

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

Faculty Senate Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance (CPPP)

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(Thanks to David Towers, CITR, for creating and distributing the survey)

### **Executive Summary**

A survey was conducted of the WIU Macomb and Quad Cities faculty asking them to evaluate President Thomas's performance in 2015-2016. A total of 278 faculty members opened the survey instrument and 243 actually submitted the survey, out of a population of 612 in the Spring of 2016. They evaluated the President's Overall Performance on a five-point rating scale at a mean value of 2.47, with a standard deviation of 1.42. The respondents also provided evaluations of the President's performance in the areas of Total Campus Enterprise; Student Success; Academic Goals; and Personnel, Faculty Relations and Campus Issues. A summary of those respondents' quantitative ratings follows. Finally, the respondents were given opportunities to comment on the President's performance. The comments provided are summarized at the end of this report, and representative comments are shown.

Both the qualitative and quantitative responses to the survey show that faculty ratings of the President deteriorated from previous years, in the light of the President's performance in responding to the significant budgetary and demographic constraints facing the University.

In the area of Total Campus Enterprise, comments focused primarily on the ongoing fiscal crisis. While some praised the President's decision to eliminate low-enrollment programs, more faculty expressed concerns regarding his decision to use enrollment decline as a means for laying off faculty. Similarly, while some praised the President for his openness regarding his decisions, more faculty perceived a lack of transparency, and an absence of vision. The President's relationship with the leadership of the faculty union UPI was a major concern as well. While some faulted the Union, others faulted the administration. Some blamed both parties.

In the area of Student Success, the comments focused on recruitment and retention. Many respondents commented on the quality of students admitted to the University, the impact of layoffs on students and the reputation of WIU; others voiced concerns about the lack of faculty support and resources in fostering student success. Positive comments were specific to reduced tuition, funding MAP and the overall focus on student success.

In the area of Academic Goals, some faculty protested what they perceive as the University's move away from comprehensive education towards specialization in certain programs that recently have seen robust enrollments. Others urge this. Faculty appear divided about what the President's plans are for the university as an academic institution, as well as uncertainty about the President's vision for the relationship between and goals for the Macomb and QC campuses. Many faculty commented that the method by which the administration targeted faculty for layoffs beginning in December 2015 seemed invalid. Faculty also expressed frustration with decreased funding for scholarship, which impacts their professional training and teaching. Some faculty, however, acknowledge that the university's financial

challenges are not all the President's responsibility, and credit him for striving to keep the university affordable for students despite the state of affairs in Illinois higher education.

In the area of Personnel, Faculty Relations, and Campus Issues, a majority of comments focused on the President's management of the budget crisis, layoffs, and his effectiveness in working with UPI. While some comments on the President's performance were positive and either acknowledged external factors impacting the University or criticized UPI, these were greatly outnumbered by responses critical of the President. Other issues commonly discussed included hiring practices and facilities.

In the area of President Thomas's Overall Performance, there were several areas of concern including doubts about his leadership ability and expressing need for new leadership, his lack of transparency about administrative decisions and faculty and staff layoffs, and questions about the effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts, especially the quality of the students being recruited. However, there were those that voiced support for President Thomas's leadership abilities and many pointed to the state of higher education in Illinois and the unprecedented lack of fiscal support from Governor Rauner and his administration.

## **Overview and Methodology**

At the request of the Board of Trustees' standing Presidential Evaluation and Assessment Committee, the Faculty Senate conducts an annual survey of the faculty regarding their views on the President's performance. The data in Figure 4 include the previous evaluations for comparative purposes. Several changes were made to the survey used last year. These are as follows:

- To increase the survey response rate, language was used in the survey introduction to communicate the confidentiality of the survey, and to communicate its importance, including a statement by the chair of the Board of Trustees.
- "No Basis for Response" and "Decline to Respond" were included for each survey item, replacing the single category "No Response."
- Student Success is a new area of evaluation, adapted from evaluation practices at a peer institution. This category evaluates the President for effectiveness in students' recruitment and retention, particularly concerning their financial access to education.
- In "The President works effectively with Student Services to foster policies for..." "Student quality of life" is a new survey item, also based on peer evaluation practices. This category evaluates the President's effectiveness in helping to make students' lives in Macomb enjoyable and enriching.
- "The President effectively promotes enhancement of student learning outcomes for a globally competitive environment" is a new survey item, also based on peer evaluation practices. This category addresses the President's effectiveness in preparing students with global skills and international career awareness.

The survey was conducted on-line by e-mailing each eligible faculty member (612 faculty were invited to participate) a web link to complete the survey. Eligible faculty members had three weeks to respond (opened February 2, and closed February 23) and were given two separate reminders in addition to the initial invitation to complete the survey. 45% of the total faculty opened the survey (compared to 28% last year), and 40%, of the total faculty submitted their survey (compared to 25% last year).

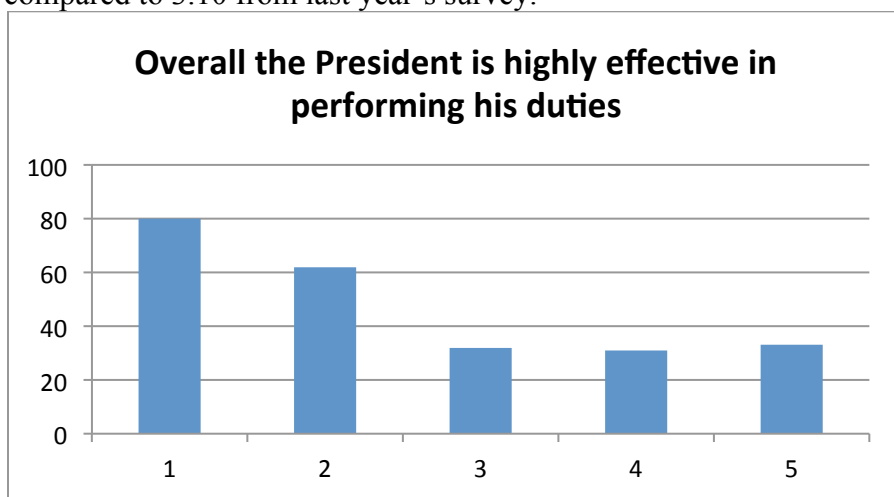
For the survey questions, a 5-point rating scale was used (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with the additional options of No Basis for Response and Decline to Respond. The survey instrument asked questions divided into four focus areas: Total Campus Enterprise; Student Success; Academic 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=Strongly Agree)." The mean of the responses was 2.47. These responses exclude one "No Basis for Response" and three "Decline to Respond" answers.**

When asked at the end of the section on Total Campus Enterprise if “overall, the President fosters the mission of the University,” the mean rating was 2.83 (compared to 3.23 from last year’s survey).

The respondents were first asked to rank the President’s initiatives for the current year in order of importance to them. Figure 2 lists each initiative, and how these initiatives were ranked in importance

by the respondents, from most to least important. The greatest number of respondents indicated that Academic 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 chosen as most important by the faculty, replacing Enrollment Management in the previous year. Committees were the least important initiative by a wide margin (same as in 2014-2015). The relationships of faculty priorities of the President’s initiatives are depicted proportionally in the pie chart in Figure 3.

