

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

Date: September 26, 2013

Re: September 2013 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* shows that Western Illinois University continues to receive national recognition for our academic excellence and educational opportunities and that the campus community continues to advance all of the University's core values.

Demonstrating our academic excellence and educational opportunities:

- *Washington Monthly* placed Western Illinois University in the top 275 master's granting institutions nationally for social mobility (recruiting and graduating low-income students), research, and service (encouraging students to give back to their country).
- *U.S. News and World Report* named Western Illinois University a *Best Regional University* for the ninth consecutive year. Of the 39 public universities included, Western ranked 13th among the 110 Midwestern universities recognized as *Best Midwestern Universities*. Western was also recognized as a *Best Institution* for graduation rates, freshman retention rates, least debt (class of 2012), highest proportion of classes under 20 students, most international students, and economic and ethnic diversity.
- Victory Media Publications recognized Western Illinois University as a *Military Friendly School* and will feature the University in *G.I. Jobs Guide to Military Friendly Schools* for the fifth consecutive year. The *2014 Military Friendly Schools* list honors the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace the success of America's military service members, veterans and spouses as students.
- *Affordable Colleges Online* ranked Western Illinois University 29th in the top 39 schools profiled at AffordableCollegesOnline.org. Graduates from these schools enjoy the largest earnings gap between non-degree holders, and earn more on average than graduates from other Illinois schools.

Additionally:

- Drs. T.K. Vinod, Rose McConnell, Brian Bellott, Jin Jin, and Shaozhong Zhang from Chemistry received a \$250,000 National Science Foundation grant to purchase a nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometer. The 400 MHz NMR spectrometer will help accommodate expanding research needs and provide instrument access to students from Quincy University and Carl Sandburg College.

- University Libraries, African American Studies, and History received four films chronicling the history of the civil rights movement by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Western was one of only 473 institutions nationally to receive *The Abolitionists*, *Slavery by Another Name*, *Freedom Riders*, and *The Loving Story*. Each film depicts incidents from the 150-year effort to achieve equal rights and are designed to encourage community discussions about America's civil rights history.
- The Western Illinois University Faculty Exhibition continues display at the West Central Illinois Arts Center in Macomb until October 19th. The exhibit features paintings, silk screenings, ceramics, metal works, etchings, mixed media, drawings and sculptures produced by Western faculty.
- “A New Deal for Illinois - The Federal Art Project Collection of Western Illinois University” continues exhibition at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa until January 5, 2014. Western’s Federal Art Project Collection was formed in the 1930s when university officials commissioned works through the Public Works of Art Project, and later through the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration. These paintings and prints once decorated classrooms, hallways and other public spaces on campus.

Demonstrating the University’s commitment to social responsibility and personal growth:

- The annual Big Pink Volleyball (BPV) breast cancer awareness fundraiser tournament was held September 23-26 on the Macomb campus. Last year’s tournament raised \$9,781.64 for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure and McDonough District Hospital (MDH). This year's proceeds will be donated to the same organizations. MDH proceeds will support mammogram services and other cancer-screening programs.
- The Disability Resource Center hosted Fall 2013 Faculty and Staff Partnerships for Accessible Solutions. Workshops included instruction in the application of Universal Design principles and exposure to techniques that increase course and service ability.
- Counselor Education received \$100,000 from AT&T to support an academic, social and personal support volunteer-based retention program that helps eighth-grade and high school students in the Rock Island School District persist and succeed.
- Centennial Honors College and University Libraries hosted Western Illinois University's annual Constitution Day Celebration on September 17th. *The Constitution and Freedom of the Press* was featured in student posters and in a panel discussion led by faculty members Drs. Kimberly Rice, Mahrya Carncross, Yong Tang, Roger Sadler and moderated by Dr. Keith Boeckelman, Chairperson of Political Science.
- Western Illinois students, faculty, and staff participated in the sixth annual Upper Mississippi River Conference held in Davenport, Iowa September 25-28. Regional planners, elected officials, architects, engineers, environmental groups, developers, educators, and students focused on issues and opportunities associated with the Mississippi River, including sand mining, development, water quality, flood insurance, and river recreation.
- Facilities Management and Horn Field Campus co-sponsored WIU’s cleanup efforts for the Illinois River Sweep. Students, faculty, and staff participated in activities at the LaMoine River on September 21st.
- Annual Fall We Care events will be October 8th and 10th on the Macomb Campus and October 4th on the Quad Cities Campus. We Care, the campus beautification project, focuses on planting, mulching, and cleanup.

Should you have questions about the materials in this *Update*, and/or if you have feedback for the continued successful advancement of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me.

cc:	President Thomas	CSEC Pres. Mattson	Associate Provost Neumann
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