

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
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From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: July 29, 2014

Re: July 2014 Strategic Plan Update

At the June 6, 2014 Western Illinois University Board of Trustees meeting, it was announced that 1,460 students (1,175 undergraduate and 285 graduate) earned academic degrees after the Spring 2014 semester, and 32 faculty members earned tenure. This month's *Strategic Plan Update* shows how the academic excellence and educational opportunities continued at Western Illinois University during the summer semester. For example:

- Western Illinois University students Scottie Waldhaus and Darren Walker earned first place in the 2014 national Direct Digital Manufacturing Design Competition sponsored by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. The students entered the competition after receiving encouragement from WIU engineering technology instructor Rafael Obregon who taught them in his prototype design and production course, which focuses on additive manufacturing and 3D printing techniques.
- Alumna Jessica Toops of Aledo, Illinois, received a \$5,000 fellowship from The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. She received her bachelor's degree in history at Western with a minor in English, and will continue her studies in Northern Ireland.
- Paris Hamm, a senior biology and French major from Macomb, won the Best Undergraduate Poster Award during the Mycological Society of America's annual meeting. She is an undergraduate honors student conducting laboratory research for her honors thesis with biology Assistant Professor Andrea Porras-Alfaro.
- Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Sean Jenkins and Kibbe Field Station Manager Jim Lamer received \$30,000 from the U.S. Geological Survey for "Ecological Studies on Asian Carp to Assess Habitat Selection, Migration, Feeding Behaviors and Potential Recruitment Constraints to Inform Control Measures." The research pair was awarded \$45,777 to begin the study in 2013.
- Faculty members from Educational Leadership continued to engage in the Illinois State Action for Education Leadership Project. This \$4.6 million U.S. Department of Education School Leadership Grant-funded project evaluates the effectiveness of a new principal preparation program and partnership development for preparing effective principals to work in high-needs schools.

Western's living environments are also receiving national recognitions. The Thompson Hall renovation project will be featured during a presentation at the 2014 Midwest Association of Higher Education Facilities conference for facilities management professionals at Purdue University in September. The 19-story, 800-room residence hall was renovated as part of a \$25 million design and construction project.

As the University continues preparation for academic year 2014-2015, there will be even more educational opportunities promoting academic excellence, personal growth, and social responsibility.

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education approved the University's new Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) program in Business Analytics to begin in fall 2014. The program offered by Economics and Decision Sciences integrates data mining, statistical modeling and forecasting to support data-driven decision making and analytical problem solving. It also addresses a high-need area. A recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article noted that the need for skilled data professionals is real and growing. A 2011 study indicated that the U.S. could face a shortage of as many as 190,000 workers with "deep analytical skills" by 2018.
- Moves to the Western Illinois University-Quad Cities Riverfront Campus began on July 28th, and are on schedule for completion by August 19th. A total of 108 faculty and staff will be located in new facilities. The Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Director of Facilities Management will be coordinating property transfer from Western Illinois University 60th Street to the Macomb Campus once all furniture, fixtures, and equipment are delivered and installed at Riverfront Campus.
- Phase I construction School of Agriculture's Greenhouse Project is underway and scheduled for completion by Homecoming. Two 16 x 48 feet greenhouses will be located near the University's Livestock Center. The new facilities will extend the School of Agriculture's research capabilities in plant-science, increase opportunities to seek external funding, and add capacity to conduct more student-centered research.
- Western Illinois University-Quad Cities received a \$154,000 grant from the State of Illinois to continue the Western Illinois University-Quad Cities AmeriCorps early childhood literacy program. National studies indicate that one in three kindergarten children lack skills necessary to succeed in school. Twenty-four Western Illinois University-Quad Cities students will help area children increase school readiness in educational settings located throughout the Illinois and Iowa Quad Cities.
- Western Illinois University's Peace Corps Fellows Program received \$160,000 from the Corporation in National and Community Service to continue its statewide rural community development program. This new funding will support 17 AmeriCorps members in small communities and local organizations across the State to build capacity; engage local volunteers; and lead downtown revitalization, business retention and expansion, tourism development, health education and outreach, youth leadership, and disaster preparedness.

As these examples show, through successful implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, Western Illinois University supports high-quality educational opportunities and is a key contributor to the success of our host communities, regions, and beyond. Please contact me if you have any questions about the materials in this month's *Strategic Plan Update* and/or feedback for the continued successful implementation of the University's *Strategic Plan*.

cc:	President Thomas	CSEC Pres. Mattson	Associate Provost Neumann
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