



PROGRESS ON OUR 2015-16 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Each fall, we outline Wooster's strategic priorities for the coming year within the context of our long-term strategic framework. In this document, we report on our progress on the priorities we outlined for 2015-16.

The year was a year of transition, yet that did not preclude us from making progress on the priorities we set last Fall. Our "success" is characterized as goals and objectives attained, as well as our learning from the challenges inherent in those priorities that were seeking to attain higher goals, address complex issues, or undertake new endeavors.

Our interim president Georgia Nugent not only sustained our momentum, but also undertook new projects that advanced our efforts in strengthening our sense of community, staff compensation, and facilities to enhance our residential program:

- The "One Wooster" initiative continues to strengthen relationships among students, staff, and faculty through the planning, programming, and promoting of activities and events that are inclusive and open to all members of our campus community.
- Following a year of study by the Staff Committee and Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee (SPPAC), we raised the base salary at the college from minimum wage to \$11/hour for benefits eligible staff and commenced work to continue to improve the work environment for staff, with emphasis on training and professional and leadership development.
- Our plan to renovate Holden Annex was literally scrapped, as we accepted the recommendation of our architect to [finally] demolish the Annex and construct Brush Hall as a new facility funded by donors. The in-house managed project was completed in time for students' return to campus in August.

During the course of this year, we brought three important searches to successful conclusion with Sarah Bolton joining the College as president, Scott Brown joining us as Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and Jennifer Griffin joining us as the first Dean of APEX. In addition, Peter Mowrey began his appointment as Dean for Faculty Development.

In the following sections, we provide highlights of our activities and progress relating to our priorities for the year.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: TO FULFILL WOOSTER'S EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE WITH DISTINCTION.

Curriculum

What we set out to do: *Focus on conversations that will incorporate the Graduate Qualities into "A Wooster Education" and enhance curricular cohesion for our students; sustain Wooster's leadership role in scholarly writing and research, by searching for innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to enhance our First Year Seminars, Writing Intensive Courses, and Independent Study.*

What we did:

The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) continued to discuss broader curricular issues in preparation for revising "A Wooster Education." Two subcommittees carried out this work: the first focused on FYS and

processes to improve writing instruction in FYS and also reviewed writing practices across the curriculum, including the new Writing Studio seminars; the second looked more holistically at the curriculum and laid the groundwork for more extensive modifications in the way the College supports and sustains interdisciplinary research and fosters overall curricular coherence. Substantive progress was made through discussions of Wooster's general education curriculum with faculty, led by Beth Muellner and Jeremy Rapport working with EPC. These discussions will continue in 2016-17 and we anticipate that there will be definite proposals for innovation by Spring 2017.

Graduate Qualities Assessment

What we set out to do: *To provide evidence pertinent to these broader discussions, our assessment of the student learning outcomes articulated in our Graduate Qualities will concentrate on direct (rather than indirect) measures of elements such as critical thinking, written communication, inquiry and analysis, and quantitative literacy.*

What we did:

As part of an AAC&U initiative, we are participating in a Sherman-Fairchild funded project to directly assess elements of our graduate qualities. This project includes both an external project, in which our students' assignments are scored by evaluators from other institutions participating in the AAC&U initiative and an internal project, which allows for professional development for our own faculty to work on course embedded assessment to give a more customized direct assessment of Wooster's student learning outcomes.

In the fall, the external project focused on Critical Thinking and Written Communication and we received the first draft of the data from this pilot project. We were asked to submit assignments dealing with Intercultural Knowledge and Competency, Quantitative Reasoning, Ethical Reasoning, and Civic Engagement, but we will not have results for those parts of the project until the fall of 2016. We identified several faculty and staff who have agreed to be trained and to serve as external evaluators for the student assignments coming from the other institutions participating in the external project.

We have 10 academic departments plus the Writing Center participating in the internal project, which supports the assessment of a selected departmental learning objective that aligns with one of the AAC&U rubrics. Final reports from the departments analyzing their findings were submitted throughout the summer.

Enhancing the I.S. Experience

What we set out to do: *This year, through CoRE activities and programming, we seek to build new capacity for the effective use of digital scholarly resources and techniques by our faculty and students. We will also continue to encourage collaborative research, both within and across the disciplines.*

What we did:

As part of a series on social justice and digital scholarship funded by a five-year \$750,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we offered presentations and workshops from two speakers: Angel Nieves of Hamilton College, who helped guide us in our thinking about space and programming, including the creation of a maker space, and Todd Hughes of Vanderbilt University, who provided a lecture and a workshop for the language faculty on mapping. We established a partnership with the Digital Humanities Summer Institute, with the hope of encouraging more faculty to attend. The Teaching Staff and Tenure committee developed a set of recommendations for the evaluation of digital scholarship, and revised the criteria of evaluation to reflect digital scholarship.