President Initiatives for 2015-2016

	Mean
Academic Programs	2.06
Budget	2.65
Enrollment Management	2.81
Facilities	4.98
Governmental Relations	5.06
Alumni Relations and Development	6.29
Professional Development	6.29
Campus Collaboration	6.49
Committees	8.37

Figure 2. The President's initiatives for 2015-2016, and how they were ranked in importance by the faculty respondents (1 = most important, 9 = least important).

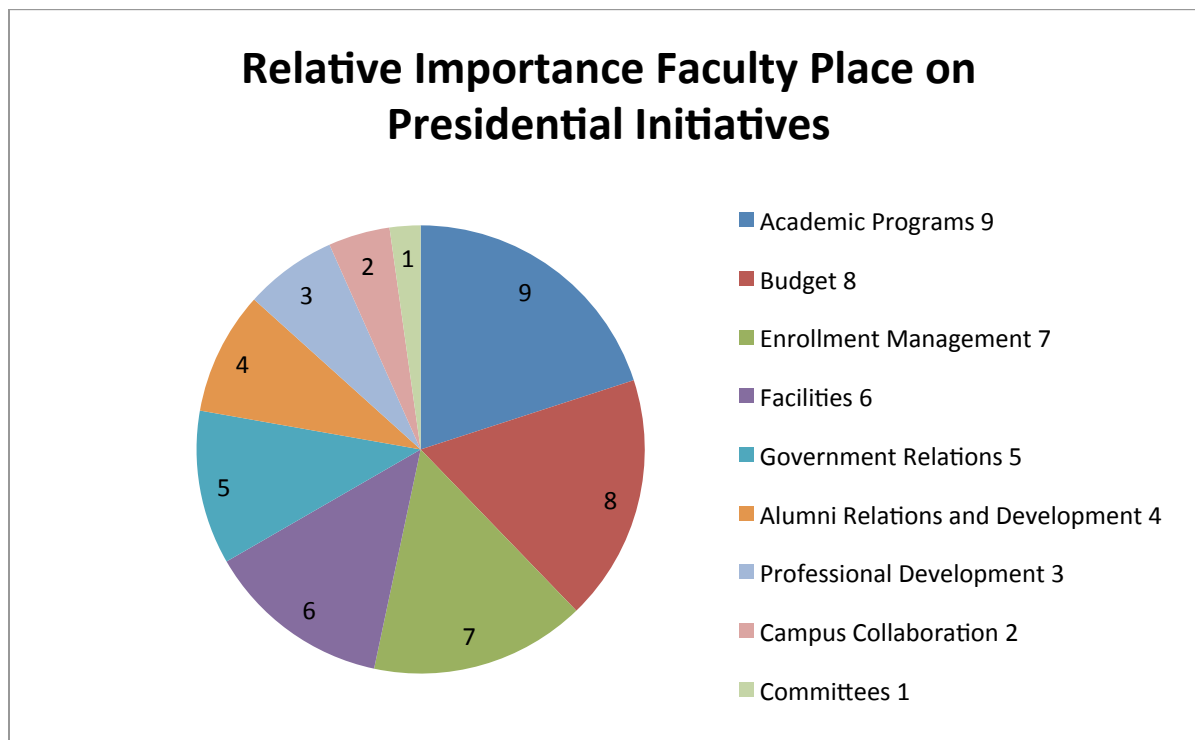


Figure 3. Pie chart showing the relative importance among faculty of the President’s 2015-2016 initiatives (9=most important, 1=least important).

## **Areas of Performance**

Discussion of ratings below is based on a rating scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant faculty “strongly disagreed” with the statement, and 5 meant “strongly agreed” with the statement.

### **Total Campus Enterprise**

#### *Support for Scholarship, Teaching and Students*

When asked if the President effectively promotes an environment for excellence in scholarship, the mean response from the faculty was 2.69. When asked if the President effectively promotes an environment for excellence in teaching, the respondents rated his performance at 2.91. The President’s performance was rated at 3.05 for “effectively promoting an environment for excellence in student learning.”

#### *Campus Mission*

There were a number of questions in the survey related to the President’s effectiveness in carrying out the University’s mission, or in his support of others in accomplishing their mission. With regards to short-range planning, the President’s policies were rated at 2.68, while his policies related to long-range planning were rated at 2.57. The higher rating for short-range planning is reflected in some comments of the respondents that credited the President for actions in the face of severe financial exigency.

With regards to the President’s effectiveness in promoting the University’s mission to the local community, the western Illinois region, and beyond the region, his actions were rated at 2.96, 2.93 and 2.81, respectively. The ratings indicate that the faculty respondents consider President Thomas to be doing a somewhat better job in promoting the University and its mission regionally than he has been able to outside our region.

With regards to the President’s effectiveness in fostering relationships among the relevant constituencies on campus, the ratings for his effectiveness with government agencies was 2.93, with potential donors was 2.97, with alumni was 3.14, with the local community was 2.91, with the Board of Trustees was 3.42 and with the University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) was 2.05. His lowest ratings were for relationships with the UPI and the local community. The highest ratings were for his relationship with the Board of Trustees and alumni.

The next questions concerned how effectively the President has managed and provided resources to the departments, colleges and overall University. The faculty respondents rated his performance in supporting their department or academic unit at 2.44. They rated his performance in managing University resources at 2.65, and his effectiveness in securing funding at 2.28.

#### *Overall Rating*

Respondents rated the overall effectiveness of the President in fostering the mission of the University at 2.83.

### **Student Success**

The faculty were asked to rate the President’s demonstration of effort to ensure student success. In terms of increasing access, retention, and graduation of new high school graduates, respondents rated

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 to be 2.70, in developing the QC academic programs to be 2.75, in implementing the QC academic programs to be 2.74, and in assessing the QC academic programs to be 2.62.

A parallel question regarding the President's support of the academic programs at the Macomb campus had from 194 to 208 respondents. The respondents rated his leadership in planning for the Macomb academic programs to be 2.56, in developing the Macomb academic programs to be 2.50, in implementing the Macomb academic programs to be 2.55, and in assessing the Macomb academic programs to be 2.46. Consistent with last year, this year these numbers are lower than for those evaluating the Quad Cities programs.

### *Overall Academic Standards*

The faculty were asked to rate the President's effectiveness in fostering high academic standards for students at WIU. Respondents rated the President's performance at 2.77.

### *Preparing Students for a Globally Competitive Environment*

In a new category this year, the faculty rated the President's effectiveness in promoting enhancement of student learning outcomes for a globally competitive environment at 2.72.

### *Support for research*

When asked to respond to the statement, “The President allocates resources so that your department or academic unit’s faculty can accomplish their research mission,” the respondents rated the President’s performance at 2.12. The comments indicate widespread dissatisfaction with the support they receive for carrying out their research agenda.

### **Personnel, Faculty Relations, and Campus Issues**

A series of two questions were asked regarding faculty, staff and student activities. The first question was whether the President’s management practices promote excellence. The respondents rated the President with regard to faculty at 2.33, with regard to staff at 2.52, and with regard to students at 2.87. The second question was whether the President’s management practices promote diversity. The respondents rate the President with regard to faculty at 3.05, with regard to staff at 3.12, and with regard to students at 3.40. The President’s highest ratings of effectiveness are for his work in promoting diversity.

