

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
Cathy Early, Chair Bill Epperly
Andre Ashmore Carolyn Ehlert Fuller
Roger Clawson Phil Hare
Lyneir Cole Yvonne Savala

From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: February 21, 2014

Re: February 2014 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* exemplifies how the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Western Illinois University continue to advance the University's values of academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility. The accomplishments discussed below also advance the priorities and goals of *Higher Values in Higher Education* and the *Long Term Plan for Western Illinois University*.

Academic Excellence and Educational Opportunity

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission approved Western Illinois University's first Ph.D. program in Environmental Science with an emphasis on large river ecosystems. An interdisciplinary committee of faculty members developed the program, including individuals from biological sciences, geography, mathematics and the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and River Action.

Dr. Roger Viadero, director of the Institute for Environmental Studies, will direct the program that will be offered in the Quad Cities. Initial classes will start at the same time that the University opens Phase II of the Quad Cities Riverfront Campus for the fall 2014 semester. Additional program information is available at wiu.edu/cas/ies.

- Western Illinois University's Department of Educational Leadership (which houses Western's Ed.D. in Educational Leadership) represents one of three universities participating in a \$4.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education School Leadership prepared by the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University.

The five-year project will study the effectiveness of a new principal preparation program to work in high-need schools. Joining Western and Quincy Public Schools are Illinois State with Bloomington Public Schools, and North Central College with the East Aurora District. More than \$13 million in grant funding was awarded to 20 projects in the School

Leadership Program. The five-year grants will serve more than 1,500 current and future school leaders in 98 high-need school districts across 15 states and Puerto Rico.

- Dr. David Rohall, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, was named Western Illinois University's 2014 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. He will address the ways sociologists study the military in society and discuss his research about the impact of military service on soldiers and their families. *Peach Blossoms in a Post-Military World: Working with Iraq-Era Student-Veterans* will be presented at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 26 in the College of Fine Arts and Communication Recital Hall and in the Quad Cities at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1 at 60th Street, Room 102.
- Western Illinois University's first Graduate Research Conference at was held February 7th as part of Graduate Research Week in Macomb. The event featured presentations by 65 WIU graduate students in the areas of artistic performances, research posters, and research presentations.
- Centennial Honors College hosted Western Illinois University's 13th annual Pre-Law Symposium on February 17th. Recruiters from law schools at DePaul University, Drake University, Hamline University, Indiana Tech, John Marshall, Loyola University, Marquette University, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, University of Illinois, University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Wisconsin, and Valparaiso were in attendance to recruit future Western Illinois University alumni.

The keynote speaker was Heather Wier-Vaught, a 1998 alum with degrees in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration and Sociology. Ms. Wier-Vaught received her law degree from Northern Illinois University and currently serves as counsel to Illinois Speaker of the House Michael Madigan, parliamentarian for the Illinois House of Representatives, and ethics officer for the House Democratic Caucus. The symposium also included a panel discussion made up of WIU alumni. The panelists were:

- Genc Arifi, 2013 Law Enforcement and Justice Administration graduate, DePaul University College of Law.
 - LaQuenta Rudison, 2012 Philosophy graduate, John Marshall Law School.
 - Arsenio Mims, 2011 Political Science graduate, business minor, University of Missouri School of Law.
 - Attorney Steven Dennis Rineberg, 1998 Political Science graduate, St. Louis University College of Law.
 - Attorney John Fisk, 1977 History graduate, Chicago-Kent College of Law
- The Illinois Music Educators Association (ILMEA) presented Christine Lapka, Professor of Music, and alumnus R. Brett Goad the Mary Hoffman Award of Excellence at its recent conference. The Hoffman Award recognizes teaching excellence in music educators who have taught for at least 10 years. Professor Lapka served as the ILMEA Learners With Special Needs Special Area Chair. Mr. Goad, the director of the University Chorus at Northern Illinois University, received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music from Western. He has influenced numerous music programs across the state and served as an ILMEA district choral representative.
 - The School of Nursing's RN to BSN degree program will be fully on-line effective for fall 2014 courses. The online format serves place-bound professionals who cannot attend a Western Illinois University campus.

- *U.S. News and World Report's Best Online Education Program Rankings* recognized Western Illinois University's distance learning program for the third consecutive year. Western ranked 61st out of 210 colleges from across the nation in *Best Online Education Degree Programs: Bachelor's Category* and is one of three Illinois public universities named in the top 100.
- The Department of Broadcasting completed a \$100,000 High Definition upgrade to its broadcasting studio and control room. The upgraded equipment will benefit the student-run newscast, sports programming, and allow for development of more shows through the department and a morning talk show.
- The *Western Illinois University-Quad Cities View Book* won a silver award in the Collegiate Advertising Awards competition. More than 700 entries were received from colleges and universities across the nation. Judging criteria by a panel of design and education marketing professionals included creativity, layout and design, functionality, message effectiveness, production quality, and overall appeal.

