

## Faculty Report to the Budget Advisory Committee February 27, 2009

### Don't Look Back: Planning through the Economic Crisis

#### Academic and Administrative Buildings

##### 1 Admission

Admission Office  
Student Financial Services

##### 2 Balfour-Hood Campus Center

Campus Mail Services/Copy Center  
Ellison Dance/ Aerobics Studio  
Health and Wellness  
Information Center  
Media Center  
Office of Student Life  
Pappas Fitness Center  
Student Government Association  
WCOS Radio Station  
Wheaton Wire

##### 3 Clark Center

Cole Memorial Chapel  
Office of Service, Spirituality  
and Social Responsibility  
Christian Fellowship  
Community Service Council  
Hillel  
Interfaith Alliance

##### 5 Counseling Center

6 Davis International House  
Center for Global Education

##### 7 Doll's House

Education Department  
Office of the Registrar

##### 8 Elisabeth W. Amen Nursery School

##### 9 Facilities & Operations

##### 10 Haas Athletic Center

Balfour Natatorium  
Beard Field House  
Emerson Gym

##### 11 Hebe Hall

Human Resources

##### 12 Hollyhock House

##### 13 Institutional Research

##### 14 Knappton Hall

Classrooms  
Faculty Offices

##### 15 Kollett Center for Academic Advising and Co-Curricular Learning

Academic Advising Center  
Filene Center for Work and Learning  
Kollett Center for Collaborative Learning

##### 16 Mary Lyon Hall

Holman Room  
May Room  
Quinby Alumnae/ Offices  
Woolley Room

##### 17 Mars Arts and Humanities

Maneely  
Studio Arts

##### 18 Marshall Center for Intercultural Learning

##### 19 Norton Medical Center

##### 20 Old Town Hall Bookstore

##### 21 Park Hall

Administrative Offices  
President's Office

##### 22 Presidents' House

##### 23 Public Safety

##### 24 Science Center

Classrooms/Labs  
Faculty Offices  
Hindle Auditorium  
Lecture Halls  
Observatory

##### 25 Ten Library Square

Advancement Services  
Communications Office  
Web Strategy Team

##### 26 Madeleine Clark Wallace Library

Gebble Archives  
Information Technology and Services  
Library Collections  
Library and Information Services (LIS)  
LIS Technical Support

##### 27 Watson Fine Arts

Beard Gallery  
Krespe Experimental Theatre  
Weber Theatre  
Weil Gallery

#### Dining Facilities

##### 28 Chase Dining Halls

Chase Round  
Chase Square  
Chase Small

##### 29 Emerson Hall

Emerson Dining  
Faculty Dining  
President's Dining Rooms

##### 30 Balfour-Hood Campus Center

Hood Café  
The Loft

##### 31 The Lyons Den

#### Residence Halls

32 Beard Hall  
33 Chapin Hall  
34 Clark Hall  
35 Cragin Hall  
36 Emerson Hall  
37 Everett Heights  
38 Everett Heights  
39 Gebble Hall  
40 Keefe Hall  
41 Kilham Hall  
42 Larcom Hall  
43 McIntire Hall  
44 Meadows Center  
45 Meadows East  
46 Meadows North  
47 Meadows West

#### Student Houses

48 Metcalf Hall  
49 Stanton Hall  
50 Young Hall  
51 5/7 Pine Street  
52 9 Taunton Avenue  
53 11 Howard Street  
54 22 Howard Street  
55 44 Howard Street  
56 25/28 Taunton Avenue  
57 Bittersweet  
58 Elms  
59 Guest House  
60 Lindens  
61 Old Observatory  
62 White House

#### Campus Parking

1 Faculty, staff  
2 Designated visitors area, faculty, staff, students  
3 All students, faculty, staff, visitors  
4 Upperclass students  
5 Faculty, staff  
6 Faculty, staff  
7 Faculty, staff  
8 Faculty, staff  
9 Faculty, staff  
10 Upperclass students

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## PREAMBLE

*"That they may have life and have it abundantly"*

— Wheaton College motto

Last year, the faculty report to this committee began by sounding a cautionary note concerning the perfect storm of economic slowdown and shrinking college applicants. This year, economic conditions have worsened beyond what most of us would have imagined. So much so that even those who held out hope that Wheaton could continue to maintain business as usual in the face of such a rapidly degenerating economy are coming to see that virtually every aspect of institutional operations must be reassessed in the face of the tremendous downward pressure on the college's revenues and resources.

If, as all signs indicate, we are indeed entering a severe recession, the duration and scope of which remain uncertain, it may seem ironic to remind ourselves of the college's motto. On the contrary, moments such as these are ideally suited for recalling that our institutional motto calls for an abundant life, not a lifestyle of abundance.