Following a successful Senior I.S. colloquium dinner, workshops were offered for students in the fall in the art of voiceovers and in filmmaking. A productive meeting was held with staff at APEX about building more reflection into the summer research program, and providing more opportunities for summer research

students to share their results with one another. These reflections and moments of sharing might provide opportunities for research collaboration.

Just when we thought it could not go higher, the number of students participating in this year's Senior Research Symposium increased, with 80% of the Class of 2016 participating. We are working to implement a new database that students can use to share the topics of their I.S. early in the process to facilitate interaction and collaboration among students in their research.

Achieving Wooster's Mission in the Sciences

What we set out to do: *We will complete the design phase for the Ruth W. Williams Hall of Science. We will also focus on a new initiative, STEM-Zone, designed to support students from all backgrounds toward successful completion of introductory courses in the sciences, whether to fulfill general education requirements or as a start to a science major.*

What we did:

EYP finished the design development documents and the construction documents. Mateer has been demolished, and construction is underway. Faculty and staff worked very hard on the move out of Mateer and in preparing shared spaces in Morgan, Scovel, and Severance.

Now in the second year, we have continued to refine the STEM-Zone, assessing what is most effective for student success and faculty development. The support of an annual \$100,000 gift for several years has made our efforts to refine and innovate possible. Most importantly, we hired a coordinator for the program this fall, Kara Melrose, who is responsible for overseeing the daily operation of the space and supervising the student interns. The second key innovation this year was the creation of partial credit Chemistry Studio course aimed at supporting the quantitative reasoning skills for those students in Introductory Chemistry classes who, based on math placement scores, were predicted to struggle in the introductory sequence. Initial assessment of the project indicates that a greater percentage of the students enrolled in the Studio course stayed enrolled in the CHEM 111 for the semester instead of withdrawing, and have also registered for CHEM 112, as compared with a control group of students with similar test scores who were not in the Studio course. Based on the assessments of the course, we hope to extend this beyond Chemistry. Finally, we continued to pursue faculty development on cultural competencies in STEM courses, including the visit to campus of Rigoberto Hernandez of the Georgia Institute of Technology, an expert in diversity in STEM fields.

At the October Board meeting, Katie Boes presented the STEM-Studio concept at the Academic Mission committee meeting. At the request of those trustees, we offered a webinar in March on the entire STEM-Zone program.

Taking the Next Bold Steps in APEX

What we set out to do: *After three successful years in establishing the foundations of an integrated program for Advising, Planning, and Experiential Learning, we are now poised to address the future leadership structure and develop a program vision for the next five years. Our overarching goal is to improve our service to students by fully integrating the areas of APEX and by developing closer connections with curriculum, faculty, and alumni.*

What we did:

John Ramsay worked with the staff in APEX and with a faculty/student advisory group to develop a plan for the leadership structure and program vision in APEX. After a rigorous search process facilitated by search consultant, Tom Courtice, we identified and were able to hire Jennifer Griffin as the new Dean of APEX. This new leadership position, made possible through a gift that endowed it, will allow APEX to grow in bold new ways, making stronger and deeper connections with the faculty and the curriculum on campus

and with our external constituents: alumni, families of prospective students, corporations, industries, and non-profits.

This summer we completed a major renovation in Andrews' Library to continue the trajectory of making the libraries a hub of student educational activity. The project enhanced an old space that will serve multiple purposes for students, the library, and APEX. In concrete terms, the new Longbrake Commons provides an office for the new Dean of APEX, a multiple purpose room which during the day will be used by APEX for student programs (such as, Wooster 101, the transition to college program for first-year students) and in the evening a study space, and smaller collaboration rooms which will provide space for peer tutoring, testing space for the Learning Center, and group study.

