Performance Contract Helps EWU Plan Proactively

Across the country, state legislatures are increasingly asking public universities for performance contracts in efforts to manage costs and improve student outcomes. Here in Washington, both WSU and UW have drafted contracts for discussion with the legislature. When we were asked last month by the Governor’s office to consider drafting a framework for EWU we said “Yes!” for several reasons.

First, we want to be proactive and set the parameters for what we believe will best serve our unique, regional, student-focused mission. Second, we have an Academic Strategic Plan that should guide and frame our discussions. And third, we want a collaboratively created document, not one handed to us from Olympia. So we formed a team of faculty and administration and drafted a first framework. You can view it on my website at www.ewu.edu/provost. Special thanks to Patty Chantrill, Barbara Alvin and Tony Flinn who consulted with the President’s staff on the contract.

I want to reiterate that this is a draft document and at this point is meant only as a basis for further discussion. Initial reaction from Olympia has been positive and we hope ongoing conversations will help us create an agreement that will support us in serving our students better. I welcome your comments at provostplanning@mail.ewu.edu.

Faculty Fellows Announced

I want to welcome three Faculty Fellows who will begin their service in January. They were selected from a highly qualified group of applicants after interviews with me and Faculty Organization President Patty Chantrill. Susan Stearns will continue with Academic Integrity, Galina Sinekopova will focus on Service Learning and Sue Wright will concentrate on General Education. Additional Fellows positions are under consideration.

These areas were identified as priorities by our strategic planning efforts. Fellows will spearhead campus-wide initiatives that will enrich EWU and their own professional growth. In addition to working on their initiatives, Fellows will meet together on projects that will contribute to faculty and staff development. They will also work closely with the Teaching and Learning Center’s Scholars Learning Communities and the Faculty Senate’s General Education review efforts.

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Log On and Be Part of Our Strategic Planning

With our Academic Strategic Plan as the foundation, we have begun the next challenging step of looking closely at our growth, capacity and resources. In November we launched the planning effort with a retreat attended by 75 faculty, staff, students and community members. Six Work Groups are now doing research and brainstorming to develop specific recommendations. They will have preliminary strategies ready for campus discussion in April, with a report due to the Board of Trustees in June.

You can participate in creating our strategies! The Strategic Planning website has full information and updates on all groups at www.ewu.edu/strategicplanning. There is also an active Blackboard discussion on which you are encouraged to post your ideas and reactions. After you log in, go to the “Strategic Plan 04-05” course.

I encourage you to contribute to what will be key planning for future growth, program priorities and supporting our academic quality.

Accreditation Self-Study Reports: Two Down, Two to Go

As of Dec. 1, EWU department chairs have completed the second of four self-study reports for EWU’s accreditation site visit, scheduled for April, 2006. By now, most faculty have probably been involved in some way to answer questions about programs, technology or student services. The Accreditation Steering Committee has graciously extended the deadline for the next round of reports until Feb. 1, but in the meantime, the Deans are working through a comparable cycle of questions.

According to Committee Chair Larry Kiser, the process is working well. Early next spring we’ll begin sharing some of what we’re learning from the reports. Until then, thank you for continuing to make our accreditation self study a high priority.

2005 Will Be a “Banner” Year

All systems are go for implementation of our new Banner student information system. Mark Baldwin is spearheading the team to launch the project, called TALONS for the benefits it will bring EWU in Teaching, Analyzing, Learning, Optimizing, Networking and Serving. Banner is scheduled to go live in the fall of 2006, with staggered transition to the system beginning in April.

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Every two weeks, you can read an update on Banner activities on the Provost Website. Just check out “Updates on Banner” under the “Information for Faculty” heading. If you have specific questions, call Mark at ext. 2449.

Have You Seen What EWU Faculty Are Up To?
If you haven’t checked out the Faculty Recognition page on the Provost website, you should. EWU faculty have had a very busy fall—our current December update has a long list of faculty publications, presentations and teaching accomplishments. The page is updated monthly, so check back often. To submit your activity, contact Lisa Poplawski at ext. 4323 or lpoplawski@mail.ewu.edu. We especially welcome news about teaching and community engagement activities.

Chalk Up Another Blackboard Success
What web page gets 137,000 hits every day and had 7,000 EWU students logging on this quarter? If you guessed our very own Blackboard site, you get a gold star. This fall, 500 instructors, teaching 805 courses, used the online discussion and posting features of Blackboard, which allows students to log on 24/7.

Blackboard is becoming such an important tool that after five years of working with Blackboard Basic, we’re ready to upgrade to Blackboard Enterprise. The new system will allow even more integration with our other systems after we implement Banner. At that time, class lists and grades, for example, can be integrated with our administrative systems. The move to Blackboard Enterprise is still being mapped out and implementation planning has just begun. Watch for updates here, in Good Morning Eastern and in the Easterner as the project moves forward.

Season’s Greetings
Best wishes from the entire staff at Academic Affairs for a wonderful holiday season and new year!