

President's Panel
Thursday, September 26, 2013
Chart Room
2:30 p.m.

Attendees

Mary Ellen Mazey – President	Sheri Wells-Jensen – Faculty Senate
Rodney Rogers – Sr VPAA/Provost	Joel O’Dorisio – Faculty Senate
Jodi Webb (for Jill Carr) – Student Affairs	Elizabeth Wood – Faculty Senate
Mike Hachtel – ASC	Amy Rybak – Faculty
Emily Monago – ASC	Nicole Neely– USG
Gail Houtz – CSC	David Neely – USG
	Lingxiao Ge – GSS

Topics submitted for discussion

- 1) **Question:** More in-depth discussion/information about the points mentioned in the State of the University Address. A specific request for more information about the partnership between Owens and BGSU. (ASC)

Response:

We are in the process of forging the agreement with Owens. One of our goals at the University is to admit more academically well-prepared students than we have in the past. In this program, student can enroll in Owens classes and live on the BGSU campus. Once they have upgraded their academic profile and are better prepared, these students can be admitted to BGSU. This helps students with the cost of education and at the same time helps us build enrollments in order to gain a greater portion of the funding allocated by the SSI formula (State Share of Instruction). Several sister institutions appear to have increased headcount as of this past weekend (OU, Kent State, Miami, Ohio State, and University of Cincinnati), although our figures are not yet final. That makes it important for us to increase our enrollment.

Follow-up: Assuming that the partnership with Owens will extend to BGSUs’ linked classes, what other kinds of connections can BGSU faculty make with Owens faculty in math or English composition or other areas difficult for first year students?

Response: One approach is to get department chairs together to discuss projects on which the two-year and four-year schools could collaborate.

Follow-up: Linked courses are an amazing opportunity for collaboration; but what do you think is the best structure to facilitate such collaboration? How would we bring faculty from both institutions together?

Response:

Sometimes faculty get together informally with others teaching linked courses. No one tells them to do it. If the links involve residence hall cohorts, that provides an opportunity for faculty collaboration as well.

This first year, we have focused primarily on the mechanics of creating cohorts and scheduling linked courses. We are learning what works well and what doesn’t. Next spring we will start planning for the following fall. The intent is to

keep faculty engaged and to determine how we can leverage the linked course experience to be a major factor in retention and student success.

Follow-up: It can be problematic to link GSW students because of variations in placement. Is there a way to overcome such difficulties? Linked courses seem a fantastic way to build community among students and among faculty. Are their significant workload implications when we talk about faculty getting together and teaming up to leverage the idea of linked classes?

Response: I have seen it succeed elsewhere. GSW faculty and the social science and biology faculty all endorsed the idea. I believe it can be a success at BGSU as it has been in other unionized environments.

- 2) **Question:** Efficiency Task Force Update (*ASC*)
- Current progress toward efficiencies noted in 2012
 - Future use of this initiative

Response: There is a draft report on the Provost's website summarizing recommendations of this task force. It's really pretty much final; and I commend the Provost who chaired of this task force. The report speaks to many of the issues critical to improving academic advising (greater use of technology, degree audits, and other recommendations). The lean process was used to generate ideas about automating manual processes on the HR side as well as on the academic side of operations.

The next stage of the efficiency process involves the Accenture consultants, who are on campus. They will be working with those administrators that have the major budgets of the University and their recommendations will probably be in our hands by December 2013.

Follow-up: Will recommendations regarding outsourcing of more functions like dining services and health services be made?

Response: This will depend on recommendations of Accenture. They know our situation and they know what has worked in other higher education environments. If you believe any practices at other universities will serve BGSU well, please let us hear your thoughts.

- 3) **Question:** We have heard a variety of plans to address the English Language needs of incoming international students. How do we expect to increase the number of international students if we don't have a solid basis of support for their English needs: are we expecting to recruit only international students who do not need this support? (*Faculty Senate*)

Response: BGSU has about 640 graduate students compared to approximately 2,250 at Kent. As I said in the State of the University address, recruiting more international students is one critical strategy for increasing total enrollment. We are considering a number of suggested ways to address the English language needs of incoming international students. The current method is outsourcing this aspect of instruction. On the other hand, I have seen success in terms of both recruitment and retention in doing ESL instruction in-house.

- 4) **Question:** Where can faculty find updates on construction plans in instances when the website for such information may not be current (e.g. College of Musical Arts)? (*Faculty Senate*)

Response: We have requested that plan updates be posted on a regular basis. Regarding the new HVAC installation for the College of Musical Arts (a major financial commitment of more than 2 million dollars), activities such as the summer music camps delayed full implementation. Completion of that project is anticipated for summer of 2014.

