# APPROVED BY FACULTY SENATE 29 March 2016

## President's Performance Survey Report ~ 2015-2016 Academic Year

Faculty Senate Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance (CPPP) Senators: Tim Roberts (Chair), Mahrya Carncross,

For the survey questions, a 5-point rating scale was used (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with the additional options of No Basis for Response and Decline to Respond. The survey instrument asked questions divided into four focus areas: Total Campus Enterprise; Student Success; Academic Goals; and Personnel, Faculty Relations and Campus Issues. The responses of No Basis for Response and Decline to Respond are not included in the sample sizes on which statistical analyses are provided below (for these totals see Appendix 2). Open comment sections were provided at the end of each focus area. Items requesting demographic information were also included in the survey. The quantitative results of the survey can be seen in Figure 4: President's Survey Quantitative Data.

#### **Demographic Overview**

Of the 220 survey participants who indicated their gender, 51% identified as male, 49% identified as female. Among 223 faculty respondents who provided their years of service at Western, 39% have been at Western 11-20 years, 28% have 6-10 years' experience, 17% have 0-5 years' experience, and 16% have more than 20 years' experience. Of those who indicated their college affiliation, 41% belonged to the College of Arts and Sciences, 4% were affiliated with the Library, 21% were affiliated with the College of Education and Human Services, 19% were from the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and 15% identified with the College of Business and Technology. Of 230 participants who indicated how often they interact with the President, 36% interact with him 1-3 times a year, 31% interact with him 1-3 times a semester, 20% never interact with him, and 12% interact with him 1-3 times a month. One respondent indicated interaction 1-3 times a week. Finally, of 225 participants who indicated their campus, 95% of the respondents indicated they were from the Macomb campus, and 5% indicated they were from the Quad Cities.

#### **Overall Effectiveness**

The faculty reported (Figure 1) an overall mean rating of effectiveness for the President of 2.47, as compared to 3.10 from last year's survey.

Figure 1. Distribution of 238 responses to the survey prompt: "Overall, the President is highly effective at performing his duties (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=

by the respondents, from most to least important. The greatest number of respondents indicated that A cademic Programs was the most important. This is consistent with responses from prior years, reflecting the faculty's concern that President Thomas prioritize the quality of students' academic experiences. Budget was second in terms of initiatives

his performance at 3.13. In terms of increasing access, retention, and graduation of community college transfers, he was rated at 3.05. In terms of making undergraduate education affordable, he was rated at 3.69, and making graduate education affordable, 3.41. Concerning his effort to increase the availability of student financial aid, the President's performance was rated at 3.34, and in advocating policies to moderate debt load of students, he was rated at 3.25.

#### **Academic Goals**

Working with the Provost, Deans, and Student Services

The faculty were asked to rate the President's effectiveness in working with the Provost and the Deans to allocate resources to the departments. The respondents rated his work with the Provost at 2.88, but somewhat lower with the Deans at 2.62.

The faculty were asked to rate the President's effectiveness in working with the Provost to anticipate the future needs of the faculty, students and staff. The respondents rated his effectiveness in doing so at 2.48 for the faculty needs, 2.77 for student needs, and 2.58 for staff needs. Again, a consistent message from the faculty comments was the need to provide more opportunities for faculty research.

The faculty rated the President's effectiveness in working with Student Services to foster policies for student leadership and co-curricular participation. The respondents rated the President's effectiveness in fostering student leadership at 3.23, for co-curricular participation at 3.14, and for student quality of life (a new category this year) at 3.12.

Academic programs in the Quad Cities and Macomb

Those taking the survey were asked about the President's support of the academic programs at the Quad Cities campus. The number of respondents to these questions, from 105 to 113, was significantly lower, indicating that most faculty having no experience with the Quad Cities refrained from responding. The respondents rated the President's leadership in planning for the QC academic programs 0.2 (e0.2(n pl) 0.2 (a) 0.2 0 4 0 0 0..24 050 0 0 50 0 0Tm /TT1 1 Tf (Tm /TT1 1 Tf [ (t) 0.2 (o a) 0.2 (

For each of the following series of questions

| Q# ( | Question Text | Mean (Average)<br>Score |         | Standard<br>Deviation* |         | N<br># of respondents per question** |  |
|------|---------------|-------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--|
|      |               | 2015-16                 | 2014-15 | 2013-14                | 2015-16 |                                      |  |

exceptional job in lobbying for higher education funding, highlighting the good things about WIU, developing excellent relationships with alumni and students, and has a strong desire to see WIU continue and succeed." Similar comments include "Very competent leader who relates well to students, faculty, staff and other university stakeholders."

With regard to fiscal responsibility, comments here include "The President has provided exceptional leadership. Individuals should not confuse constraining variables with controllable variables." A few similar comments include "I like that he's thinking about the long-term sustainability of our campus and making the necessary changes to get through this." "Dr. Thomas has been extremely responsible, fiscally, as President. He maintained the reserve fund of over \$20 million while President, ... [which] is why WIU hasn't reached the level of crisis of some other state universities." Some respondents appreciated how Dr. Thomas is publicly addressing the crisis. Comments here include "He has handled the budget situation proactively and kept everyone informed of what is happening." "During the tough economic times, he has continued to provide vision, innovation, and integrity while engaging the WIU community in very difficult financial conversations." "While facing these challenges, he has done a good job of advancing the goals of the total campus enterprise and he seems to have done so while promoting an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect."