The faculty members being surveyed were then asked to evaluate whether the President is “responsive to your concerns.” The President’s responsiveness was rated at 2.40.

#### *Macomb Campus*

The survey asked the respondents to evaluate whether the President promotes the Macomb campus work environment to be healthy, safe, and pleasant. The respondents rated his effectiveness in promoting these characteristics at the Macomb campus to be 3.03, 3.22 and 2.70, respectively. The number of respondents averaged 214.

#### *Quad Cities Campus*

The same questions were asked regarding the Quad Cities campus, for which an average of 72 people responded (note that only 11 of these 72 respondents self-identified as associated primarily with the Quad Cities). The respondents rated his effectiveness in promoting a healthy, safe, and pleasant environment to be 3.37, 3.45 and 3.33, respectively.

#### *Faculty governance*

The respondents were asked to evaluate whether the President supports faculty governance at all levels. The respondents’ rating was 2.46.

#### *Administrative appointments*

The respondents were asked to evaluate whether the President makes effective administrative appointments. They rated his effectiveness of making appointments at 2.22.

#### *Physical facilities*

In response to the statement, “The President directs the University’s physical facilities so that they meet the needs of your department or academic unit,” the respondents rated the President’s performance at 2.72.

### **Figure 4: President’s Survey Quantitative Data:**

For each of the following series of questions the respondents were asked to rate how effective President Thomas is in performing various aspects of his responsibilities. The scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). If the respondent felt he or she couldn't or shouldn't answer, he or she could answer "No Basis for Response" or "Decline to Respond."

**NB: "No Basis for Response" and "Decline to Respond" numbers were not used in calculating the mean or standard deviation. Their totals of these responses for each question are reported in Appendix 2. The labeling of the years in the columns refers to the academic year being evaluated.**

Q #	Question Text	Mean (Average) Score			Standard Deviation*			N # of respondents per question**		
		2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-2014
A1-3.	The President effectively promotes an environment for excellence in:									
	i. Scholarship	2.69	3.09	3.19	1.33	1.44	1.27	240	147	192
	ii. Teaching	2.91	3.23	3.32	1.37	1.34	1.25	244	145	194
	iii. Student learning	3.05	3.26	3.40	1.30	1.29	1.22	243	142	186
A4-5.	The President effectively promotes policies that support the mission of the University relative to:									
	i. Short term strategic planning	2.68	3.22	3.45	1.39	1.31	1.23	242	143	182
	ii. Long term strategic planning	2.57	3.02 <sup>a</sup>	3.18	1.42	1.43	1.33	240	142	181
A6-8.	The President effectively promotes the University's academic mission to:									
	i. The local community	2.96	3.16	3.42	1.38	1.48	1.34	228	141	170
	ii. The western Illinois region	2.93	3.14	3.44	1.42	1.44	1.30	220	136	168
	iii. Beyond the region	2.81	3.19	3.13	1.41	1.43	1.36	201	128	157
A9-14.	The President fosters effective relationships with:									
	i. Government agencies	2.93	3.24	3.35	1.42	1.41	1.30	209	119	126
	ii. Potential donors	2.97	3.32	3.50	1.37	1.33	1.28	158	111	133
	iii. Alumni	3.14	3.31	3.56	1.33	1.32	1.19	184	121	148
	iv. Local Community	2.91	3.17	3.35	1.34	1.45	1.29	223	131	159
	v. Board of Trustees	3.42	3.78	3.89	1.34	1.23	1.18	199	112	140
	vi. UPI (University Professionals of Illinois)	2.05	2.95	3.19	1.32	1.38	1.28	243	132	169
A15.	The President effectively promotes policies that foster the activities of your department or academic unit.	2.44	2.76	2.97	1.37	1.46	1.35	234	147	190
A16.	The President manages the University's resources well.	2.65	3.06	3.24	1.43	1.47	1.33	240	147	192
A17.	The President effectively secures funding to support university initiatives.	2.28	2.83	3.06	1.38	1.43	1.29	213	138	171
A18.	Overall, the President fosters the mission of Western Illinois University.	2.83	3.23	3.37	1.40	1.39	1.27	242	147	191
B1-6.	To ensure student success, the President demonstrates effort to:									
	-increase access, retention, and graduation of new high school graduates	3.13	-	-	1.36	-	-	216	-	-
	-increase access, retention, and graduation of community college transfers	3.05	-	-	1.34	-	-	203	-	-
	-make undergraduate education affordable	3.69	-	-	1.25	-	-	217	-	-
	-make graduate education affordable	3.41	-	-	1.26	-	-	187	-	-
	-increase the availability of student financial aid	3.34	-	-	1.36	-	-	174	-	-
	-advocate policies to moderate debt load of students	3.25	-	-	1.35	-	-	174	-	-



Q #	Question Text	Mean (Average) Score			Standard Deviation*			N # of respondents per question**		
		2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-2014
C1-2.	The President works effectively with ___ to allocate resources for your department or academic unit to achieve WIU's mission i. Provost ii. Deans	2.88 2.62	3.32 3.01	3.35 3.19	1.45 1.39	1.41 1.43	1.37 1.41	189 199	126 129	165 162
C3-5.	The President works effectively with the Provost anticipating future needs (i.e., technology, infrastructure, or student services) of: i. faculty ii. students iii. staff	2.48 2.77 2.58	2.75 3.10 2.97	2.92 3.08 3.04	1.43 1.40 1.39	1.53 1.43 1.49	1.36 1.26 1.29	208 196 175	177 158 134	159 131 109
C6-7.	The President works effectively with Student Services to foster policies for: i. student leadership ii. co-curricular participation iii. student quality of life	3.23 3.14 3.12	3.46 3.35 -	3.67 3.44 -	1.35 1.35 1.37	1.38 1.41 -	1.22 1.32 -	132 123 128	103 98 -	117 113 -
C8-11.	Regarding the Quad Cities academic programs, the President provides leadership in: i. planning ii. developing iii. implementing iv. assessing	2.70 2.75 2.74 2.62	3.24 3.23 3.12 3.08	3.40 3.32 3.27 3.18	1.48 1.50 1.52 1.50	1.49 1.49 1.54 1.50	1.33 1.39 1.42 1.43	113 110 111 105	80 80 78 75	81 81 82 71
C12-15.	Regarding the Macomb academic programs, the President provides leadership in: i. planning ii. developing iii. implementing iv. assessing	2.56 2.50 2.55 2.46	3.05 2.99 2.99 2.91	3.59 3.51 3.50 3.63	1.44 1.39 1.44 1.39	1.44 1.46 1.46 1.47	1.51 1.53 1.52 1.66	208 202 201 194	130 131 128 126	194 192 194 194
C16.	The President fosters high academic standards for students at Western Illinois University	2.77	3.09	3.29	1.37	1.44	1.29	230	149	188
C17.	The President promotes enhancement of student learning outcomes for a globally competitive environment	2.72	-	-	1.41	-	-	219	-	-
C18.	The President allocates resources so that your department or academic unit's faculty can accomplish their research mission.	2.12	2.43	2.63	1.27	1.44	1.31	226	149	189
D1-2.	Regarding faculty, the President's management practices promote i. Excellence ii. Diversity	2.33 3.05	2.83 3.79	3.04 3.79	1.42 1.57	1.45 1.20	1.39 1.24	235 225	147 145	185 174
D3-4.	Regarding staff, the President's management practices promote: i. Excellence ii. Diversity	2.52 3.12	2.83 3.59	3.08 3.70	1.48 1.54	1.49 1.31	1.38 1.19	172 165	115 117	122 125
D5-6.	Regarding student activities, the President's management practices promote: i. Excellence ii. Diversity	2.87 3.40	3.08 3.66	3.37 3.91	1.46 1.43	1.44 1.31	1.30 1.16	165 164	121 123	132 133
D7.	The President is responsive to your concerns.	2.40	2.89	3.01	1.45	1.55	1.48	209	118	158

