

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees  
Cathy Early, Chair      Will Gradle  
Roger Clawson      Todd Lester  
Lyneir Cole      Steve Nelson  
Carolyn Ehlert Fuller      Yvonne Savala

From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: March 20, 2018

Re: February 2018 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* summarizes some of the decisions made at the March 13, 2018, Illinois Board of Higher Education meeting. As shown below, these decisions support the continued successful advancement of the goals and priorities in *Higher Values in Higher Education*.

- *Higher Values in Higher Education* includes priorities to increase the participation and achievement of students who have been traditionally underrepresented in Illinois public higher education. The IBHE's Underrepresented Groups Report noted, "Western Illinois University (WIU) continues to effectively serve students from historically underrepresented groups. The student population at WIU continues to increase in physical diversity, with the percent of domestic students identifying as non-white increasing from 21.4% in 2011 to 32.5% in 2016 – an increase of 740 students; 42% of WIU students identify as the first-generation college students."
- *Higher Values in Higher Education* includes priorities to develop high demand programs in areas of need that are consistent with the *Mission* of the University. The IBHE approved Western's request to establish a Bachelor of Business in Business Analytics degree. This new degree is built upon existing courses and resources. It is estimated that program enrollment will increase from approximately 15 students in the first year, growing to 50 students in the fifth year. The program extends from rapid growth in the analytics minor, and will be administered by the Department of Economics and Decision Sciences within the College of Business and Technology.

In reviewing the University's proposal, the IBHE concluded, "There are no Illinois public universities currently offering an undergraduate degree in business analytics. There are very few institutions currently offering full degree programs in Business Analytics, with most defining study in the field as a minor or concentration within existing baccalaureate programs. The only private college in the State of Illinois that offers a Bachelor's degree in Business Analytics program is Benedictine University. Three other private institutions offer an undergraduate degree in data analytics. WIU is therefore poised to be an early leader in providing this high-need program due to the limited options available for undergraduate business analytics students in Illinois."

- *Higher Values in Higher Education* includes priorities to increase the recruitment and retention of high-achieving, diverse faculty and staff. Recognized for the University's leadership in these matters, Dr. Ron Williams, Vice President for Student Services, was appointed to Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois (DFI) Program Board. The DFI Board provides "financial awards and support services to eligible underrepresented students pursuing graduate and professional degrees at Illinois public and private institutions of higher education. As a condition of the award, recipients agree to accept a teaching or staff position in an Illinois higher education institution or governing board, or an education-related position in a state agency, equal to the number of years the student was a participant in the program."

As these examples show, Western Illinois University is on the forefront of statewide policy issues. As such, the Social Responsibility Task Force continues to seek your feedback on the first draft of Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027 (available at

[http://www.wiu.edu/university\\_planning/planningupdates.php](http://www.wiu.edu/university_planning/planningupdates.php) and clicking on February 2018).

Comments received will be included in a revised edition of the new Strategic Plan that will be shared with the University community in April. Thank you, in advance, for your feedback.

cc:      President Thomas                      CSEC President Dorethy                      SGA President Cortez  
            Interim Provost Neumann              COAP President Adamson                      Associate Provost Parsons  
            Vice President Bainter                      Faculty Council Ch. Pillutla                      Associate Provost Morgan  
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