

Notes from open meeting of the Board of Trustees, 27 Feb 2009, by Lynn DeNoia, Antje Mays, and Cheryl Fortner-Wood

Presentation from President DiGiorgio: “Changing Landscapes at Winthrop University” to review the past year

Although the presentation provided a review of points that were familiar, interesting things included:

- The BoT’s week-end theme was succinctly stated as “enabling the future development of the University while managing the demands of the present” and the challenge was to find an appropriate balance. The theme was an umbrella statement for needing to look ahead in terms of planning for the future but being able to function in the near term as state funding continues to dry up.
- We do not have certainty about what is to come but we have some probabilities (stimulus funds, BEA estimates, etc.).
- Winthrop must be pragmatic and nimble in these uncertain times.

- Enrollment and academic life initiative notables:
 - First Look Friday is being well-received.
 - Applications overall are up 13%, with in-state applications up 20% (The President called this a ‘trickle-down’ effect of the poor economy as parents and students need to temper ambitions with fiscal reality – where applicants may move down from privates to publics to community colleges. The open question is how many of the applicants will ‘stick’ in each tier.)
 - Academic Success Communities are paying off.
 - The 4th floor of the Courtyard is going to house the honors program, pending future intentions to have an honors residence hall.
 - Prospective students are showing increasing reluctance to live in traditional high-rise residence halls and we do lose some applicants as a result of freshman housing in Wofford and Richardson. This is not a revenue issue because residence halls have to pay for themselves.

- Campus construction notables:
 - The Campus Center is about 50% complete, ahead of schedule and proceeding well.
 - The future of Peabody Field as a storm water drainage system has become dramatically more attractive due to some clever ideas by Walter Hardin and company. The plan is to have open area “activity lawns” from the Campus Center to the Amphitheater that become storm water detention “bowls” to collect and funnel water into storm drains. This is a natural water drainage area. The graded area is designed to look like lawns subtly shaped like oval basins. In very rainy weather (“10-year storm”) they would fill up like lakes and subsequently drain slowly into the ground. It’s both eco-friendly, costs the same to build as conventional drainage, but the natural grading completely eliminates the need for maintenance of a conventional / industrial-type of storm-drainage system.
 - Carroll Hall is proceeding well and is expected to be open in the fall.

- The organ is back in Byrnes Auditorium; over \$200,000 of the cost of \$400,000 has been raised privately.
- Technology activities of note:
 - The transition to the new administrative software system (TALONS) is proceeding well and on schedule, thanks to tremendous dedication of administrative staff who are performing both regular and training/development duties simultaneously; often devoting 3 days each week to training in addition to their regular duties.
 - The new Content Management System to give a consistent look and feel to all our official Winthrop web pages is nearly ready to take effect and will be introduced officially in the next few weeks.
 - For webmasters, pages on winthrop.edu are currently on lockdown while they're moved over to the new look on the new server.
- The fiscal situation remains uncertain:
 - We are currently facing the possibility of another 8% reduction from Ways and Means (\$1,565,847) and also 3+% from BEA (\$587,183). The problem is that such cuts so late in the fiscal year are increasingly difficult to accommodate. → So far, Winthrop has lost ~22% of the initial allocation from the state and an additional 3% would raise the reduction to ~26%. An added challenge is that whatever our final budget ends up being after any cuts yet to come will be our beginning allocation next fiscal year.
 - Timetables and impact of the Recovery and Reinvestment Act in terms of how much money might come to Winthrop and when continue to be uncertain. And due to the unique political realities in SC (e.g. gubernatorial veto), such funding cannot be counted on.
 - Stimulus funds would not be available to meet cuts made in the remainder of the current fiscal year and these funds will only be available for two years.
- Our priorities remain:
 - Ensuring the continuing national-caliber quality of the academic experience at Winthrop
 - Continuing to provide a safe and secure campus
 - Continuing recruitment of the high-achieving, socially responsible and inclusive student body for which Winthrop is known.

A new breed of academic programs is coming down the pike (to increase the marketability of future graduates' combination of degrees):

- ❖ A new 18-hour Business minor that meets all MBA prerequisites, for combining with any BA program and leading to a possible 5-year program leading to an MBA
- ❖ MS in Chemistry with MBA
- ❖ BA/MAT in Secondary Education
- ❖ BS in Sport Management with MBA, although great for graduates' marketability, has hit some business accreditation snags