

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROVOST ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010**

The past year has been challenging but strong for the Academic Affairs Division. Faculty and staff worked to educate and integrate me into the work of the College during my first year as Provost, and I am grateful for their efforts as I learned the culture, procedures, and needs of the institution. This year unfortunately saw a continuation of the financial challenges facing Wheaton, as well as other collegiate institutions. Although we ended the year with a reduction in force across the division, we also made plans for moving forward. We are ready to welcome a new leader for Library and Information Services, along with two hires in Career Services at the Filene Center. We formalized our efforts to increase retention, including appointing a Retention Coordinator from the division. We added a new study abroad program in Bhutan, along with a summer institute for English language learning. Overall, the staff of the Provost's Division has performed excellent service to our students and our community.

This report summarizes many, but not all, of the accomplishments and activities across the division over the past year.

### **FACULTY**

In February, seven faculty members were awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor: Shawn Christian (English), Francisco Fernandez de Alba (Hispanic Studies), Peony Fhagen-Smith (Psychology), Domingo Ledezma (Hispanic Studies), Jake Mahaffy (Art/Art History and Film), Shawn McCafferty (Biology), and Kim Miller (Art/Art History and Women's Studies). In May, four faculty members were promoted to Full Professor, the highest rank in the College: Matthew Allen (Music), R. Tripp Evans (Art/Art History), Michael Gousie (Mathematics and Computer Science), and Evelyn Staudinger (Art/Art History). These eleven colleagues represent strong additions to the senior faculty leadership of Wheaton, and demonstrate a strong, vibrant faculty community of teachers and scholars. The success of seven tenure cases attests to the faculty's commitment and careful attention to recruitment and mentoring.

In May, five faculty members were chosen by the Provost and a committee of their peers to hold endowed chairs over the next five years: Vicki Bartolini (Education), Williams Professor; John Grady (Sociology), Cole Chair; Gerry Huiskamp (Political Science), Jennings Professor; Nancy Kendrick (Philosophy), Prentice Professor; and Mark LeBlanc (Mathematics & Computer Science), Meneely Professor. These prestigious awards require submission of an application describing one's past performance and future plans in scholarship, teaching, service, and community enhancement. The chairs signify tremendous accomplishment, service to the College, and promise for future contributions.

The Provost's Office also awarded grants for summertime pursuit of research, all based on a competitive application process. Ten Provost Faculty Research Awards were given for pursuing summer scholarship; six Student/Faculty Research Awards were distributed for collaborative work between student researchers and faculty mentors, some of which will result in publications; and four Arnold Awards provided for faculty professional and personal enrichment.

### **CURRICULUM**

Under the guidance of the Educational Policy Committee, considerable examination of the curriculum occurred this year. The Curriculum Evaluation Subcommittee reviewed data on implementation of the requirements in foreign language, science, quantitative analysis, and writing since the addition of the

revised curriculum. A new subcommittee on Faculty Curriculum Support planned and organized programs that help faculty in their advancement and evaluation of the curriculum and their planning for new courses.

The Provost's Office funded a dozen Course Transformation Grants to help faculty implement the goals for senior capstone courses – the final experience in a student's major. Last year, we established goals for these capstone experiences; this year and this coming summer will focus on assessing how well such learning has occurred. Over the summer, we funded additional Connections Conversations, which promote new connected courses between faculty members. A new survey on the use of Connections has recently been distributed to both students and faculty; analysis will begin over the summer and into the school year. The faculty survey focuses on pedagogies used in connected courses.

## **RETENTION**

This year brought a renewed focus on student retention, as Lee Williams, Vice President for Student Affairs, and I studied existing campus efforts to better understand and address student satisfaction and retention. Along with Gail Berson, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing, we met with several campus groups to learn about their past work, the data they have gathered, and the questions they are asking.

Early in the year, Dean Williams and I met with the staffs of other divisions and the groups that share formal responsibility for retention efforts (e.g., First- and Second-Year Experience, the Committee on Academic Standing, Leave of Absence study group, and advising staff). In February, we introduced to the faculty an expanded "early warning system" to record concerns about student performance, which can be followed up quickly by the Dean of Students Office and Academic Advising.

In March, I appointed Alex Vasquez, Associate Dean for Academic and Campus Life, as coordinator for retention efforts. He will not have sole responsibility for these issues, since our strong philosophy is that retention must be everyone's focus; but, Dean Vasquez has assembled a new Retention Steering Committee to coordinate the efforts and avoid redundancies among the various groups. In June, we secured the support of a retention consultant through our new association with the Student Affairs Leadership Council, and Dean Vasquez will use the consultant as he plans work with the Steering Committee.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICES**

Across the division, we used the notion of supporting student success as a focus for our work. Each of the programs mentioned below has fuller annual reports available, and the material here merely highlights some of their accomplishments.

