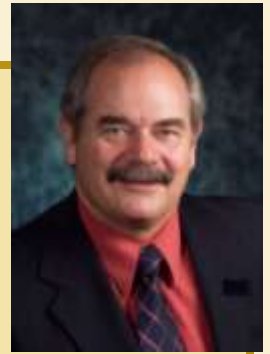




January 29, 2010

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

News for WCU Faculty and Staff
President Greg R. Weisenstein



The spring semester is now in full swing, and planning and preparation for West Chester University's future are also underway through a range of initiatives. These initiatives require the involvement of every member of our campus community. In this newsletter issue, I want to update you on some of the current activities and other important campus news.

CREATING A SHARED VISION AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

The West Chester University campus community has launched a comprehensive process for establishing and clarifying our vision of the future. Initiatives are underway to help us listen carefully and comprehensively to one another, analyze our internal strengths and weaknesses, and understand external opportunities and challenges. These initiatives include our campus-wide self-study for reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan, a Campus Climate Survey, task forces on a number of vital issues, and our new Marketing Plan.

Together, these activities will give us exceptional insight and knowledge as we develop our new strategic plan to succeed the *Plan for Excellence* and guide West Chester University through the next decade.

In this newsletter, I'll include an overview of three of the current activities. For more information about the overall process and its component initiatives, please see the Web site *Creating a Shared Vision at West Chester University*, which will soon be available. I look forward to hearing from you as the process moves forward.

MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY

West Chester University is conducting a comprehensive self-study and preparing to host a visiting team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education—the institutional accrediting body for colleges and universities in our region. Middle States reaccreditation follows a 10-year cycle that, for us, will culminate in a review team's visit to our campus in March 2011. SUNY Fredonia President Dennis Hefner will be our Middle States team chairperson. Research for the self-study document and preparation for the campus visit are taking place under the leadership of WCU's Middle States Steering Committee and nine working groups.

WCU faculty, staff, administrators, and students have important roles in both the self-study and the site visit. A number of you are taking part in the Middle States Steering Committee and working groups; many more of you will be asked for your input as they continue to conduct their self-study investigations. When the Middle States team visits campus in the spring of 2011, its members will be meeting with a wide range of individuals and groups, and your assistance will again be valuable in helping the team acquire a full and accurate picture of our institution.

TASK GROUPS

The suggestions that you have submitted through the electronic suggestion box *WCU Ideas Online* and directly to members of the President's Cabinet and me are being acted upon. To address some of your ideas, we currently have five groups examining strategies for generating additional revenue streams and for moving the institution to still higher levels of excellence. We are considering both strategic investment in new directions in accord with our mission and redefinition of some of the ways we do business.

Two current task groups are investigating the feasibility of expanding our curricular offerings, one through distance education and the other by use of the winter break to offer credit-bearing courses. Another group is reexamining the Academic Year Model to ensure a direct link between enrollment and faculty resources. The fourth group is looking at our graduate programs to determine whether we can take advantage of a new Board of Governors policy allowing differential tuition. The final task group is exploring both short- and long-term ways to make WCU more international and prepare our students more fully for the present and future global world.

COMPREHENSIVE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Three weeks ago, my cabinet and I engaged in a planning retreat to initiate the process of revising the University's Facilities Master Plan. The last such plan was completed in early 2000 and needs to be updated to reflect new ideas and emerging directions in teaching, research, and student services.

An important part of the facilities planning process will be engaging the entire campus community, including our students, in identifying the way we envision our campus to look in the next 10 years. This goal includes projecting what our mix of students might be (undergraduate and graduate, instate/out-of-state, and international), as well as the needs of our faculty and staff. Other key themes include the following:

- Environmental sustainability
- Sense of community
- Professionalism in design and aesthetics
- Health and safety
- Inclusion
- Current critical needs

Suggestions for the Facilities Master Plan can be submitted through *WCU Ideas Online* or directly to Vice President for Administration and Finance Mark Mixner.

WCU IDEAS ONLINE IN ACTION

The recommendations that you have submitted to *WCU Ideas Online* are already adding to the University's excellence and effectiveness in serving our entire campus community. Here are 15 examples from among the suggestion-box ideas implemented during the fall 2009 semester:

1. Computer labs in the Sturzebecker Health Science Center updated
2. Academic Calendar link added to the Favorites links for current students (WCU Web site)
3. Campus Web pages redesigned for better access and search capability
4. Requests for food-service improvements addressed with ARAMARK and forwarded to the Dining Program group that is developing an RFP for the University's dining service
5. Children's Center availability continued for WCU students and employees over a two-year period while efforts are pursued to build and improve enrollments
6. Student Government Association provided with student *WCU Ideas Online* recommendations and with the University's response to those issues
7. Late night bus service to and from South Campus extended
8. Workshops on retirement planning held through Human Resources

9. Campus grounds appearance and exterior lighting improvements made
10. Parent recommendations included among the suggestions solicited for *WCU Ideas Online*
11. Graphics and Printing request forms placed online
12. Cross-generational educational offerings developed for a Grandparents' University to be held summer 2010
13. Additional Financial Aid Office administrative position approved to improve services to students and parents
14. Funding provided for additional tutorial services for students
15. University Library operating hours extended

OTHER CAMPUS NEWS

- ✚ As of January 28—with additional payments expected—we have 13,449 paid students for this spring semester, exceeding the 12,791 final enrollment count for spring 2009.
- ✚ This week, for a worldwide audience, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* featured WCU and Aruba Networks in a Webinar highlighting wireless-network best practices. The Webinar described our move to wireless only technology in our newest residence halls and the substantial benefits of that move.
- ✚ The State System has mandated that the product Desire to Learn replace Blackboard on PASSHE campuses as the preferred Learning Management System. The date for this change is still uncertain. Taking our customary leadership role, we will embrace this mandate, ensure that WCU faculty and staff are fully trained and comfortable with the new system, and assist other PASSHE campuses in making the most of the program's potential.

- ✚ Our Student Government Association, led by SGA President Anthony DiJiacomo, has developed WCU after Dark programming that ranges from recreational sports to arts and entertainment. We are currently funding a pilot program of this joint student-staff initiative. The program enhances Thursday-through Saturday-night on-campus socializing and entertainment options for our students living on and off campus.
- ✚ Thanks to the efforts of the WCU Foundation and our Washington consultants, the University will receive two new congressionally directed grants. These include \$300,000 to advance geothermal efforts and \$150,000 to support the Cottrell Entrepreneurial Leadership Center.
- ✚ WCU's Campaign for Excellence capital campaign reached its expanded \$35 million goal in December 2009, nearly two years ahead of schedule. This achievement is particularly remarkable in light of the current difficult economic environment. Campaign fundraising continues in support of the Undergraduate Business Center.



- ✚ Demolition of Sanderson Hall and Ramsey Hall has occurred to make way for new facilities. Much of the building material is being recycled.