- 5) **Question:** Can you speak to the relative priority of classroom upgrades versus other parts of the Master Plan implementation? (*Faculty Senate*)

Response: Classroom upgrades remain a high priority. Some 23 renovations have done in the past three months to upgrade such features as lighting, and digital a/v controls. Eight more classrooms are scheduled for summer 2014; and much more is planned for the next 3-5 years. As pedagogy evolves, best practices in creating ideal learning spaces also evolve. So we need to address updating classrooms in stages, bearing in mind also the practical necessity of limiting how many rooms are taken offline at any one time.

- 6) **Question:** Could you provide us with a short overview of how the Math Emporium is working so far, both in terms of faculty and student response? (*Faculty*)

Response: Nationwide, math tends to be a barrier to some students doing well in college. The BGSU math emporium is still a work in progress; and we are making adjustments. Given the success of math emporiums or math labs elsewhere in the country, we are hopeful that our facility has great potential for reducing the failure rate in mathematics courses and boosting success rates as high as 80-100 percent.

Follow-up: Do we have data on increases in student success?

Response: Collecting data on improving student success is part of our implementation plan. This is usually measured and analyzed at the end of semesters. We have already added supplemental instruction for math in the Learning Commons and in the Math Emporium. In addition we've added technology staff support so that class time is not lost because of difficulties with the technology.

- 7) **Question:** Could you provide us with an update about the plans for reorganizing academic advising on campus? (*Faculty*)

Response: Recommendations for improving academic advising -- in part by using technologies from SuccessNet to an updated system for degree audits -- are on the Provost's website. Another significant change will be implementing a centralized structure for advising, while preserving clear reporting lines to Vice Provost, Sue Houston, and back to college deans. A summary of the committee's recommendations is posted; but the Provost will be happy to send a copy of the full report to interested persons.

- 8) **Question:** At the September Faculty Senate meeting, you mentioned that cuts are likely again this year. Clearly, the administration will be looking across the board at ways to save money, but could you speculate on where those cuts will most likely come from this year? (*Faculty*)

Response: This current academic year we hope to be all right. In lieu of imposing a hiring freeze, all members of Cabinet have been asked to be very careful about hiring. In that spirit, several administrators have accepted dual responsibilities. (For example, Balzer, Frizado, and Ogawa.) The best way to make cuts is by attrition and/or reorganizing units if possible, rather than via layoffs.

For next AY, we need to plan carefully. Recommendations of the Accenture consulting group benchmarking us with peers are due in December 2013. At a minimum, we need to achieve the level of productivity of peer institutions. Higher productivity would be even better. That will give us roughly six months to prepare for the next fiscal year.

In addition to careful fiscal management, we also need to do the best job of recruiting students that we can do. The sooner a student is contacted by a faculty member, the more chance we have of recruiting and retaining that student. Making this kind of personal connection is the responsibility of all of us here at the University.

Follow-up: Are there specific ways that faculty interaction with students outside the classroom in order to help retention and advance toward attainment of enrollment goals?

Response: One tactic I have seen successfully employed at private schools is setting up an appointment for a prospective student to sit down with a faculty member in the academic discipline he or she is considering. This kind of practice would reinforce the BGSU brand of being a warm, supportive environment that personalizes your education.

- 9) **Question:** Staff concerns have been expressed over pending budget concerns, future layoff rumors (resolving questions/concerns as they are forwarded to me) (CSC)

Response: We want to be as transparent as possible and to consider all points of view and suggestions; but we are waiting to make firm plans until the consultants (Accenture) give us their objective input. We'll be looking at the whole University.

- 10) **Question:** While we focus on increasing enrollment and student success, what strategies does the University apply to ensure the quality of faculty? (Complaints came from students about unqualified professors and advisers) (GSS)

Response: As always, we will be monitoring feedback on faculty performance and following up on concerns heard at the college level. Policies and procedures articulated at the department level in compliance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), will make expectations of faculty clear and will ensure that we have the best faculty possible at BG.

Response: Complaints must be dealt with diplomatically albeit holding faculty and staff accountable. At the same time, due process must be accorded the subject of complaints. Student success is one of our highest priorities.

Follow-up: GSS has heard complaints about one particular core course that were not addressed at the department level. An instructor allegedly told his/her class that s/he was pressed into service and did not feel qualified to teach that class. Who should these students contact next?