Guided by the "promise of a transformational liberal arts education," the Strategic Plan couches the pledge we make to students in different language than the college's motto, but the spirit of that pledge remains fundamentally unchanged. The faculty certainly recognizes that the flagging economy may slow our progress toward reaching milestones *en route* to fulfilling that promise; nevertheless, the milestones themselves remain philosophically sound and pedagogically exigent.

This year's faculty report is anchored by two important beliefs. First, the college must proactively pursue measures that will ensure Wheaton's fiscal health and with it the ability to survive the current economic crisis. Second, the foundation of "Wheaton's promise of a transformational liberal arts education" is its "innovative curriculum" and the commitment to fostering an academic culture that requires, results from, and reflects "diversity and inclusive excellence." Although some may view these priorities as incompatible with one another, we hope that all members of the Wheaton community — particularly those in positions to make decisions about the allocation of resources — will be guided by a deep respect for the ways in which they are mutually reinforcing.

The report that follows is divided into two sections. The first identifies areas of greatest immediate faculty concern as we brace for the projected budget shortfall for FY10. The second serves to table a list of concerns that we acknowledge cannot in any practical manner be addressed under current conditions but which remain very much on the minds of the faculty.

## ISSUES THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

### I. Tasks and Forces: Reassessment, Recovery, Reinvention

#### a. The short-term: Reassessment

At the plenary session with the Board of Trustees on Friday, February 20, Trustee Anson Beard, Jr., described the economy as worse than it's ever been in his lifetime and predicted that it will likely experience further sharp declines before the dust settles; he added that every institution — be it for-profit or not-for-profit — now shares a common mission: SURVIVE. We take these words to heart and recognize that in order to do so we will need to make some difficult decisions in the face of potentially dramatic shortfalls in revenues. The faculty understand that a period of reassessment is upon us, and we join the staff and students who have called for a proactive, indeed aggressive examination of ways to reduce expenses and save costs.

#### b. The mid-term: Recovery

As the faculty, staff and students redouble efforts to work cooperatively in a spirit of shared sacrifice and responsibility, these efforts are sure to impact individuals and the institution in both tangible and intangible ways. It will be important to guard against sagging morale and to ensure that all parties are working in good faith. One way to help achieve this is to provide a mid-range plan that anticipates conditions under which the institution will transition from reassessment to recovery. Thus, we formally request that the newly formed Presidential Task Force work to develop such a plan that prevents any short-term reductions in existing resources, personnel, salaries and/or benefits from becoming permanent.

#### c. The long-term: Reinvention:

'Survival' may indeed be our primary institutional priority in the coming year(s), but the challenges it presents are not purely pragmatic. They are also philosophical, perhaps even metaphysical. The potentially historic financial obstacles we must overcome require practical thinking to be sure; however, we cannot lose sight of who we are and what we stand for as a college, an institution, a community. The economic crisis provides us with an opportunity to revisit these matters with an urgency few of us would ask for given the choice. If we address the crisis proactively we can emerge from it stronger and more robust than we were. Budgetary decisions must be made with an eye

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toward balancing short-term, reactive solutions against more proactive mid- and long-range measures that proceed according to a shared vision of Wheaton College 2.0.

## II. Faculty Salary Plan

- a. The faculty would like to recognize President Crutcher and the other officers of the college who have taken voluntary reductions in salaries. Such a gesture not only drives home the severity of our economic reality, it demonstrates a solidarity with the faculty, staff and students, whose experience at Wheaton will undergo other types of changes in the coming year(s) in the face of reductions in available resources. We applaud this decision and thank you for your willingness to lead by example.
- b. Let us be absolutely clear. In the current economic climate, the faculty understand that salary increases are not feasible in FY10. Moreover, we recognize the depth and duration of the recession threaten to exert continued downward pressure on resources beyond FY10. That said, no one relishes frozen salaries, especially since these are tantamount to a decrease in real income given the increasing costs of health care and energy. Still, there is broad recognition that such emergency measures will likely be required to ensure our ability to meet operating expenses in spite of reduced revenues. It is important to note, therefore, that we do not consider a 'salary plan' to be synonymous with 'salary increase' with respect to the next fiscal year.
- c. The faculty salary plan that maintains salaries at the mean of the NE9 has been approved on a year-to-year basis for the past 4 years. As noted above, it is clear that this plan will be put on hold for the coming year. The faculty as a whole have overwhelmingly expressed to their colleagues on this committee the urgent need for the Trustees and the President to publicly recommit to a long-term salary plan as soon as possible. The economic recession need not (and indeed should not) be used as justification for further delays in such a recommitment. On the contrary, it underscores the need for all parties to find common ground for the long-term even as, in the immediate short-term, it can accommodate the unique economic pressures we face. Additionally, such an act by the Trustees and President would go a long way to reassuring the faculty that the college continues to share the goal of reaching/maintaining the mean of the NE9 even during a time when we all

understand there is a need to forego some short-term gains in order to ensure long-term individual and institutional security.