### **Center for Global Education**

In its eighth year of operation, the Center for Global Education created some new programs and set the stage for initiatives to come. The Center sent 242 students abroad, both in long- and short-term programs. Short-term faculty-led programs included Arts in Ireland (Professors Andy Howard and Tim Cunard), Witnessing Contemporary Africaness (Professors James Freeman and Marcus Allen), Innovative Music Traditions of Trinidad and Tobago (Professor Julie Searles), Of Minoans and Mycenaeans (Dean Alex Trayford), and Education and Development in Tanzania (Professor Donna Kerner). New study abroad partnerships were created with Ewha University in Seoul, Korea; Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan; Fudan University, Shanghai, China; Shanghai University of Finance and Economics; Royal Thimpu College, Thimpu, Bhutan. The new relationship with Royal Thimpu College is significant as the

culmination of several years of engagement with that new liberal arts institution, the first private institution of higher learning in Bhutan.

The Center also provided support to 137 international students at Wheaton, including 38 in the first-year class (an increase of 40% from last year). Many of the new students are coming to Wheaton from China. Our increased interest in China has resulted in a new summer program for Chinese high school students to strengthen their English skills on the Wheaton campus; the inaugural programs of 2 weeks and 3 weeks began in July. We also opened Davis House at 7 Howard Avenue as a themed residence for 12 students supporting the work of the United World College students on campus. The vitality of the house and its location in one part of the Center emphasize the Center's identity as a growing hub of intellectual and program resources, along with its provision of study abroad information.

### **Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services**

The Filene Center focused this year on increasing the number of students using its services and on extending the Center's reputation both on and off campus. The Career Services staff conducted a self-study and worked to launch a new "Framework 4" that will guide students year by year during their time at Wheaton, preparing them for career success beyond college. Student experience in the classroom, internships, research experience, learning goals, and career planning all will be analyzed and organized in this comprehensive program to support students in their lives after Wheaton.

The Center also created a new Internship Showcase, where more than 40 students presented posters, films, and slide shows about their internship experiences. A "Sweats to Suits" program offered a five-part workshop series for seniors, preparing them for interviews and career choices. "Career Conversations" with alumnae/i during Homecoming and "Sophomore Symposium" in January further helped students connect their in- and out-of-classroom experiences.

Academic Advising continued its workshops for students applying for graduate scholarships and national fellowships (e.g., Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Truman, Watson). In addition, Disability Services created a plan to identify needs in campus facilities to make the college more accessible.

Overall, the Filene Center interacted last year with 75% of the student body, recording more than 4500 individual contacts with students.

### **Marshall Center for Intercultural Learning**

The Marshall Center for Intercultural Learning focused this year on offering programs and services that connect to the curriculum and address students' academic needs. Its work is grounded on an expectation of and commitment to academic excellence. The Center began its year with a successful pre-orientation program for 30 new students of color, which provides an excellent introduction to Wheaton's focus on intercultural learning, even as it connects students to the Center. The Center conducted 13 academic workshops with a focus on student success. Its Open House, Study Breaks during finals, and Senior Reception drew additional students, for a total of 471 student contacts in these programs. Another 282 students attended programs related to Women and Gender (including women's lunch discussions). Theme-month programming, such as Women's History, Black History, and Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle-Eastern, and South Asian, has been a popular partnership with student groups, drawing 953 students to 39 separate events. The Center supported students attending off-campus leadership workshops and academic conferences, including the Consortium on High Achievement and Success and the Biomedical Careers Conference at Harvard Medical School. In addition to programming, a hallmark of the Center is individual academic and personal advising for students, in concert with other

advising around the campus. The Center lost its Assistant Director for Intercultural Learning this year to another institution, and the position was not replaced. Even with a diminished staff, the Marshall Center continued to offer strong programs and services, and increased its partnerships with other campus offices, especially in the Division of Student Life.

### **Office of the Registrar**

In addition to ongoing support for students, faculty, and curriculum evaluation, the Office of the Registrar this year coordinated a transition to Banner 8, a major upgrade to the campus data program. As managers of Banner's Student Module, this required coordination across several areas, including Advising, Athletics, and Residential Life. The office also established a library of reports that are being used to evaluate the curriculum, including studies of Connections, the natural sciences requirement, and the foreign language requirement.

