

October 31, 2007

Dear Colleagues,

I regret that I am unable to attend the faculty meeting on Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. I will be attending two conferences – the Project Kaleidoscope 2007 Assembly in Chantilly, VA and the Council on Independent Colleges' National Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Chief Financial Officers in Philadelphia, PA. I want to address three issues in this memo – the writing proposal, Academic Administration restructuring, and the proposed childbearing/childrearing leave policy – to bring you up-to-date on where these issues stand.

As you know, the summer Writing Study Group (WSG) has been discussing the writing proposal with many different constituencies during the fall semester. These constituencies include department chairs and school directors and major faculty committees. The WSG held an open forum on October 24<sup>th</sup> to obtain more feedback from faculty members. President Wilson has been in conversation with the WSG and has already made writing a priority in the upcoming capital campaign. Furthermore, we have applied for funding through the Mellon Foundation for support of the writing program and should learn in December whether we will receive funding. Finally, the one change to the curriculum included in the proposal (two Writing Intensive courses beyond Gateway, one of which must be completed by the end of the sophomore year) is currently being considered by Curriculum Council.

The charge from Academic Standards states that the resulting proposal move “IWU towards a more focused, fundable vision for how we can improve student writing and critical thinking skills over the full period of undergraduate study.” The proposal presented by the WSG builds on the proposal approved by faculty in the mid-1990’s that created the writing across the curriculum program at Illinois Wesleyan. The new proposal is based on information contained in a number of reports generated by a variety of committees and task forces over the past ten years. The main initiative of the new proposal is building an infrastructure that can be used to support our writing program and strengthen the development of writing by students.

The WSG anticipates that CC will present their proposal for changing the curriculum later this semester. If the faculty pass this change, then the next step is to formulate an implementation committee. If the Mellon Foundation funds our proposal, then we can begin developing the supporting infrastructure such as searching for a Director of the Writing Program. The process to implement various aspects of the writing program proposal will take time and the good will of the faculty. The most important aspect of the proposal is that improving student writing is at the core. I know that all of us recognize that good writing is important for the success of all of our students.

I am also in the process of discussing restructuring the Academic Affairs administration so that my colleagues and I can better perform our functions and continue to provide quality support for faculty and students. Earlier this fall, I presented a proposed structure to CUPP and the department chairs and school directors. The proposed structure was based on the work of CUPP from last year. You can access the proposed restructuring and the CUPP report on academic affairs structure via the web links below. I have met several times with CUPP during the semester and will meet again with CUPP later in November. I am meeting with department chairs and school directors in divisional groups through mid-November. From these meetings and the October faculty meeting, I have heard concerns about establishing a dean-level position that would have responsibilities related to diversity. When I arrived at Illinois Wesleyan, I was told that President Wilson had already announced that a senior-level position would be filled to coordinate the diversity initiatives that were expected to follow from the first goal of the Strategic Plan – the goal concerning diversity at Illinois Wesleyan. The proposed new position incorporated the responsibilities concerning diversity that were outlined by a number of campus constituencies and President Wilson. The main responsibility of this position would be to chair an all-university committee

on diversity. I am in the process of asking more questions about the concerns raised by faculty regarding this position. If Academic Affairs is to provide leadership in moving forward with diversity issues, who will this be? If Academic Affairs does not provide leadership, then who would provide leadership for diversity issues and how will Academic Affairs move forward with diversity initiatives? I also have heard concerns about faculty advocacy in the Academic Affairs administrative structure. I continue to seek further clarification of this issue. In particular, where has Academic Affairs fallen short in terms of advocating for the faculty? I will be holding an open forum on Thursday, November 15, at 4:00 p.m. in the Turfler Room to provide an opportunity for faculty to provide feedback about the restructuring. I encourage you to attend. Refinements to the proposed restructuring will be made based on feedback from faculty and a more complete document will be presented to the faculty sometime after the November open forum

Finally, I am continuing to obtain feedback on the proposed childbearing/childrearing leave policy. You can access the proposed policy and the cover letter sent to chairs and directors regarding the proposed policy via the web links below. The proposed policy is based on several principles. First, the proposed policy would provide time to parents of newborn or newly adopted children when they most needed it – at the time the child arrives. The policy would apply to any male or female faculty member anticipating the arrival of a child. Second, the proposed policy keeps the best interests of our students in mind and minimizes disruption in instruction during the semester by providing an opportunity for parents to take a semester-long leave. The proposed policy retains the short term disability benefit currently available to all Illinois Wesleyan faculty and staff for those who do not want to take a full semester leave. Third, it recognizes the financial situation of parents while allowing adjunct coverage of courses during a childbearing/childrearing leave. Fourth, the proposed policy for faculty parallels the proposed policy for university staff which also will allow new parents to take time off when a new child arrives. Finally, the proposed policy would provide several options to new parents without being too complex or too cumbersome to administer. If you have questions or comments about the proposed policy, please let me know. I will provide another update on this issue in December.

I wish you the best as we begin the last full month of the fall semester.

Sincerely yours,  
Beth Cunningham  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

Proposed restructuring of the Academic Affairs administration:

[http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP\\_minutes\\_07/AcademicAffairsReorganization.Sept07.pdf](http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP_minutes_07/AcademicAffairsReorganization.Sept07.pdf)

CUPP report on academic administrative structure

[http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP\\_minutes\\_07/CUPPAdministrativeStructureReport07.pdf](http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP_minutes_07/CUPPAdministrativeStructureReport07.pdf)

Cover letter to chairs and directors regarding proposed childbearing/childrearing leave policy:

[http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP\\_minutes\\_07/chairs.directors.memo.childrearing.pdf](http://www2.iwu.edu/provost/facgov/CUPP_minutes_07/chairs.directors.memo.childrearing.pdf)

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