

Follow-Up Report for the College Strategic Plan
September 2009

On January 16, 2006, the faculty of the College approved the College Strategic Plan. This brief report updates progress on the goals established by the Plan, and other related steps that have been taken in the more than three years since the Plan's adoption. Many of the College's key goals have been fully incorporated in the University's Strategic Plan, announced in May 2007. You can find the text of the University's Plan at <http://www.wlu.edu/documents/president/strategicplan.pdf>. In addition, the University's Strategic Plan served as the foundation of the priorities established for the University's capital campaign; many College priorities are incorporated in that key set of priorities for fundraising.

Each of the priorities below is followed by a brief description of progress made since January 2006. One central priority of the College is not included in the Plan--*the renovation of the Colonnade*—because 1) the renovation had already become a university priority, and 2) the cost of renovation was yet to be determined. As everyone on campus knows, the Colonnade renovation project is currently underway; a renovated Newcomb Hall will reopen in the summer of 2010.

The College established two sets of priorities, first for the College itself, and second for the institution at large. As the updates below demonstrate, very significant progress has been made on the majority of the goals adopted by the College faculty in January 2006.

The College-specific initiatives are, in order of priority:

- *Create a program of Freshman Seminars* -- What is now called the First Year Seminar Program was launched in April 2007 and now offers between 10-15 seminars a year. The program has been popular with both students and faculty members, and we hope ultimately to offer between 20-25 seminars a year.
- *Raise to major status current non-major programs, with the goal of further building the breadth and diversity of the undergraduate curriculum* – One interdepartmental program, Environmental Studies, has been approved as a major program. A number of new programs – including Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Dance—have been created. More than 15 new minors in the College were approved and began operation in the Fall 2009 term.
- *Improve communication and trust between faculty and administration* – Several new key senior administrators, including the President, Provost, Dean of the College, and two Associate Deans of the College, have assumed their responsibilities in the last four years. Efforts to increase transparency and improve communication with faculty and staff have been a priority. New mechanisms for the faculty to evaluate senior administrators and department heads are now in place.
- *Create more endowed chairs to expand curriculum in strategic directions* – Since 2006, three new endowed professors and two term professors have been named. Four of those five professorships are new gifts, and a number of new pledges have been made that will permit additional appointments to endowed chairs over the next few years.
- *Establish a visiting artist/scholar residency program* – Funds are being raised for a residency program, but already discretionary funds and dedicated gifts have been used to bring in short-term and full-term visitors.

Recommendations with wider institutional impact include, in priority order:

- *Increase need-based financial aid* – Needless to say, Rupert Johnson’s magnanimous gift of \$100M (\$85M of which is dedicated to need-based financial aid) has greatly expanded the University’s financial aid resources, permitted us to create the Johnson Scholars program, and has permitted us to recruit students that would not have before considered W&L.
- *Support the creation of an Information Commons and other Library improvements* – Very much the work of Provost June Aprille, a renovated and much improved space, integrating library and technology services, opened on the main floor in Leyburn in February 2009.
- *Support Spring Term by fully endowing it* – President Ruscio’s Academic Life Initiative, with the approval of the faculty, redefined the spring term in many ways. The new four-week spring term was adopted as the University’s QEP and will be launched in April 2010. Funds have been sought and raised to help underwrite the additional costs of the new spring term, and development efforts continue.
- *Increase the number of staff, augment their skill level, and increase compensation* – President Ruscio’s administration has committed considerable resources to improving compensation levels for staff and a new compensation and classification program has been developed under the leadership of Amy Barnes. Training opportunities and support for staff seeking degrees have been enhanced. Although there have been some additions to staff in the past few years, the new financial reality means staffing levels will remain unchanged or may even shrink modestly by attrition.
- *Move fraternity and sorority rush to sophomore year* – Optimistic and potentially controversial, this objective has not materialized, nor have serious efforts been made to accomplish this goal. However, serious attention to student and Greek life issues has been paid in recent years, and the College faculty continue to support positive changes to Greek recruitment and new member education.
- *Move towards a five course teaching load* – President Ruscio’s Academic Life Initiative included a move to a 5.5 teaching load from 6. That new lower load is in effect this academic year.
- *Set and meet a goal of 20% American minority students* – Although this goal has not yet been met, serious discussions are ongoing and significant efforts to increase the diversity of the student body have occurred.
- *Create an International Village* – This objective has not been actively pursued, nor was it included in the campaign priorities.
- *Increase faculty research support* -- Faculty research support has been significantly increased in the last 3 years. Summer support grants increased from \$2600 to \$4000 in the summer of 2006 and again to a very respectable \$6500 as a result of Jerry Lenfest’s generosity. Mr. Lenfest’s recent gifts also have made possible much-improved financial support for faculty sabbaticals. In addition, faculty start-up packages have grown considerably and the University has made major investments in equipment in the past four years. A book or supply fund was created for new faculty in the arts, humanities and social sciences, and in recent years, additional research expense support has been offered to newly hired faculty for their pre-tenure research leave.
- *Recruit minority faculty members for senior positions and leadership roles* -- Despite continuing efforts, this goal has proven elusive, and current financial conditions will make senior hires less likely for a while.
- *Develop an International Studies Program* – This objective had mixed support from the faculty and, after some exploratory discussions, has not been pursued.

- *Create a Teaching Innovation Fund* – Such a fund has not been officially created, although the University offered faculty funding to develop new four-week spring term courses, and some faculty use summer grants for pedagogical projects.
- *Improve sabbatical funding* – As described above, new endowed funds have permitted the Advisory Committee to award generous additional salary funding to make full-year sabbatical leaves more possible for faculty.