With regard to Administration /Union relations, some felt the Union bears more responsibility for a perceived impasse. "[The President] maintains integrity at a time when the faculty union has been combative." "Our Union is the biggest issue we face. They believe there is a bundle of money somewhere and they refuse to appreciate the situation we are currently in." Another wrote "He made some tough decisions for the good of WIU that have led to many disagreements among WIU employees, and especially the UPI leadership."

Among negative comments, a common theme suggests the President should have followed the faculty contract. "The Contract was not followed. The BOT was supposed to authorize layoffs before they were announced, not after." Another wrote, "He left our tenure-track WIU colleagues on [the layoff list], despite the fact that not all Unit B (i.e., contingent) faculty have been laid off first...." Likewise, one wrote, "The entire manner in which the layoffs were handled seems to have disregarded both the specifics of the UPI contract and the unique needs of individual academic departments." Others expressed concerns regarding the criteria used to determine layoffs. One wrote, "A one-size-fits-all metric for students/faculty fails to take into account differences in pedagogy across disciplines and differing emphases on research and service," while another wrote, "Decisions to cut faculty positions based purely on the numbers will cost the University dearly through the loss of diversity." Related comments include "I can support some faculty reduction if I know the criteria/process that was used .... When asked about the process before Faculty Senate no answers were provided," and "By designing and implementing a metric ... that has a disparate negative impact on women and minorities, he has sent the message that the University doesn't care about equality and diversity." Finally, one respondent noted, "It appears that he is only willing to save money by firing faculty in departments with few majors. This is despite the fact that these faculty often teach many students."

The President's relation with the faculty union was a source of concern. Comments include "His refusal to compromise with the Union hurt this whole community," and "[The Administration has] failed to really engage with the faculty or with UPI in a forthcoming and constructive way that fosters partnership at this time." Alternatively, one respondent noted, "I am concerned that his lack of willingness to work with the Union will bring the conflicts (that should be resolved behind closed

unknown) about the actual, specific criteria underlying each faculty firing," and another "The President claims transparency, but ... if there was transparency, why were people caught totally by surprise with layoffs announced right before Christmas?" Others suggested, "Despite his professed desire for transparency, he has been unable to articulate clearly whether our problems are budget, cash flow, or the size of the teaching faculty," and "The President continues to make decisions that are not transparent or adequately explained to faculty." Finally, one commenter wrote, "Jack appears so concerned about not mentioning anything negative that he ends up not really saying anything at all.... It is ok to make people upset if we can explain our actions. It is ok to struggle if we have a goal and are making progress."

Another theme focused on a perceived absence of vision and lack of consistent leadership. "There is a lack of strategic thinking and vision. The budget (or the lack of one) has become all-consuming and there is no discussion regarding the academic positioning of WIU." "I see ... only reaction and helplessness." "Actions appear random and unfocused on solving the University's most critical issues," said another. One respondent commented, "In December, layoffs were announced, and then placed on hold. In January they were announced again, and again, some people were told they were not, after all,

challenges, President Thomas remains focused on student success." "President Thomas, on the recommendation of a committee, has lowered the tuition for new students starting next year. Also, instate tuition rates have been extended. I think that these messages are very important right now. This gives us some good news to highlight on the WIU website, and to emphasize in these extremely difficult fiscal times." "The president made the right decision in keeping tuition low and funding

development, and evaluations and promotions... desperate times calls for desperate measures, and he was simply attempting to do all that he could to keep the University financially solvent." "In difficult financial times, the President honored his pledge to follow the contract and give our faculty the 2% raise in the fall of 2015. He and his team have managed to avoid the devastating layoffs of hundreds and furloughs that other Universities are using to avoid closure. We may not have 'liked' his fiscal

has been a terrible time for WIU because of statewide enrollment problems and the current budget situation. Any president would have faced a difficult time. But President Thomas has really failed as a leader." "There does not seem to be a plan or a vision. WIU is going to be dismantled and I don't

## **Student Success**

24. Decrease the number of programs that are not contributing to the bottom-line then we may be able to

### **Overall Performance**

- 46. I suggest that he hire a new Provost that comes from outside the ranks of WIU staff.
- 47. Set the tone and the environment of the University.
- 48. A

## Appendix 2 Number of questions answered "No Basis for Response" or "Decline to Respond"

Question No Basis for Pecline to Response Respond

The President effectively promotes an environment for excellence in:

| Question                                                                           | No Basis for<br>Response | Decline to<br>Respond |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Regarding the Quad Cities academic programs, the President provides leadership in: |                          |                       |
| i. planning                                                                        | 125                      | 5                     |
| ii. developing                                                                     | 127                      | 5                     |
| iii. implementing                                                                  | 126                      | 5                     |
| iv. assessing                                                                      | 130                      | 6                     |
| Regarding the Macomb academic programs, the President provides leadership in:      |                          |                       |
| i. planning                                                                        | 28                       | 6                     |
| ii. developing                                                                     | 32                       | 6                     |
| iii. implementing                                                                  | 34                       | 6                     |
| iv. assessing                                                                      | 40                       | 6                     |
| The President fosters high academic standards for students at Western Illinois     |                          |                       |
| University                                                                         | 14                       | 0                     |