Cost Savings & Revenue Generating Suggestions Received (2009 CWU Survey)

Upcoming Topic: “Ladder of Changes: An Introduction to the Provost's Council”