Q #	Question Text	Mean (Average) Score			Standard Deviation*			N # of respondents per question**		
		2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2015-16	2014-15	2013-2014
D8-10.	The President effectively promotes the Macomb campus work environment to be									
	i. healthy	3.03	3.32	3.41	1.42	1.42	1.36	219	140	173
	ii. safe	3.22	3.33	3.35	1.39	1.36	1.38	224	142	177
	iii. pleasant	2.70	3.23	3.25	1.50	1.45	1.43	225	142	175
D11-13.	The President effectively promotes the Quad Cities campus work environment to be									
	i. healthy	3.37	3.76	3.67	1.49	1.41	1.52	75	58	52
	ii. safe	3.45	3.76	3.61	1.44	1.33	1.50	74	55	51
	iii. pleasant	3.33	3.77	3.67	1.53	1.41	1.53	78	57	51
D14.	The President supports faculty governance at all levels.	2.46	3.15	3.35	1.49	1.35	1.37	217	142	175
D15.	The President makes effective administrative appointments.	2.22	2.64	2.91	1.38	1.46	1.46	217	137	169
D16.	The President directs the University's physical facilities so that they meet the needs of your department or academic unit	2.72	2.88	3.03	1.38	1.37	1.34	207	145	168
	<b>Overall, the President is highly effective at performing his duties<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>185</b>

\* Standard deviation is a measure of dispersion. In other words, it measures the degree to which responses are spread out around the mean. The larger the standard deviation, the more the scores differ from the mean. Alternatively, if the standard deviation is small, this indicates that the scores were very close to one another.

\*\* In the 2015-16 survey, 278 faculty members began the survey, and 243 submitted their survey by clicking the submit button. Not everyone filled out a response to every question. The statistical means were calculated using the number of respondents who responded 1 through 5 on the rate scale provided. This number is indicated in the third column of numbers in Figure 4.

<sup>a</sup> In the 2013-14 and 2014-15 surveys, this question read, "Overall, I rate the President as".

### Qualitative Analysis of Open Ended Comments:

At the end of each of the four sections in the survey and concerning the President's overall performance, faculty were asked to add any additional comments regarding the President's performance in those areas. Representative comments are presented below by the section of the survey in which they were submitted, and within each section, organized as positive comments and negative comments. Additionally, faculty used some comments to make recommendations to the President for changing his performance in serving the University. A representative number of these are included in Appendix 1.

### Total Campus Enterprise

One hundred thirty faculty offered comments in this section. Of these, 32 were positive, 79 were negative, and 4 included both positive and negative comments. Thirteen comments offered recommendations. Two wrote "No Comment."

Among positive comments, several faculty spoke well of Dr. Thomas's advocating on behalf of the University. "He is a strong advocate for WIU in Springfield, and he is exercising every option within his power to ensure the University survives this crisis." Another wrote "President Thomas has done an

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 doors) out to the public, causing further damage to the University's reputation."

Several respondents said they were not aware of the criteria used for faculty layoffs, suggesting a lack of transparency in decision-making. One wrote, "It was not publicly made known (and it is still

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, going to be terminated." "He has known about the state's gradual dis-investment for years; the demographic drop that has led to our enrollment declines has also been no secret. Bolder and more responsible actions were needed much earlier." From another, "He seems resigned to declining enrollment rather than being aggressive in turning the trend around." Another wrote, "The only way out of this situation is to regrow our enrollments. A leader would be working with all WIU staff and faculty to figure out how to turn the tide." One felt too little was being done: "Except for cutting the cost of tuition I've seen little in initiatives to attract more students except a few more billboards and some television ads." Another wrote, "Thomas's failure to take decisive action could result in the closing of WIU...." "By trying too long to save dying programs, he hurt WIU in the long run. He should have cut under-performing programs loose a long time ago.... The University cannot sustain that model."

Some other concerns were expressed. For example, "President Thomas has mismanaged resources by prioritizing purchases like light-up signs and hiring expensive consulting services." A few worry "The Thomas Administration apparently wants to ... turn our University into a Vo-Tech [university]." Similarly, "It is sad to hear that there is some impetus for moving WIU to be more of a regional vocational training school--focusing on career majors and moving away from a hybrid liberal/applied education." One wrote, "He appears unwilling to make comparable cuts to administrative staffing." Another, "He also appears unwilling to consider other kinds of cost-saving measures, such as energy efficiency and reductions in athletic programs." Another wrote, "As far as I can tell, we also are not aggressive in tapping our alumni during these desperate times." Last, a couple suggested the President could be more visible beyond athletic events, and "He has never been in my academic building since I arrived at WIU. We have invited him to events, some of which connect with his academic background. He has never attended."

## **Student Success**

Fifty-six faculty offered comments in this section. Of these, 16 were positive, 24 were negative, and 16 were recommendations.

Among positive comments, 12 respondents were positive about the decisions to fund MAP and decrease tuition. "His decision to front students their MAP funds is an example of his resolve in this area." "His funding of MAP grants speaks volumes." "Providing access to a quality, affordable education has been a consistent focus of the President's mission, evidenced in the recent decision to reduce the tuition for the next academic year. Although the University is faced with many budgetary

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, in-state 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 MAP grants from the university resources.” “I feel that the President is aware of the needs that the majority of potential students coming to the University have, is making conscious efforts to ‘market’ the University as a source for higher learning for all students - not just those with higher incomes. He is very pro-students and services that they need.” “I believe the president is taking the appropriate steps to keep and enhance WIU as an affordable option for students.”

Three additional comments highlighted the President’s focus on student success. “He has provided strong and energetic leadership that has focused on student access, learning effectiveness, student diversity, and student success in an environment that has become increasingly uncertain. He has collaborated with various entities on campus to ensure that students are having a positive experience at Western Illinois University. He has worked positively with student representatives such as the Student Government Association and also created a Student Round Table where he discusses various issues and concerns with students. President Thomas frequently meets with undergraduate student groups and attends their functions as his schedule allows. In all my years of higher education, I have not seen a university president give the level of access to students that he has provided. The preceding is solid evidence that the president is strong regarding student success.” “Students speak very highly of President Thomas and his interest in their educational endeavors and how to help them succeed and earn their bachelor or master degrees.”

Among negative comments, 10 respondents expressed concern about the quality of our students. Some of these comments included: “My understanding is that a few years back, President Thomas admitted students who did not qualify for our school. This decision affected many classes and programs. We need to recruit the best, not take anyone who can get a loan. That is unethical in my book. Taking money when you know the student's success rate is limited.” “Your recruitment over the last five years is AWFUL. The quality of the students and the retention of the students have fallen off a cliff. Your plan has cost us money in lost student loans and only given us poorer quality students under your leadership.” “I realize we are a state school and not a research driven campus. But that doesn't HAVE to mean that every student gets in. There is a job for junior colleges that goes beyond education in class rooms: they give kids time to stay living at home while working somewhere, while getting interested in the life they could have with an education. Then they begin changing their plans and goals; they begin to see the importance of working toward an education that will help them. THEN they are ready for our hallways. Let's give them that time for growth.”