Community of Learners

Diversity & Inclusion

What we set out to do:

- *The re-named Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) will move forward on several initiatives based on the findings of a listening study conducted last year.*
- *The new President's Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion will help coordinate and strengthen our efforts by bringing together those responsible for our work in these areas, including students and faculty, to promote a positive climate for diversity on campus.*
- *We will support the diversity and inclusion initiatives in Athletics in response to the external Diversity and Title IX reviews we initiated last year.*
- *Faculty orientation and faculty development programming will continue to include emphasis on developing sensitivity to student backgrounds and experiences in course design and classroom management.*
- *We intend to develop a sustainable model for the MLK day celebration, continuing connections between the College and the broader Wooster community.*

What we did:

- Given that diversity and inclusion has become a greater area of focus campus-wide, President Nugent opted to work directly with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and with student organization leaders to address campus and broader issues and to respond to the findings of the "listening study" conducted in 2014-15.
- The Board established a subcommittee of the Trustee and Governance committee to consider how to increase diversity on the Board. The sub-committee brought forward a number of recommendations for increasing the diversity of the Board, and the full Board adopted a resolution stating their explicit commitment to greater diversity. To support this effort, the Advancement team has been carrying out a systematic effort to identify diverse candidates for Board and other leadership positions.
- One concern raised by students is the lack of diversity—as well as the small size—of our safety and security staff. This is currently a very difficult area in which to attract staff members. We re-directed some resources to increase the size of the staff; and we are seeking new ways to identify and recruit individuals to this work.
- Fall 2015's faculty orientation and faculty development programming continued to include an emphasis on developing sensitivity to student backgrounds and experiences in course design and classroom management. For example, *Teaching Matters* was dedicated to thinking about diversity and the student experience in the classroom. We had very successful and well attended sessions discussing the use of trigger warnings in the classroom, working with

students with disabilities, and gender expression in the classroom.

- Following a successful MLK day celebration in 2015, a challenge for us in 2016 was to integrate the day into coursework across disciplines, particularly for years such as 2016 when MLK day falls on the first day of classes. We provided faculty with ideas for how to incorporate the day into their classes, and worked individually with some faculty to develop successful models.
- In her new position as Assistant to the Athletic Director for Diversity and Inclusion, Ashley Reid is off to a fast start working on these issues with coaches and athletes. She assumed duties as the Title IX representative in athletics and as Senior Woman Administrator, which provide her with a more comprehensive set of responsibilities related to Diversity and Inclusion. Ashley has been a very important part of the planning process with MLK Day, as she is responsible for one of the service activities. Working with Athletic Director Keith Beckett, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) (which now has 100% of teams represented as opposed to 30% in the past), and the coaching staff, Ashley initiated an NCAA program addressing student responsibility for the behavior of their colleagues called “It’s On Us.” We believe that we were the first college in the NCAC to adopt this program. In addition, she implemented a training program for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April that involved athletes, SAAC, and staff.
- During the fall semester there were several meetings on campus regarding campus climate. Meetings in Babcock and the Lowry Pit outlined many student concerns at Wooster. As a result, we offered a seminar in the spring semester – Weaving a New Tartan: The Future of Wooster. This course co-taught by Kabria Baumgartner (History), Shelley Judge (Geology) and Hank Kreuzman (Philosophy) explored how the complex issues of race, gender, sexuality, culture, and class impact both the American system of higher education and the curriculum, co-curriculum, and social climate at the College of Wooster. Students in the seminar worked in teams to examine and develop ideas about ways in which the College can reshape the curricular and social climate to meet the needs of our students in a changing world.

Campus Life

What we set out to do: *This year we seek to shape a creative and innovative vision of student life that is student-centered and advances our mission through student learning, living, development, and leadership opportunities. Overall goals are to provide clarity and stability, as well as accountability, to the student life area. During the fall semester, we plan to work with an external consultant to assist us in determining how to structure the organization and carry out the activities in student life in ways that effectively serve current and future Wooster students in our increasingly complex and diverse culture. This work will assist us in defining the qualities we will seek in the next leader of the student life division. We plan to undertake the search for that individual during the spring semester, timing it in such a way that the incoming president will be able to be involved in the conclusion of the search.*

What we did:

We benefitted from the consultancy and two campus visits by Margaret Hazlett, the Dean of the College at Franklin & Marshall College, to help us evaluate our personnel and resource needs in the area of Student Life as well as to identify the qualities that we sought in our next leader for the division. At the conclusion of the academic year, we completed a successful search with the hire of Scott C. Brown, then Associate Vice President and Dean of Students at Colgate University. In her final report, Dean Hazlett stressed the importance of thinking creatively about student living spaces and creating successful living and learning communities to break down the silo between classrooms and residential spaces. She recommended an organizational structure for the division that would focus the staff’s work on academic success and community engagement and emphasized the need to

provide professional development programming for staff as well as including faculty in some of those opportunities to build relationships across campus.