- d. The President has convened a meeting for March 6 between himself, the Committee on Economic Status and Workload, and the faculty members of B.A.C. to begin discussing the issue. Vice-President of Finances and Operations Rick Wallick and Interim Provost Elita Pastra-Landis will also attend. Although all parties will have to agree to the finer points of any salary plan, the need for one results from and responds to three inter-related objectives:

- i. *Prioritizing the academic mission:*

In 2006, William Adams, president of Colby College, wrote an open letter to parents and students entitled "Educational Mission Dictates College's Cost." In that letter, Adams explains that "Colby costs what it does because we are committed to offering the best residential liberal arts education available.... We also operate in an intensely competitive marketplace where the expectation is that we will provide outstanding facilities and services." He follows this by noting that budget decisions "start with the faculty, the heart of the college." Wheaton faculty do not consider the value of a salary plan to be limited to — or even primarily about — their paycheck. Rather, we see the salary plan as an important mechanism that formalizes the institution's commitment to making budgetary decisions that prioritize the academic mission of the college.

- ii. *Remaining competitive with our competitors:*

Wheaton will not be able to recruit and retain the caliber of faculty it currently has if salaries fall further behind the mean of the NE 9 comparison group. A salary plan that quickly returns salaries to the mean of the NE9 is arguably one of the most effective ways to ensure that we remain a place where leading scholars want to teach, a precondition for the academic excellence a Wheaton education offers to students. Of course, this assumes that our relative resource position has not deteriorated substantially below the level where we previously reached the NE9 salary mean.

- iii. *Transparency*

As the faculty brace for frozen salaries and reductions in other resources, maintaining a transparent process is vital to securing their

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support and protecting their morale. Because a salary plan commits the college to funding this area in specific ways, in the event that it cannot the institution will need to provide an account of the reasons for this. We see the formation of the Presidential Task Force as an important forward step in increasing this sort of transparency, but one that must exist in addition to, not in lieu of, a salary plan.

### III. Protecting tenure, promotion & equity

- a. *Institutional Considerations in tenure cases*  
Economic tumult affects everyone. For tenure-track assistant professors, this means not only living with a (frozen) lower salary than those who have been working for longer, but doing so without the security of tenure. In order to ensure the intellectual vitality and diversity of the Wheaton faculty and curriculum, we ask that the President convey to all faculty in strong, unambiguous language that Institutional Considerations will not be invoked with respect to upcoming and future tenure cases.
- b. *Salary adjustments for promotion*  
Despite the need to freeze salary *increases*, the faculty feel strongly that salary *adjustments* continue to be made for those faculty who are promoted from Assistant to Associate or from Associate to Full Professor. These adjustments should be funded at their current level (\$2,500). In the event that these adjustments be delayed, any faculty who should have received a promotion-related adjustment should receive it retroactively; additionally, the retroactive adjustment should include the 9% (or \$225) the college would normally have contributed to the faculty member's retirement plan.
- c. *Salary adjustments for equity*  
In the event of any glaring inequities in salary relative to peers within the same rank and/or academic division, these should be treated at the discretion of the Provost, though adjustments should be made as mindfully as possible with respect to the trade-offs required in terms of funds available for additional instructional support (i.e., adjuncts).

### IV. Center for Scientific Inquiry and Innovation

- a. That the current economic crisis will likely delay original construction timetables for the new Science Center is both understandable and understood. Nevertheless, for reasons that have

been made abundantly clear in numerous discussions and reports, CSII remains an integral part of Wheaton College's ability to meet its goals of providing a "transformational liberal arts education" in the twenty-first century. To this end, the faculty feel there is a need for a clear and unequivocal statement that avers the importance of, and commitment to, completing construction of CSII. We see such a statement working to: (a) ease faculty concerns about the long-term status of the project; (b) reaffirm the crucial role of scientific inquiry and innovation to educational excellence, and to both curricular and co-curricular learning at Wheaton; (c) project an optimistic, forward-looking vision of a future that is built on continued investment in people and infrastructure; and (d) ensure that former, current and future students and their families are informed about and included in such a future.