Four respondents were concerned about the fairness of reducing tuition for incoming students with no reduction for returning students. “I think lowering tuition was a great idea (and eliminating the in-state/out of state distinctions), however I do think it was unfair to not lower the tuition for next year's sophomores. I understand the revenue implications, but it's still a little shameful and defies the spirit of the 4-year guarantee that we've so proudly championed for so long.” “I really hope the decrease in tuition for incoming students works to get more students enrolled because it has annoyed a lot of the current student body.” One respondent disagrees with reduced tuition, “The problem with the affordability question is that he has cheapened the ‘education.’ Of course a cheaper, lower quality education can be more affordable, but you get what you pay for.”

Five comments were made about how the layoffs will affect recruitment and retention. “The decision to unnecessarily lay off faculty has significantly damaged the reputation of WIU and will make it much more difficult to attract and retain students. Even before the announcement, one of the primary

failures of the president's term in office has been the steady decline in student attraction and retention. He and his team have failed at the basic mission of their positions.” “Short sighted. Without a long-range vision, there is nothing substantive that all of these questions have to do with money but when the union tried to save him money, he was not willing to compromise on lay offs.”

## **Academic Goals**

For this area 79 faculty wrote comments. Among these, 13 were positive, 45 were negative, and many others were recommendations for the President to consider.

Among the positive comments, several support the President for performing well under difficult circumstances. “If we recognize that our budget crisis is beyond our control (i.e., we have not received a penny of our 53 million dollar state appropriations this year), then it is clear the President is doing his best, and doing well, all things being equal. We have no money coming in from the state, but we are surviving.” “Despite one of the most perilous times in the University's history, President Thomas has been effective in achieving the University's overall academic goals. He has continued to pursue and ensure viable academic programs. He continues to promote a student-centered learning environment and encourages excellence and innovation in teaching through the use of technology and creative activities. He has worked collaboratively to set an academic vision and continues to provide stellar leadership and direction for all aspects of the University. He continues to push departments to refine curriculum and instruction standards and seek external funding opportunities.” A similar comment reads, “The President has done what he can, but without resources (e.g., funding) he cannot do the things that need to be done in this area such as restore travel budgets for faculty research presentations, travel funds for professional growth opportunities, and better instructional technology capability in our aging classrooms.” A third stated, “As a consequence of the budget crisis it's very difficult to grow in the area of research and scholarship. From a long-term perspective this will hurt our ability to help our students (they want to learn from faculty engaged in the frontiers of their disciplines) but it's an understandable sacrifice right now.”

Other faculty expressed approval of some aspects of the President's strategic decision-making. “The decision to change Student Services leadership was bold and important. If student services and academic affairs collaborate more effectively, we can provide programs that more effectively recruit and retain undergraduate students.” One respondent believes the President's reallocation of resources is good and should be accelerated. “The President is moving toward providing more resources for growing areas; however, the need for program review and reallocation or limitation of resources in certain areas is happening too late. Overstaffing and over administrating should have been addressed as the budget began to decline. I believe that active and positive steps are being taken to ensure that WIU will prosper and thrive in a more efficient and positive manner in the future.”

Among the negative responses, roughly ten questioned the President's basic commitment to or understanding of academic goals. Some representative comments were these: “This president has no Academic Goals.” “What performance? He has done nothing here.” “What are our academic goals, beyond the rhetoric? I honestly don't know.” “I don't see any leadership or initiatives in this area.” “It is very clear that if it is academic, it's not his goal. No need to gild that fact.”

Several faculty interpreted faculty layoffs as a reflection of the President's low concern for the University's academic affairs. Six responses focused on consequences of eliminating the arts and sciences. Illustrative comments were these: “The president has attacked the faculty in a careless way. Students pay for that. In this environment of attack, there is no academic freedom or independence. There is fear.” “Academic goals cannot be met with faculty layoffs, especially if so many of the layoffs are for women and international faculty and so many of the areas of expertise are global.” “I

don't see how the president could be helping students learn about the world when he cuts professors from history, religious studies, foreign languages, politics, education, etc. In fact, it seems his choices are diametrically opposed to what our students need.” “How can the president foster global awareness or student success when he intended to layoff almost all faculty at the University that dealt with areas of the world that aren't predominantly populated by [C]aucasians. I get that some CAS programs don't bring in money, but you know what, educating students about diverse groups, their cultures, languages, histories, and religions is ESSENTIAL.” “It seems to me that it does not matter to [the President] whether WIU remains a true liberal arts university or not. And in fact, if he would come right out and say this – ‘we don't care if our students receive a well-rounded education in the social sciences, natural sciences and the humanities’ or ‘we cannot financially support a well-rounded education now’ - we could have an argument about it. But my suspicion is that he does not even have a vision about what will take the place of what is now WIU.”

Cuts in funding for faculty scholarship also arose as suggestive of the President's low concern for achieving academic excellence. Nine faculty made this point. Four comments were these: “All [the President has] done is cut the travel budget to attend conferences or professional development opportunities. The CITR travel award for presenting at conferences is a joke!!!” “[Z]ero travel money, but junior faculty are expected to spend their own money to present at conferences in order to earn tenure.” “There is not money for travel or conferences. We are required to do this, not only for tenure, but to stay current in our academic disciplines [however] this seems unimportant to the President and the administration at large.” “Despite the current crisis, we still are able to educate our students for success. However, we are not able to conduct research and/or present that research at regional, national, and/or international conferences due to the removal of support funds for laboratories, other resources and travel.”

Finally, four faculty commented that there is an apparent decline in student quality, despite an increase in WIU's academic admission requirements. One comment read, “The administration's decision to lower academic standards for incoming freshmen contributed to the failure to attract and retain students. The president does not care about academic standards, only the artificially produced rankings described in his blurb [statement of priorities].” However, another comment read, “I consistently have students in class who are unprepared for college-level work. I'm unsure how much of this problem relates to the president's performance. I do know WIU very publicly initiated a tiny increase in admission standards, but even those standards can easily be waived. The administration's reliance on rankings by *U.S. News and World Report* is unhelpful, given that those rankings are demonstrably invalid and seem to mask problems with student preparedness that WIU urgently needs to address.”

### **Personnel, Faculty Relations, and Campus Issues**

This section yielded 83 total responses. Of these 11 were positive, 47 were negative, and 25 included both positive and negative commentary or simply offered recommendations.

There were a number of positive comments regarding the President's management of the budget crisis. These comments acknowledged external factors as the source of the crisis and praised the President for his management and communication skills. “The President has no choice but to react to the funding challenges presented by our state, and this means making difficult personnel decisions. Although faculty layoffs are painful for the University community, we cannot escape the fact that some departments have too many faculty to serve our current student population. The President and the administration have handled this extremely difficult situation in the most compassionate way possible.” “President Thomas has tremendous organizational and communication skills. These skills have been tested with the state's budget crisis and political fighting in the state capitol. President Thomas has continued to provide strategic leadership in regards to budgetary matters, and professional

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 conservatism in the past, but it has provided the safety net for the current crisis.”