Within the division last year, several important staff hires were made including a Director of Residence Life, a Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and a Health Education Coordinator. While many institutions nationwide saw violence and protests on their campuses, we facilitated several open forums for discussion that directed student concerns toward constructive dialogue and outcomes of mutual understanding and respect. President Bolton is continuing to build on those relationships, meeting with many student groups already this year.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2: TO STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION OF OUR COLLEGE BY SECURING AND ENHANCING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE HUMAN, FINANCIAL, AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION”

Continue to Promote Wooster's Identity

What we set out to do: *This year we will continue to build on the success of our efforts to increase Wooster's visibility both nationally and internationally, and to strengthen our distinctive and valuable position as "America's premier college for mentored undergraduate research." On a strategic level, we will review and update our multi-year marketing and enrollment plans. Specific tactical initiatives growing out of those plans include investing in a very targeted, national recruiting effort focused on students who are interested in continuing their education beyond a baccalaureate degree; development of a new print piece focused exclusively on mentored research, and a new print piece and website focused on APEX; and an overhaul of our online campus tour to create a mobile-friendly, GPS-enabled tool that combines 360-degree imagery, audio narration, text, video, and a virtual reality component.*

What we did:

Our efforts to expand our national and international visibility seem to be working. The evidence is mostly anecdotal at this point (Admitted Student Questionnaire results are pending), but families are mentioning interest in research frequently in their interactions with admissions staff. The research print piece has been deployed strategically (to counselors and parents). We decided that a new APEX microsite was of greater value than a print piece so we invested a donor's gift designated for the project towards development of the microsite. This externally-oriented website is gathering attention and great reviews from families, alumni, and our industry colleagues. We still believe an APEX print piece will be of value and will likely produce one this year. The new online campus tour had been viewed by over 13,000 individuals with an average of 8 minutes per view – both impressive results since our September 2015 launch. We have now added the option of taking the tour in Chinese and Spanish.

We updated our long-term enrollment plan and reviewed it with the Enrollment and Marketing committee. The marketing plan will be reviewed and updated in 2016-17.

Campaign/Sustained Fundraising

What we set out to do:

- *As a component of our Sustainable Budget initiative, we have committed to growing the Wooster Fund to \$3.5 million this year, an effort in which we will encourage the entire campus community to invest.*
- *We will continue developing the overall fundraising and alumni relations initiatives for long-term growth, focusing on developing new leaders and philanthropists, identifying new trustees, and engaging alumni in the life of the college.*
- *We also will sustain the momentum of our campaign, now in year three, during a presidential transition year, so that we are in a strong position to launch the public phase of the campaign as early as spring 2017.*

What we did:

- We achieved \$3.28M in annual giving, not quite the bold leap to \$3.5M attempted, due in part to several non-repeatable Wooster Fund gifts. In addition, we increased the level of the Leadership Circle from a minimum gift of \$2k annually to one of \$3k. When the minimum was increased 14 years ago, we saw most donors increase as well; this did not happen to the same degree this time.
- A variety of vehicles were deployed to be aggressive about developing the overall fundraising and alumni relations initiatives for long-term growth, from focused research and attention to "new leads" to engaging alumni around key initiatives like APEX and growing the Presidential Fellows.
- We were able to sustain momentum for the campaign through the leadership of and ownership by the Campaign Leadership Team, the Advancement Committee, and the full board, reaching an unexpected total of \$145 million by June 30, 2016. Much of the growth came, too, from a planned and executed "bequest focus" year, which involved an active partnership between our Major Gifts team and our Director of Planned Giving in making blended asks, focusing on donors who could make bequest intention commitments, and sending personalized informational pieces on the importance of bequests.

Implementing the Sustainable Budget Planning Recommendations

What we set out to do: *From the many ideas identified last year, we will identify a number of the most promising to analyze and implement. In addition, we will seek to address the impact of the Affordable Health Care Act on our healthcare program costs, in a way that remains sensitive to the needs of our employees and also offers a sustainable solution.*

What we did:

In preparing the FY17 budget, Cabinet reviewed both the "longer-term" sustainable budget ideas and the status of the ideas that were incorporated in the FY16 budget. The FY17 budget reflects a few additional ideas that Cabinet, with the advice of SPPAC, opted to pursue. With respect to our health insurance plan and the Affordable Health Care Act, we took two major actions. First, we reconstituted the Health Benefits Task Force with a charge to look at longer-term options and recommend a plan for our program. The Task Force has shared an initial set of recommendations and is expected to provide a recommendation for 2017 in early Fall term. Second, we joined the Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators (EIIA) consortium to assist with our insurance programs purchasing power and to provide independent guidance as we examine health plan options.

