

September 17 Faculty Meeting – VPAA Comments

Good afternoon, everyone – and welcome and welcome back. We ended the academic year with many conversations and projects designed to steward our academic enterprise cued up to begin again right away and indeed, we have. I will actually begin by ceding the first few minutes of my time to Dean of Faculty Tamara Beauboeuf who will report out on two such large-scale faculty endeavors.

Thank you, Tamara.

The **table of initiatives** to be addressed from Academic Affairs that I draw up each year and show you here, reflects the continuity and momentum we are building on several key issues (Some of them (**page 1**) are perennial or should become perennial like the stewardship of academic resources and the strategic marketing of academic programs; others (**page 2**) are timed projects such as building assessment of student learning and reviewing the service component of a faculty position at DePauw.) All of these engage faculty and I thank you in advance for our work together, starting with the Governance Committee, with whom I will go over these in detail tomorrow. I also shared this document with chairs and directors at the end of August and invite you all to discuss it and discern where you wish to make your contribution to the endeavors before us. It is, as experience tells us, by no means exhaustive of all of the things that we will work on together.

Most timely right now will be for me to inform you about some developments that will most immediately shape our work and stewardship.

Accreditation. Many, many thanks to the many of you who participated not only in the research, writing, and production of our accreditation report (available on e-services) but who also came to the open forums, drop-in sessions and the three “Areas of Focus” session. Those comprise the first three items on this list of preliminary indications of the work to emerge from our accreditation process. The last three items emerged during the course of the visit.

1. **Departmental learning goals/outcomes and student learning assessment** (4-year window) (development; Higher Learning Commission conference: April 5-9, Chicago – Tonya Branham, University Registrar and I, seek to take a faculty member with us) – this will take institutional focus and support, recommended by our accreditors to occur mostly around the senior capstone experience as it can tell us about the learning achieved in the rest of our curriculum; the benefit will be that we better understand what our students are learning so that we can better shape how we teach them. I will take the challenge of assessing our general education curriculum to the Curriculum Committee, which is designing a general education renewal process for the University. Assessment of student learning at the departmental level will be relatively new at DePauw; it is an instrument, not an end in and of itself, which, if well designed should see us achieve our ultimate mission of educating students through to degree completion and into a society they will meaningfully engage and shape. We have a current average four-year rate of graduation of 80% and we know that we want to increase that to fulfill our mission (our very purpose). Assessment can contribute to that endeavor, in partnership with the many measures moving into place for student success and graduation at DePauw.
2. **Student retention and persistence (plan)** – the goal here is to consolidate those “many measures moving into place for student success and graduation” into a plan with verifiable outcomes that show improvement. In its emphasis on public trust in higher education (severely shaken by the national four-year graduation average rate of 42%), HLC supports

measures that build a “culture of continual improvement.” HLC will want us to set a target graduation rate and the work will then be to inform and engage each other in the measures to be taken by the host of support systems we have: from class deans to the HHMI grant student peer guides to advising (and an institutional commitment to further developing faculty and staff in advising).

3. **Program review (curricular & co-curricular)** – issues-based program reviews, especially on issues of student learning, curriculum, and pedagogy will characterize the schedule and purpose of program reviews that I will be working on with the Curriculum Committee. Co-curricular as well as curricular programs will benefit from these reviews, which will contribute to establishing a dynamic of assessment and improvement of the Commitment, in its dedication to creating an accessible and purposeful co-curriculum from the many options that DePauw provides.
4. **Post-tenure review/assessment of teaching** – this surprised the accreditors a great deal: that at DePauw, there is no obligated review of a faculty member after tenure (in other words, that, potentially, after seven years of teaching, a 40-year career can have no review or development at the institutional level). This matter will be taken up by Review Committee.
5. **Communication between admin and faculty** – This is a commitment that must be renewed and reshaped continuously, and, with the Chair of the Faculty, President McCoy, VP for Finance and Administration Leonard, and myself are looking to the faculty committee structure to establish mutual communication between administration and faculty.
6. **Nomenclature** – the importance of a shared vocabulary emerged many times over the course of the accreditation visit: from student assessment (learning goals/ outcomes/ objectives) to what we mean by student success (persistence/ retention/ graduation) and more. We have seen this importance in the equity work of diversity and inclusion (sense of belonging, growth mindset) and know that it takes time to build.

DePauw Dialogue – September 26 – coming up!

The Schedule- “What We Say / What We Do” – unofficial theme of this year’s Dialogue

9-10 am – Keynote speaker Melissa Harris-Perry

10:15-11:45 – Skills Workshops, I

12-1 pm – Lunch

1:10-2:40 pm – Skills Workshops, II

2:50-3:50 pm – Community Statements Discussion

The Community Statements (Available in Campus Labs) (We need about X more facilitators) –

We have made these statements: do they still speak to us? How do we hold ourselves accountable to them? What skills do we need to live and practice them within our academic community?

1. Statement of Academic Freedom for Students (adopted by the faculty, April 18, 1966; Academic Handbook)
2. Statement of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Freedoms (1978, Student Handbook)
3. Statement of Community (adopted by Student Congress, May 8, 1998; Student Handbook)
4. The Community Covenant (Presidential Task Force, 2002, currently archived)
5. Institutional Values (2017 Mission & Vision)

What began as a grassroots student movement that was quickly supported by the faculty members who voted in a five-year commitment to DePauw Dialogue, is now largely managed by administrators and staff. The excellent conversations that we had Mondays during lunch in the spring gave shape to this year’s DePauw Dialogue, which has become a day-long conference held by the University to provide a large-scale communal conversation about identity, community, and

equity, designed to connect with the lived experience of this institution in the fullness of its learning and living environment in all its shared spaces: classroom, curriculum, campus, co-curriculum, residence hall, extra-curriculum (always with the curriculum as core). Race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and socio-economic class continue to shape identities within systems that education (and each of our individual academic disciplines, each in its own way) addresses and seeks to move ever-forward towards greater equity – the great and perpetual project, after all, of education in that, as Dewey reminds us, education is the midwife of democracy. And that, we can never forget, even in the midst of committee meetings, class prep, grading, meetings, reports, office hours, class discussions and all of the other intensities of the loving labor of the liberal arts, is why we are here.