Many of the critical comments in this section focused on the President’s management of the budget crisis, layoffs, and his effectiveness in working with UPI. “I understand the University is facing financial challenges, but am disappointed in the manner in which the president has chosen to address those challenges, particularly in regards to the blatant violations of the protocols spelled out very clearly in the collective bargaining agreement.” “The president disregarded viable solutions proposed by UPI to resolve the budget crisis without faculty layoffs, and has created an atmosphere of fear and distrust in every department and college of this University. The president has not made transparent the rationale behind decisions that affect the whole University, the community and region. He has created acrimonious divisions rather than cultivated consensus. He has made an end-run around faculty governance and violated the terms of the UPI contract.” “The President behaves as if he were the CEO of WIU. He disrespects faculty governance and the union that represents us.” “The President’s mishandling of the current budget crisis regarding faculty and staff layoffs has eroded the confidence of students, faculty and staff. This has harmed the relationship of the president and personnel. This has also directly impacted the reputation of the University.” “The handling of faculty layoffs has been a disaster. Much of the blame can be put on the inept union leadership, but the administration has made significant errors also. There should have been more information a year ago about the need to make changes in the future and the direct negative effects of the faculty receiving a 2% raise (more layoffs, makes WIU look as if we don’t need more support, etc.)”

There were also many critical comments regarding hiring practices, particularly for administrative positions. “I don’t feel that the President has made the wisest of choices when it comes to filling administrative appointments. Some individuals are unwilling or unable to make well informed and difficult choices about curriculum, staffing, and other issues.” “I get very frustrated that nearly all administrative appointments are internal. WIU desperately needs fresh ideas and perspectives. It feels like we are being managed to save a dollar rather than re-energize a campus.” “I think there have been some questionable administrative appointments coupled with oversights in safety issues around the University. Certainly the structural changes underway and the lack of transparency in how these decisions have been made has done little to enhance faculty relations.”

Of the comments that were neutral in tone regarding the President’s performance and offered insights or recommendations, some were critical of UPI. “The contentious relationship between UPI and the administration is costing the University valuable time, money, and resources that could be better used elsewhere. I do not believe that this is the fault of the President or the administration; this is about the union being more concerned with promoting the union agenda rather than working for the good of the faculty and this University.” “I think as long as we have a faculty union we will not have a real faculty/administration relationship. The union simply gets in the way of faculty governance.” “The work environment has been particularly unpleasant this last year and I do hope the President can do something to foster a more positive relationship with UPI (I have no idea what that would be though). The ‘negotiations’ between the two have caused serious rifts among colleagues and it’s hard to keep it from spilling into classes.” “I often feel that the President is shackled by the constraints that have been negotiated with the unions that represent both faculty and staff. In addition, there are various state-enacted regulations that prevent more inventive ways to support our mission. I believe that the President needs to reach out to a wider pool of our community in order to find more inventive ways to recruit new students, draw more funding, and promote campus harmony through diversity.”



There were also several comments that focused on facilities. “The cutting back of facility cleaning really hurts first impressions of the campus and its facilities when prospective students come to visit our campus with their parents.” “Our building lacks basic safety features for our students. Our building is a lawsuit waiting to happen.” “I work in a building that has a leaking roof, tiles missing in ceilings, moldy bathrooms, faucets that don't work or work incorrectly. It's hard to tell students we value them and their safety when the buildings we teach in haven't been maintained for years.” “I appreciate the president’s attention to the physical attractiveness of the Macomb campus. Areas of the campus become increasingly park-like and pleasant every year. That attention is important for a residential university. The buildings in which I work, however, are totally inadequate to the academic enterprise of my department. They have been for decades, and have been a subject for concern in professional accreditation reports for at least 30 years.”

## **Overall Performance**

This section yielded a total of 80 comments, including 24 positive, 42 negative, and 14 categorized as recommendations.

Among the positive statements by faculty, there were several indicating support for President Thomas in light of his leadership at an extremely difficult time in Illinois history. The following are exemplary comments: “Overall, the President is as effective as he can be. He is as effective as those he supervises in the upper administration levels.” “President Thomas has done a fairly good job throughout remarkably difficult times. However, he seems to react rather than lead.” “President Thomas is doing an outstanding job leading Western Illinois University especially with difficult state budget.” “He is making the tough decisions that need to be made.” “The President has shown himself to be a compassionate individual who cares strongly about the University, its students and its employees.” “Doing the best he can within a sabotaging environment.” “I think Jack has handled himself as well as can be expected with the amount of pressure he has been under.” “In these difficult times, he has done a fine job.” “I am extremely impressed with Dr. Thomas’s leadership this year...I am very glad that he is our president.” “Again, he’s in a no win situation and no one would want to have the job that he has now. He is doing all he can and is limited by the situation.” “I appreciate the president’s continued effort to move State Officials towards supporting State Universities.” “I rate the president’s performance as very strong.”

Many respondents noted external factors or the state of higher education in Illinois. “The president is trying to deal with a very difficult situation that is not his fault. The Illinois government is to blame for the current situation.” “I can’t understand why universities have been completely unable to get [Governor] Rauner to move on a budget.” “President Thomas has shown he is a leader who can lead in tough times. He has a heart for this university and the students and he is trying his best to get things done but his hands are tied without a state budget.” “With the TOTAL OPPOSITION to Public Higher Education by the Governor, it is hard to make an effective evaluation of President Thomas or anyone else at WIU. Currently, the whole system of Public Higher Education in Illinois is being attacked by a billionaire Governor who has no experience in Public Higher Education.” “It is inappropriate to be making an evaluation of the President of the University, when we have seen no action being taken by the Board of Trustees, the business leaders of Western Illinois, or the legislative representatives from Western Illinois.”

More comments were negative, however. There were several respondents who indicated that the president should resign, be replaced, or has generally failed as a leader. Specifically, commentators noted: “My suggestion is that he resign.” “Dr. Thomas has failed Western Illinois University and needs to go.” “The bottom line is that the University needs new leadership.” “No one doubts that this

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 think he knows what kind of university he wants that will take its place.” “Personally, I have no confidence in this president’s ability to lead this institution.” “All flash and NO substance.” “I have no trust and NO CONFIDENCE in this leader.” “He is not a leader and he is not trusted by faculty.” “I think his performance has been very poor overall.”

Many of the respondents voiced concerns about the transparency of the decisions made by President Thomas and the way in which the layoffs were carried out. The respondents made the following comments: “While President Thomas has had to deal with difficult state resources due to the current budget issues he does set the tone and the environment of the University. Through his actions regarding the surprise and secretive layoff process... Thomas has created a very divisive and uncomfortable environment at WIU.” “He has changed his story about the layoff list many times and dodges accountability.” “His lack of leadership was bad enough before the serious budget crunch, but his handling of the layoff situation has truly shown his incompetence as president and total lack of any leadership ability.” “To lay people off and then say ‘I’m asking to delay the vote to see if there is something to be done’ reveals that the president didn’t do everything he could to avoid laying people off in the first place.” “In the tough times we are having, I would suggest that if layoffs are necessary (which I believe they are due to declining enrollment) do not linger on the issue.” “I think the President’s contradictory and apparently impulsive decision-making about faculty layoffs is a reflection of the pressure he is under but also his own weakness.” “This management style has heightened emotions and increased the level of distrust.”