Personal Growth and Social Responsibility

- President Thomas, along with the WIU Foundation and its Board of Directors, announced the successful completion of the \$60 million Higher Values in Higher Education campaign. The campaign raised \$62.1 million. Information from Vice President Bainter shows the success of the campaign has had a significant impact on the WIU Foundation. The University's endowment increased from \$16 million to \$40 million. Earnings from the endowment support student scholarships, academic programs, critical University needs, and many initiatives on both campuses. Many campaign funds have gone directly to scholarships, academics, athletics, performing arts, lab equipment, and research activities. Western's total asset base is now approximately \$55 million.
- Military Advanced Education's *2014 Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities* designated Western Illinois University as a *Top Military-Friendly University*. To earn this designation, institutions are judged on flexibility of online learning options; extent of transfer credits accepted by degree level; on-campus ROTC; service member opportunity colleges participation; on-campus active duty/veteran assistance; support provided to the families of service members; faculty trained in veteran reintegration issues; presence on military installations; and full-time counselors trained in veteran-specific mental health concerns.
- Western Illinois University was also named a *Military-Friendly School* by Victory Media (for the fifth consecutive year) and is featured in *G.I. Jobs Guide to Military Friendly Schools*. Previously, Western was selected as a *Best for Vets College* by Military Times *EDGE* magazine for the fourth consecutive year.
- The Center for the Application of Information Technologies (CAIT) launched a new version of its i-Pathways, an online GED preparation curriculum. In 2013, CAIT's i-Pathways project became one of 20 publishers nationally designated as a partner with the America Council on Education's GED Testing Service. The i-Pathways project was developed in partnership with the Illinois Community College Board, has been used statewide since 2002, and is currently deployed in 14 states.
- Western Illinois University Leatherneck fans continue strong support of the athletic program and have advanced the University into the Sweet 16 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's 6th Fan Competition. With a top-16 placement, Western earned \$10,000 for the University's general scholarship fund. The winner of the overall competition will win \$100,000 for its general scholarship

fund. Western is currently paired against the University New Mexico. The school with the most votes by February 23rd will advance to the Elite 8. Information about the competition and how to vote is available at ncaa.com/6thFan.

- Chef Jeff Henderson, Food Network personality and author of *Cooking: My Journey from the Streets to the Stove*, hosted a Macomb cooking demonstration and discussion about his work as part of the academic year 2013-2014 University Theme, “Food and Drink: Mind, Body and Soul.” Chef Henderson was the Food Network personality behind “The Chef Jeff Project” that transformed the lives of six at-risk young adults by employing them at his catering company. His latest show, “Family Style with Chef Jeff,” demonstrates how good choices in the kitchen can lead to life changing experiences for families.
- Western Illinois University was designated a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the second consecutive year. The University achieved its designation by maintaining a tree advisory committee, having a campus tree care plan, dedicating annual expenditures toward trees, hosting an Arbor Day observance, and sponsoring student service-learning projects.
- Horn Field Campus Program Manager Mindy Pheiffer is currently seeking volunteers to help plant 8,500 trees and remove honeysuckle this spring. Last year, a successful Arbor Day Foundation grant application resulted in a \$10,000 award for a reforestation project at Horn Field. The award supported planting over 16,000 saplings in the challenge course area and surrounding woodlands.
- School of Agriculture alum David Erickson was recently elected as vice president of the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB). The IFB has a network of 96 County Farm Bureau offices, which provide farmers and those who work in the agriculture industry with resources in communications, leadership development, legislative education/involvement, and agriculture literacy programs.

All of the accomplishments discussed above are just from the first two months of 2014. Future strategic plan updates will showcase additional institutional accomplishments. Should you have any questions about the materials presented in this month’s *Update*, and/or feedback regarding the continued successful advancement of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me.

cc: President Thomas CSEC Pres. Mattson Associate Provost Neumann
 Provost Hawkinson COAP President Moon Associate Provost Parsons
 Vice President Bainter Faculty Council Chair Pillutla Assistant Vice President Williams
 Vice President Biller Faculty Senate Chair Rock Planning, Budget, and IR Staff
 Vice President DeWees SGA Chair Markey President’s Office Support Staff