The Registrar's Office plays a major role in understanding and supporting student retention. Recognizing the increased focus on that issue, the Registrar helped initiate a cross-divisional workgroup to review, document, and improve the Leave of Absence process. The Registrar also continued to work with the "Trackers" group, which examines and compares the records of students who have left Wheaton. Finally, also related to retention was the Registrar's reinvigoration the WISE program – an identification services that allows faculty and advisors to raise issues of concern about individual students.

### **Office of Institutional Research**

The Office of Institutional Research supports college-wide evaluation and assessment, providing information for strategic thinking, data-driven decision-making, and institutional planning. In addition to its regular agenda of local and national surveys and the provision of data to outside agencies, the IR office this year provided the bulk of data used in the NEASC accreditation process. The office continued its work on building a faculty/staff database, revised the annual Vital Signs handbook of campus statistics, updated the strategic plan Milestones, provided data for curriculum evaluation and faculty salary surveys, and supported work on a survey of students' post-graduate plans. Supporting the retention effort, the office expanded its retention and graduation reports, worked with the "Trackers" group, and supported the efforts of the new Retention Coordinator.

### **Elizabeth Amen Nursery School**

The nursery school opened the year with 66 children in its several programs. The school takes pride in its work with Wheaton students and faculty, this year supporting students in the following classes: Issues in Early Care, Developmental Psychology Lab, and Teaching and Learning. In addition, individual students from the Music, Psychology, and Anthropology departments conducted research at the school. This year, the Amen School hosted a meeting of the Council of Child Development Laboratory Administrators for colleagues in New England, New York, and New Jersey. Marge Werner, director of the Amen School, presented at the Boston Association for the Education of Young Children and at workshops for parents of special needs children. She also prepared the school for a September 2010 compliance visit by the Department of Early Education and Care.

### **Library and Information Services**

Library and Information Services spent the past year searching for a new Associate Vice President to replace Vice President Terry Metz, who accepted a new position last September. The search was conducted by a committee of faculty and staff, chaired by the Provost. In late summer, the position was accepted by Susan Wawrzaszek, Deputy Chief Information Officer and University Librarian at Brandeis

University. After examining more than 60 strong applications, the committee was delighted to bring someone of Ms. Wawrzaszek's skills and experience in a "merged organization." Starting in August, she will work to expand and advance the College's efforts in both technology and information literacy. I especially want to acknowledge the collegial and focused work of the five-member Leadership Team of LIS who, working with Associate Provost Elita Pastra-Landies, managed the diverse efforts of LIS in the absence of an Associate Vice President. A fuller annual report of LIS activities is available separately.

#### **PERSONNEL**

In the Provost's Office, I have appointed **Joel Relihan**, Professor and Chair of Classics, as a new Associate Provost for a three-year term. He will join Professor **Evie Staudinger**, who will serve a third year in her Associate Provost post. Professor Relihan replaces **Elita Pastra-Landis**, who concludes her tenure in the Provost's Office and will return to her faculty position in Chemistry. I especially appreciate Elita's support this year as I entered the Provost position. Beyond her regular and busy duties, Elita generously and ably supervised Library and Information Services while the Associate Vice President position remained vacant, and she has co-chaired the search for that position.

Professor **Brenda Wyss**, Chair of Economics, has agreed to a three-year term as the Faculty Affirmative Action Officer. This direct report to the Provost supports the faculty in recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty of color and female faculty, which includes advising on searches and supporting faculty in the annual evaluation and tenure processes. Professor Wyss replaces Paula Krebs, who has been awarded a year-long fellowship with the American Council on Education.

#### **INTEGRATED STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PLAN**

As Provost, I served on the Trustee committee to present a campus-wide Integrated Strategic and Financial Plan for the next five years. Among many items in the Plan, two affect faculty life dramatically: the reinstatement of a Faculty Salary Plan and construction of the new Science Center. I particularly appreciate the contributions of the new Planning and Priorities Committee and the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty, both of which helped vet the Plan and have committed to supporting the necessary adjustments to the academic personnel budget.

In addition to the Planning and Priorities Committee, I also received excellent guidance on these and other matters from the faculty Provost Advisory Committee, the Student Government Association Provost Advisory Committee, the Educational Policy Committee, the Budget Advisory Committee, and from monthly meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Wheaton's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). I also acknowledge the support of the staff of the Provost's Office.

#### **SUMMARY**

In all, I feel this has been an excellent initial year for me as Provost of Wheaton College, marked by tough decisions, but supported by an excellent staff, knowledgeable students, and collegial faculty. I am delighted to have joined this community.

Submitted by Linda Eisenmann, Provost  
Professor of Education  
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