One of the primary concerns for most respondents was related to retention and recruitment of students and the quality of students being recruited. For example: “Enrollment has declined because there is NO compelling reason for students to come to WIU. We have a couple outstanding programs because the faculty are good. The president has not made WIU connect to Macomb. No one wants to come to this community.” “The campus is not a pleasant environment.” “Enrollment management and appropriate staffing levels are responsibilities of the president. The problems that have been brewing for several years under Dr. Thomas’s leadership seem to have come to a head this year. I don’t see evidence that he holds himself or his leadership team accountable. I have not seen this year, to my great disappointment, the clear leadership that the situation requires.” “He has gone out of his way to make WIU ‘the MAP grant university.’ If MAP grants go away, which currently is likely, about half our students go with them. That means Dr. Thomas has effectively closed WIU. Why was he granted an extension on his contract by the Board of Trustees?”

## **Appendix 1**

### **Recommendations by Faculty Expressed in 2015-16 Survey**

#### **Total Campus Enterprise**

1. Forget PhD programs, and focus on Bachelors and Masters Programs.
2. Instead of signature programs, promote all units of the University.
3. Inefficient programs should be eliminated. Excess administrators, faculty, and staff positions should be eliminated until the crisis passes.
4. Consider changing the PAA awards to one lump sum instead of salary increments.
5. Foster a unified front with the Union and Faculty Senate to the State Legislature. Invite Governor Rauner and other legislative leaders to campus so they can see the work we do and the hardship that their budget impasse has wrought.
6. Cut the administrative “fat cow,” and go back to one Dean per college, and one Provost. Visit various departments at least once a year.
7. Eliminate some of the sports activities to save money.
8. Centralize copying, eliminate landlines, and add new online programs.
9. Weekly or bi-weekly notes to the community about your actions would help raise awareness about your efforts or lack of them. [Vice President for the Quad Cities and Planning] Joe Rives’ strategic reports do not count.
10. Refocus on our strengths and let go of the departments that are graduating 15 students per year. We cannot maintain these departments and stay competitive to recruit students.
11. Nurture the relationship with the WIU Foundation to develop avenues that support faculty development, scholarship, and student involvement at the national and international levels (conference participation and competitions).
12. Review why the library Unit A faculty are on mostly 12-month contracts when other faculty are on 9-month contracts.
13. Sit in on classes to see what really goes on with [the growing number of unprepared] students. Raise the entrance scores to recruit better quality students.
14. Fund safety requirements in Waggoner Hall.
15. [The Administration] should take a permanent pay cut, not temporary.
16. Pay people according to time actually spent in direct interaction with students. Those in the ivory tower with the gold bell would no longer waste our six figures, while people who work directly with students [live in dire straits]. We have faculty living on Ramen Noodles!
17. Make an effort to attend more events on campus and show support in that way.
18. Provide the best possible UNDERGRADUATE education to students from this region of the tri-states.
19. Articulate a vision of academic programs that includes the liberal arts as the heart of a university education. The IBHE leaves room for schools to justify low-enrolling programs, and I’d like to see the President encouraged doing just that.
20. Be transparent when it comes to faculty layoffs.
21. Reconsider working toward alternative options, such as furloughs, salary reductions and, perhaps, reassignment of faculty to joint appointments between two or more departments.
22. Faculty should be encouraged to more aggressively pursue grants/external sources of funding for research initiatives.
23. [WIU] needs to be the university that serves first generation, working class students.

## **Student Success**

24. Decrease the number of programs that are not contributing to the bottom-line then we may be able to focus on recruiting and retaining the stronger student. We need to focus on the things we are good at and not try to be everything to everybody. We are not in a position to do that anymore, nor will we be again. Nursing, Law Enforcement, Speech & Hearing, and Business/Tech, and CSP are some of the programs we excel in and we could take more students at the graduate level if the faculty numbers and necessary resources were available. That is only made possible if these areas are able to hire.
25. Graduate students have few scholarship opportunities and the graduate assistantships' monies are dismal. We can't compete with other graduate programs because the financial aid is not available. If we are going to have strong graduate programs, we have to offer better financial incentives.
26. The President's tuition reduction proposal is a step in the right direction. Personally, I do not think it is aggressive enough. I would have also liked to have seen some sort of incentive for extending a tuition reduction to all students. For example, maintain a 3.5 GPA and EARN a 7.5% tuition reduction for the next semester. Although burdensome initially, I think this would grow enrollment and increase the quality of students
27. The Quad Cities campus now has much lower enrollment than it did 10 years ago, even though many millions of dollars have been poured into it. The main effect of the Quad Cities campus has been to siphon funds from the Macomb campus. The Quad Cities campus provides a very poor educational experience for its students, while also lowering the quality of education for Macomb students. It is time to admit that the Quad Cities campus has been a failure, close it, and focus energy and resources into making the Macomb campus the best it can be.

## **Academic Goals**

28. The President needs to look at the needs in the Western Illinois Region and develop programs that will serve those needs as well as programs that will help people in the Chicago area. While many students here come from Chicago, WE NEED TO PROMOTE PROGRAMS THAT WILL SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES!
29. Increases in summer school offerings for working professionals could do much to increase revenue. Courses should not be offered on an allocation basis per department, but offered and provided if a minimum number of students register, e.g., 15. Look at changing the two semester program to a three semester program; faculty would teach two of three. Students want to "get done"--an advantage of online learning--but want the classroom experience.
30. Funding from the state is a moot point. However, Alumni, Friends, and Donors to the WIU might be a fertile ground for the President to explore for funding specific initiatives for Faculty Development, Faculty and Student Research support, supporting unique academic programs, supporting student involvement in entities outside the University, etc.
31. The university needs a final decision on what is happening to programs in a limited funding environment. Someone needs to step forward, make a decision, and push a decision that focuses on what is best for the students and university, not faculty in fields with little demand or need.
32. So long as we allow student opinion to drive faculty teaching through an outdated evaluation system, we will continue to perpetuate grade inflation and poorer student learning outcomes. Too many faculty have learned the political game for getting high course evaluations while their students do not learn the requisite information. This is continually perpetuated by high reliance not on student success when they graduate but upon student opinions about courses that are often bound up in a negotiated curriculum that limits student workloads.
33. We need to be planning to get students that can financially afford to attend a university. We have 75% of our students that rely on financial aid. And while that is fine, we still need to reduce our dependency on state and federal funding.

34. Focus more on the Macomb campus, please! The QC campus and the resources allocated there are draining what needs to be done here on our MAIN campus.
35. It would do wonders for the President to begin a new faculty member of the Year award for a tenure track faculty member that is new that has excelled in teaching, scholarship, or service to the university. It could do wonders for the morale among those who came here and are now dealing with the realities of the State of Illinois...it could also point out to the State who might be lost if the State continues to go in the direction that it does.
36. Dr. Thomas should direct more of WIU's energy and resources to the Macomb campus. The QC campus has had at least 20 years to become a self-sustaining facility/program, and it has not. I believe that it is an experiment that has failed. It demands additional time, energy and expenses from Macomb faculty.... For example, QC will not take responsibility for faculty travel from Macomb, NOR copying course materials for QC students. Furthermore, this additional burden on Macomb faculty (attending to QC students) has a negative impact on Macomb students (who do not receive our full attention), thus the QC is a drain on WIU's ability to meet its Academic Goals.
37. Very costly programs (e.g. Nursing) are getting an inordinate amount of support while those more central to the academic mission and much less costly are left so weakened that some have been put under academic review simply because they do not have the resources to meet standards set by the IBHE. Speaking of IBHE standards, they are taken MUCH too strictly, as if a program not meeting them should be disbanded, even though it is central to the mission of the university.

