**Provost Report to Faculty Senate**

**February 2021**

**Tenure, Promotion and Reappointment Process**

We are coming toward the end of this year’s TPR cycle.  As you know, we had to make some changes on the fly to accommodate virtual meetings of review committees, electronic voting, and the use of electronic documentation of faculty dossiers.  I want to thank everyone involved in the review process for their patience and flexibility, especially to those faculty undergoing review this year.  As can be expected for a change as big as this one, there were some glitches, but by and large I think the process worked well.  I want to express my sincere appreciation to Suzanne Melton, Carrie Hockman, and Brandon in my office for making it all happen.  We are gathering feedback from those involved and will take the lessons learned to determine what we should continue to do and what we can do better.  I also know that the Senate’s Collegial Review Council has been working on this and will be sharing their recommendation for next steps later this semester.

**Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries**

The Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries continues to meet monthly. The goal of the committee is to propose specific strategic directions addressing faculty salaries to the Chancellor by the end of spring semester 2021.

**Administrative Searches Update**

The search committees for a new Dean of Library Services and a new dean of the College of Arts and Sciences continue their work with plans to bring candidates to campus during the month of March. Details will be forthcoming.

**Spring 2021 Census Report\*** (addendum)

Enrollment for the current semester is a mixed bag; we have declined 1.3% in overall enrollment (spring 2020 to spring 2021) although there are gains in graduate (2.23%) and distance student enrollment (6.38%). Enrollment at Biltmore Park has increased by 14.5% (up from 563 to 645, duplicated). The fall 2020 first-time full-time freshman cohort retention rate slipped 4.85% (from 91.3% the past two years to 86.5% this spring). There are encouraging signs on our race/ethnicity enrollment: Black/African American student population increased by 3.1% from 634 to 654 this spring over last spring; the Hispanic student population increased by 2.56% from 821 to 842 over the same time; and our Asian student population increased by 16% from 131 to 152. Our Native American student enrollment remains flat.

**Fall 2021 Enrollment**

Fall enrollment projection is mixed. While there are fewer applications from first-time full-time freshmen, we have admitted more than 2,600 students compared to this time last year; the number of students who have committed to attend is within 100 of there we were a year ago. New transfer students are up in applications, admitted, and commitments, as are new distance learning program students. Honors student admission is up significantly while commitment is slightly behind point-in-time last year. Graduate student enrollment is trending up.

**Relief Fund and Summer Enrollment at WCU**

* The *Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund* is a method in which WCU can increase student enrollment due to the impact of COVID-19. The emergency grant will be available to WCU undergraduate students (residential and distance) who have separated from WCU over the past four years. The GEER fund will be available to non-PELL eligible students or those who are not eligible to receive Financial Aid for summer enrollment. The GEER fund originated at the state level and will be available to only in-state students. To recover separated students over the previous eight semesters, WCU will initiate multiphase marketing to promote the return and the application of these funds for summer enrollment.
* WCU can increase summer enrollment with the application of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). If approved, the Office of Summer Sessions would like to apply the HEERF to further the impact on WCU’s enrollment and reduce financial barriers for returning students. The HEERF grant is a federal assistance program and can apply to any US resident, in-state or out-of-state.
* Furthermore, the continuation of the $100,000 institutional contribution will allow *First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen (*FTFTF) cohorts who do not meet the 30, 60, 90, or 120 benchmarks or are within six hours of graduation will assist in degree completion. The application of these funds will continue to contribute to the increase of WCU’s 6-year graduation rate, as seen over the past three years.
* FTFTF will be the primary target group of the summer enrollment efforts; FTFTF who have broken enrollment will be contacted and updated on the financial assistance available for summer enrollment. Students within stop-out and in good academic standing will be assisted with registration via professional advisors in the Advising Center. Students outside of their stop-out window will be directed to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to complete an application for re-admission for the summer term. Students who were in poor academic standing when last enrolled will be directed to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to complete a re-admission application and complete a Statement of Academic Intent (SAI). Students who are identified and return for summer enrollment will be tagged in WCU’s Navigate system for tracking. Students who receive this opportunity to return to WCU will be offered financial assistance up to $1,000 to cover costs associated with enrolling in summer classes.
* In collaboration with WCU’s Advising Center, the Office of Student Retention and the Office of Summer Sessions will generate communication for target groups. A multipronged enrollment campaign will consist of direct mailings, email campaigns (Catamount and non-catamount email accounts on file), and phone calls; social media will aid in outward-facing marketing.
* **Marketing outreach:**
* **Phase 1: March 1, 2021:**FTFTF within the stop-out timeframe and are in good academic standing can register for the upcoming semester without reapplying. These students did not complete 30 hours at the end of their first academic year or 60 hours at the end of their second academic year. Targeting these two completion bands falls in line with WCU’s Finish in Four campaign. Summer enrollment will assist these students with timely graduation.
* **Phase 2: March 1, 2021:** FTFTF outside of the stop-out timeframe and in good academic standing who did not achieve 90 hours at the end of their third academic year or 120 hours at the end of their fourth academic year, or are within 6 hours of graduating will receive marketing. Targeting these completion bands falls in line with WCU’s Finish in Four campaign and can help students to be on track for timely graduation. Students who are eligible to participate in the Finish Line program (90 completed hours and 2.0+ GPA) will have their application fee waived.
* **Phase 3: March 15, 2021:** FTFTF students who were enrolled in the previous four years and were in poor academic standing when last registered still have time to reapply and complete the SAI process to return in summer. This outreach comes after the previous groups because this population may be less likely to return as they could have enrolled at a local community college or began full-time employment since last enrolled at WCU.
* **Phase 4: April 1, 2021:** Outreach to all undergraduate students with unmet liberal studies requirements will receive marketing. These students could be part of previous outreach to FTFTF cohorts but could be outside of those target groups due to the number of completed hours or the number of transfer hours prior to enrolling at WCU.

\*(addendum) Spring 2021 Census Statistics