### 'BACK BURNER' ISSUES

#### I. Benefits

We value and appreciate the considerable efforts made in 2007-08 to restructure the tuition benefit for dependents in such a way that retains the college's commitment to supporting higher education and that distributes the benefit resources in a manner that is equitable, predictable and that allows families more flexibility in selecting the most appropriate college or university for their child(ren).

As was first noted in 2003 in the findings of the joint faculty and staff group conducting the comprehensive benefits review, Wheaton's contribution to faculty and staff retirement falls significantly below other NE9 colleges. Faculty serving on B.A.C reminded this committee in 2008 that Wheaton makes one of the smallest contributions to faculty and staff retirement — Colby contributes 8%, Haverford 12%, Bates 11%, Connecticut, Hamilton, Muhlenberg, Hobart & William Smith and Trinity each contribute 10%.

During the current economic crisis, increasing the college's contributions to faculty and staff retirement is obviously not going to be possible. Nevertheless, the same downward pressure the college is coping with extends to individual employees' retirement savings. Virtually all of us have seen the value of our retirement savings shrink significantly, and consequently some are bound to delay retirement. This is a loss to both individuals and the institution; deferred retirements oblige the college to continue paying the higher-than-average salaries drawn by the most senior faculty and force those faculty to

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forestall any plans for a life after teaching at Wheaton.

Thus it remains the position of the faculty that the college articulate a plan for when it will begin to honor the commitment it made after the 2003 Benefits Review to increase its retirement contribution to 10%. Doing so will not only help current employees replenish their retirement savings; it is also crucial for recruiting and retaining the caliber of faculty Wheaton currently enjoys.

Once the college enters into a 'recovery' mode, we should once again conduct a comprehensive review of employee benefits in order to ensure that part of the recovery includes moving to a more competitive benefits package.

## II. Support for Faculty Research and Creative Work

Supporting the creative and scholarly work of the faculty remains crucial to ensuring the academic excellence of the college. We urge the college to do everything in its power to maintain the current level of funding for summer research, faculty travel and the like. We would like to thank Elita Pastra-Landis, who, in her capacity as Interim Provost, has been a vigorous advocate for academic affairs and who has indicated that the Provost's Office has no intention of deprioritizing faculty scholarship or creative work.

## III. Workload

As in previous reports, workload issues remain important concerns to the faculty. Still, we appreciate the severity of the current economic crisis and its impact on the college's operating budget, and understand that resources for addressing many of these concerns may be difficult to find in the coming fiscal year. Among these are: service, staff support, technology, and untenured faculty protections. Although they receive only a passing mention here, they nevertheless remain very much on the minds of the faculty and we very much hope they will be addressed with all due diligence over the coming years as the economic situation improves and the college enters into a recovery phase. In the immediate term, the faculty would like to make the following points:

### a. Use of adjunct faculty

With shifting enrollment patterns and faculty hiring distributions among departments in the last year or so, some departments remain in critical need of adjuncts to assist with and offer courses that are mission critical. We understand that reducing the

number of (full-time) adjuncts is an increasingly likely component of emerging plans to meet budget constraints. The faculty wish to be assured that any cuts in adjunct positions — which are almost always tantamount to reduced course offerings — be distributed equitably and thoughtfully among departments, being mindful of the critical role adjuncts play in some understaffed departments.

### b. Class size

The faculty applaud Wheaton's current goal of a 10:1 student/faculty ratio, and join the college in viewing that goal as part of a broader commitment to assuring educational excellence. The faculty also recognize that achieving and maintaining this ratio in such difficult economic times may not be practicable. Nonetheless, we remain committed to providing the highest quality educational experience for our students.

Faculty have indicated their clear willingness to find ways to mitigate the negative impact of any course reductions on the ability of departments and programs to meet the needs of majors and minors. Some departments may elect to temporarily increase or suspend existing enrollment limits to ensure that students do not experience any difficulty selecting courses necessary to matriculate on time. Additionally, at the February faculty meeting, the faculty expressed their broad support for increasing the size of FYS to accommodate between 15-18 students, a move that will reduce the overall number of First Year Seminars that must be staffed while keeping them of a size that will not fundamentally erode the FYS experience.

## POST-AMBLE

Having to do more with less is something we are prepared for, and something Wheaton is well-practiced at. To do this successfully, though, requires a holistic vision and a planning framework that uses our existing resources to strengthen one another rather than an *ad hoc* plan that risks allowing shortages in one area to exacerbate shortages in others. The former allows us to do more with less; the latter threatens to do less with more. The former looks to the future; the latter looks to the past. As we start the long journey to economic reassessment and recovery, we hope Wheaton College will keep its gaze set firmly on what lays ahead. Look forward. Don't look back.