### **Personnel, Faculty Relations and Campus Issues**

38. Increased transparency would improve the working climate at the university.
39. More openness is needed about how personnel decisions are being made.
40. Outside hires are few and far between. When the culture is about retribution and tight controls and people are "promoted" from within that environment, that climate perpetuates itself. Need to seek out and hire people who have strengths beyond us.
41. In these difficult times, it is imperative that the President hear from a variety of sources. His roundtables are a good start; however, he also should consider establishing a group of the best faculty, administrators, and staff to discuss what needs to be done to further their interests and commitment to WIU. We are losing many of the best WIU individuals due to budget cuts and employment instability (not layoffs per se). A discussion group comprised of the best individuals (not self promoters, self selected, or those who agree with current policies, but rather, the best recruiters, best professors, best innovators) would hopefully result in helpful strategic planning and, more importantly follow through or positive results.
42. I believe that the President needs to reach out to a wider pool of our community in order to find more inventive ways to recruit new students, draw more funding, and promote campus harmony through diversity.
43. The existing model of requiring full professorship for chair and dean positions needs to be revisited. There are associate faculty and assistant faculty with the experience and knowledge to lead departments and programs.
44. Units/departments could benefit more if they each had computer labs for teaching and learning for students to be on cutting-edge with this technology.
45. The President does promote a safe campus BUT some of the buildings need serious renovation and need to be torn down.

## 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. Actively plan for a different future for the university that reflects the need for radically new direction in development, in governance, and in academic programming.
49. Compromise with the Union so that we can solve our problems together.
50. Tell me you what you are giving up. What are you sacrificing? And then ask me to make sacrifices and I will.
51. Make WIU connect to Macomb. Make Macomb a community to which people want to come. Make the campus a pleasant environment. A lot of faculty do not know how to teach – that needs to change.
52. Create a future to meet the needs of students who want to attend one of the "best Midwestern" universities. International students should be welcomed, but must be strong academically with a solid English background.
53. Be more visible through the media, fighting for the campus. Make decisions directly and in a more timely manner.
54. Steps should have been taken during the 2014-2015 academic year. Somewhere UPI and the President (and his representatives) need to find a way to resolve the budget issues.
55. Play hard ball with the Union. Focus on recruiting, not advertising. Overhaul the curriculum. Drop the core to 48 hrs, and increase the electives. Run the campus 12 months a year. Get students out in three years instead of four if they go year-round. Communicate more frequently with the faculty. Cut any class that has not been offered in two years out of the catalog. Continue to consolidate. Cut first year experience. Drop the diversity initiatives. Eliminate some majors. Be more proactive. Go on the offensive with communication, recruiting, and reforming your leadership team.
56. More transparency when the President makes decisions regarding staffing issues, program cuts, etc.
57. Find a way to be more transparent about your decisions and work with the union so we as a school can get through this crisis and not lose credibility
58. If layoffs are necessary (I believe they are, due to declining enrollment) do not linger on the issue. Get it done so people can move on with their lives... Lead by example - demonstrate your willingness to make administrative cuts.
59. Connect with the faculty on a day-to-day basis. We seem far removed from his concern.
60. Include faculty in the discussion of layoffs (who better understands curriculum needs?).
61. Delegate the challenging tasks to the knowledge-base of the campus - the faculty - not just the leadership teams..., no one person has solutions to all the problems.
62. The President provides minimal details regarding union negotiations. The union is making substantial derogatory claims about the President. The time has come for the university to be confident in a plan. Clearly present all options and provide the relative strengths and weaknesses of each option, the administration's view of the negotiations. Clearly state the plan, and then move forward.
63. Articulate a vision about what it means to be a university--not only organized around majors, but also around a solid liberal arts foundation. That means using a language of shrinking, not eliminating. That means shrinking in ways that have academic program quality in mind--not only who was most recently hired.

## Appendix 2

### Number of questions answered “No Basis for Response” or “Decline to Respond”

Question	No Basis for Response	Decline to Respond
The President effectively promotes an environment for excellence in:		
i. Scholarship	11	1
ii. Teaching	7	1
iii. Student learning	8	1
The President effectively promotes policies that support the mission of the University relative to:		
i. Short term strategic planning	8	3
ii. Long term strategic planning	8	4
The President effectively promotes the University’s academic mission to:		
i. The local community	22	3
ii. The western Illinois region	29	3
iii. Beyond the region	47	4
The President fosters effective relationships with:		
i. Government agencies	42	1
ii. Potential donors	93	2
iii. Alumni	69	0
iv. Local Community	29	1
v. Board of Trustees	47	7
vi. UPI (University Professionals of Illinois)	8	2
The President effectively promotes policies that foster the activities of your department or academic unit.	11	3
The President manages the University’s resources well.	6	6
The President effectively secures funding to support University initiatives.	35	2
Overall, the President fosters the mission of Western Illinois University.	6	4
To ensure student success, the President demonstrates effort to:		
-increase access, retention, and graduation of new high school graduates	29	2
-increase access, retention, and graduation of community college transfers	40	2
-make undergraduate education affordable	17	4
-make graduate education affordable	48	4
-increase the availability of student financial aid	59	5
-advocate policies to moderate debt load of students	69	3
The President works effectively with ____ to allocate resources for your department or academic unit to achieve WIU’s mission		
i. Provost	54	5
ii. Deans	40	5
The President works effectively with the Provost anticipating future needs (i.e., technology, infrastructure, or student services) of:		
i. faculty	33	4
ii. students	45	3
iii. staff	63	4
The President works effectively with Student Services to foster policies for:		
i. student leadership	111	4
ii. co-curricular participation	119	4
iii. student quality of life	113	3

<b>Question</b>	<b>No Basis for Response</b>	<b>Decline to Respond</b>
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
The President promotes enhancement of student learning outcomes for a globally competitive environment	20	4
The President allocates resources so that your department or academic unit's faculty can accomplish their research mission	13	3
Regarding faculty, the President's management practices promote		
i. Excellence	6	3
ii. Diversity	14	5
Regarding staff, the President's management practices promote:		
i. Excellence	70	2
ii. Diversity	73	4
Regarding student activities, the President's management practices promote:		
i. Excellence	74	4
ii. Diversity	71	5
The President is responsive to your concerns	28	6
The President effectively promotes the Macomb campus work environment to be		
i. healthy	21	4
ii. safe	16	4
iii. pleasant	12	7
The President effectively promotes the Quad Cities campus work environment to be		
i. healthy	164	5
ii. safe	165	5
iii. pleasant	160	6
The President supports faculty governance at all levels	20	5
The President makes effective administrative appointments	19	5
The President directs the University's physical facilities so that they meet the needs of your department or academic unit	27	7
Overall, the President is highly effective at performing his duties	1	3