

Report from Faculty Senate
Brandon Dupont

August 18, 2023

Dear Trustees,

While the Senate has not met since my last update to the Board of Trustees in June, we have been busy preparing for the upcoming year, so I am pleased to share our progress in some key areas.

One of my main priorities as Senate President is to reconstitute the Senate's standing committees, some of which have been inactive for several years. The Senate cannot function effectively without a robust and well-supported standing committee structure, so this is a high priority as the academic year begins. I am committed to re-establishing the committees, providing them with adequate staff support, and maintaining clear and regular communication with them. In pursuit of these efforts, I have held several meetings this summer with former and/or current members of some of these committees.

- (1) Senate Library Committee (SLC): In June, I met with Madeline Kelly (who was then the Interim Dean of the WWU Library) and Mark Neff (former chair of the Senate Library Committee) about reconstituting that committee. We have developed a list of members who have agreed to serve this year, so I expect the committee will begin holding regular meetings in the fall quarter. Some priorities for SLC this year include improving communication regarding open access resources and discussing ways for the faculty to benefit from the Teaching Learning Academy and the Research and Writing Studio.
- (2) Academic Technology Committee (ATC): The ATC has been meeting, but without any substantive communication or support from the Faculty Senate. In July, I met with Derek Moscato (chair of ATC) about their work and how the Senate can be more supportive of it going forward. I will be attending the ATC's first meeting in the fall quarter to have a broader discussion about these topics, and the ATC chair will attend Faculty Senate meetings as needed throughout the year. I hope to include ATC in discussions about the implications of Artificial Intelligence for university faculty and students, including whether we need to revise the Academic Honesty policy in light of these rapidly emerging technologies.
- (3) Senate Extend Education Committee (SEEC): Bill Lyne (former chair of SEEC) and I have communicated about ways to reconvene the SEEC in the fall quarter. I have reached out to several potential members, and I hope to have a full committee in place by the beginning of the fall quarter. I see the SEEC as playing a particularly important role in the pilot program for the College in the High School classes.

(4) Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Council: Several years ago, the Social Justice and Equity Committee (SJEC), which began as a Faculty Senate committee, was placed under the Provost's Office. The Senate still has an Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Council, but it has been inactive, apparently since the time the SJEC was removed from the Senate structure. In July, I met with the outgoing co-chair of the SJEC to discuss whether it made sense to try to reconstitute the Senate committee. This is something that will require further discussions at the Senate Exec early this year. On a related note, I have also begun a series of regular conversations with Dr. Jacqueline Hughes, the Chief Diversity Officer, about ways that we can work together on the important DEI efforts that are underway across campus. Any newly reconvened Senate DEI committee would need to coordinate with her office.

I am also grateful to Jamie Lawson, the Catalog and Curriculum Specialist, who stepped in this summer to create a new Faculty Senate website. This has been long overdue and is an important step in creating better communication between the Senate and the campus community. We will be rolling out this website and a new Faculty Senate newsletter at the beginning of the fall quarter.

Shelli Soto (Associate VP for Enrollment Management) and I have also continued to meet regularly to discuss a variety of issues that must be addressed by the Faculty Senate. Given the connections between the work in her office and the work of the Senate, it will be important to continue these discussions throughout the year. I am also working with Shelli as part of the Strategic Enrollment Management process that she is leading.

There are several other things on which I hope the Senate can make progress this year:

- Forming an ad hoc committee to review and suggest revisions to the Faculty Handbook. Several years ago, the Board of Trustees noted that there were sections of the Faculty Handbook that should not require regular BOT approval. Moreover, the Faculty Handbook has not been revised since 2008, so some of the practices described therein are outdated and other sections overlap with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The ad hoc committee will therefore engage in a comprehensive review of the Faculty Handbook and propose to the Faculty Senate any modifications and/or updates that it sees as desirable. Those proposed revisions will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate Executive Council, and the full Faculty Senate which will vote on whether to recommend approval to the Board of Trustees.
- Discussing possible reforms to the Writing Proficiency (WP) system – During the spring quarter, I met with the chair of CUE and the chair of ACC to discuss revisions to the way we award Writing Proficiency (WP) points. I would like CUE and ACC to review and make recommendations to the Senate on the issue of separating the WP credits from the course credits. This is motivated by the fact that students in some WP classes,

particularly the WP1 classes, can earn a failing grade on the assigned paper but still pass the course overall, thereby earning WP credit even when the writing component was insufficient.

- Ensuring that Faculty Senate is updated on and involved in discussions of the College-in-the High School pilot program. I see this as an important role for the Senate's Extended Education Committee.

Let me close by saying that I very much look forward to working with the Board of Trustees to advance the interests of our faculty, our students, and the entire university community in the coming year.

Thank you,

Brandon Dupont