Response: Students should at least receive an explanation of how the concern is being handled by the department. If they feel their concerns have not received an adequate response at the department level, they have the option of contacting the Dean and then the Provost. The last thing we want to hear is that we have put someone into the classroom who is not qualified.

In addition, a task force will be working on developing a standard student evaluation form to be used across campus. It will probably be five to seven standard questions with an additional two or three more tailored to the specific academic discipline of the class.

Follow-up: How can we get faculty in all disciplines involved in constructing these standard questions?

Response: There are a number of models to draw from. I think a committee of faculty and students together could come up with a great set of questions. Many universities are moving to online evaluations; and that would probably make it easier to operationalize this kind of data gathering and assessment. Response rates are better using automated processes linked to a learning management system such as Canvas.

In a union environment, practice involves gathering assessment data from faculty peers as well as student evaluations of teaching. In addition to academic department or unit peers, the Center for Faculty Excellence may also become involved in identifying areas for improvement in teaching performance and in providing training where needed.

Follow-up: Are teaching assistants evaluated in the same way as TTF and NTTF professors?

Response: Yes, they are if they are the instructor of record. There may be some variation if the TA is not the instructor of record

Follow-up: According to the CBA, only TTF have a success plan. After they are tenured and/or promoted, how is their progress monitored?

Response: The merit process will have more importance for them. In addition as long as expectations for promotion are clear as they are in the unionized environment, perhaps more women will apply for promotion, particularly those with long careers who previously may not have known what they needed to do in order to be promoted from associate professor.

Follow-up: Do we have data on faculty promotion by gender and for minorities and faculty with disabilities? Also it would be good to know whether female professors are disproportionately in the non-tenured ranks. This may be particularly true in STEM fields.

Response: Institutional Research can answer those questions. We have made some progress in recruiting more diverse faculty. It is an ongoing priority.

Follow-up: How is assessment data currently incorporated into faculty promotion processes?

Response: Academic departments and units are developing their criteria in accordance with the CBA. Data from student surveys is one metric used in looking at teaching effectiveness. In the past this has been a decentralized process at BGSU with little standardization among different colleges and sometimes even among unit within a single college. Bringing a degree of consistency would help in making rational and equitable decisions at the University level.

11) **Question:** Given the workload documentation worked on over this past summer by deans and chairs, can you say what the impetus for writing that documentation was and something about what the proposed changes are? (*Faculty Senate*)

Response: In my experience, setting specific workload expectations is pretty much standard practice at universities. Once workload standards have been articulated, everyone knows what is expected, how they are being evaluated, and how they can be at their best, improving where a need for improvement has been identified.

12) **Question:** What processes were followed in determining changes in staffing support and location for the Faculty Senate over the summer? What remaining steps will be taken to meet the needs of Faculty Senate? (*Faculty Senate*)

Response: We did some benchmarking, knowing that the role of a faculty senate changes in a union environment. Some responsibilities formerly codified in the Charter are now set forth in the CBA. Since the primary function of the Faculty Senate now is curricular in nature, it was important to take a close look at Faculty Senate staffing needs in the new environment. The Provost will make a determination of appropriate support based on consultation with Senate leadership, Student Affairs personnel, and R. Ferguson in H.R.

13) **Question:** Can we bring in health care plans with the Obamacare that are cheaper than current student health insurance? (*GSS*)

Response: BGSU's student insurance package is negotiated through our membership in the Inter-University Consortium. IUC members are gathering information about how to use the federal insurance exchanges once those become available to students. Dick Sipp, Executive Director of Student Health Services, is the best source of information and updates as this process evolves.

Question: Healthcare benefit updates/changes (we are anxiously looking for the information to come/information that is expected to be released in October for open enrollment) (CSC)

Response: An informational meeting of all constituents will be held in October to discuss the rates before the start of the upcoming open insurance enrollment period. All constituents will work together to explore ways of offsetting the rising cost of healthcare as much as possible. (The closing date of open enrollment is the Friday before Thanksgiving.)

14) **Question:** In an era of collective bargaining, what do you feel the most important functions of a Faculty Senate are? (Faculty Senate)

Response: Since a collective bargaining agreement has been reached, Faculty Senate's primary responsibility now is in regard to curriculum matters.

15) Provost update: Distinguished Professor Positions In compliance with any CBA provisions that apply, there will be some changes to historical practices for appointing distinguished professors in order to expand this sort of opportunity. The call for nominations for distinguished professor appointments will be out soon.