Strategic Financial Plan

What we set out to do: *We will develop a mid-range strategic financial plan that builds upon our sustainable budget work. This plan will take into consideration residential facilities needs and having an appropriately sized and configured inventory of housing options; other facilities-related needs; and deferred maintenance. Other considerations include addressing our currently limited annual capital budget, examining the purposes and adequacy of our various reserve funds, managing and investing non-endowment cash funds, and prudent use of debt (borrowing) in financing our resource needs.*

What we did:

The Finance Committee engaged the Trustees in reviewing the longer term capital needs of the College, including the need to upgrade the student housing stock and other facilities across campus as identified in the 2012 campus master plan and the 2015 ten-year vision for residential housing. These discussions also provided a better understanding of current deferred maintenance needs. To provide funding for these high priority needs, and in light of the current debt capacity of the College, the Finance Committee also engaged a bond consultant to inform the Trustees as to the current state of the financial and debt markets, financing instruments that might be most advantageous in the near term, and how to assess the issuance of any

additional debt on the College's current Moody's rating. Conversations will continue in FY 2017 as to the prudent use of debt to finance these needs.

A new reporting system for Operating Cash Reserves and the various reserve funds, and an updated cash management policy for the investment of non-endowment funds were reviewed and approved by the Finance and Investment committees.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3: "TO SUSTAIN OUR MOMENTUM BY DEVELOPING A CAMPUS-WIDE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURE OF PLANNING AS AN EFFECTIVE, COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOR."

The new Strategic Planning & Priorities Advisory Committee (SPPAC)

What we set out to do: *SPPAC will set out to fulfill its responsibilities as outlined in its charter, determine its agenda, and further develop a strategic approach to consideration of key issues likely to have an impact on Wooster's future. SPPAC's agenda for the year includes advising on our strategic priorities for 2016-17, reviewing and revising the College's "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" (SWOT) analysis, and addressing the Faculty's request that it "make the development of principles by which all individuals who work for the College might be justly and equitably compensated for their work a priority for the coming year."*

What we did:

SPPAC's work during the fall semester largely was that of "organization" as it discussed how the committee would fulfill its responsibilities as outlined in its charter. Through a series of "101" presentations and discussions, members of the committee were introduced to the issues of admissions, recruitment, and student financial aid; development and the current campaign; Wooster's budget and financial statements; the endowment and investment principles; facilities planning; the Williams' Life Sciences facility project; and Wooster's planning approach.

To begin to fulfill its charge from the faculty to address the issue of "equitable compensation," the committee met with the faculty framers of the resolution that charged SPPAC, members of the Staff Committee, and the student "Living Wage" group to understand their perspectives of the equitable compensation issue. By the end of the spring term, SPPAC presented a draft of "Equitable Compensation Principles" to the faculty and Staff Committee for comment, advancing a recommended set of Principles to President Nugent in late April, thus fulfilling its charge from the Faculty. The latter part of the Spring term SPPAC turned its focus to strategic planning, focusing on providing its perspectives to inform the College's "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" (SWOT) analysis as did other committees, annual strategic priorities – both progress to date on 2015-16 priorities and identification of potential priorities for 2016-17, and the FY17 budget recommendation.

SPPAC acknowledged that its functioning often evidenced the reality that it was a new committee that encountered the challenges of a first-year learning curve and a new set of responsibilities and ways of operating. For its 16-17 agenda, members see the committee bringing its diverse perspectives to considering broader perspectives on strategic priorities and planning, especially given the current context of higher education.

Spending to Our Mission

What we set out to do: *During our Sustainable Budget planning, the concept of a "spending to mission" analysis emerged. What if we could examine how we allocate our resources in terms of our mission and strategic objectives, rather than by the traditional categories used for financial reporting? Last year we explored the feasibility of the concept through an initial analysis that examined our resource allocation in categories aligned to our strategic objectives and initiatives. Given the Board's and the Financial Advisory Committee's enthusiasm about the promise of such an approach, we will work with SPPAC and the Board to refine it further.*

What we did:

We introduced SPPAC to the concept during the spring semester. Using this type of framework should be significantly more useful to the strategic planning work of this committee and the College overall than the raw budget information alone. Part of the charge of SPPAC is to help refine this analysis. SPPAC concurred that using this type of framework should be significantly more useful to the strategic planning work of this committee and the College overall than the raw budget information alone. In anticipation of SPPAC engaging with the concept during 2016-17, we will update the analyses with FY15 and FY16 final data.

Continuing Accreditation

What we set out to do: *We will begin our mid-term "assurance" review for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). We will build upon our excellent self-study and the HLC visiting team's reports to provide the HLC with an update that demonstrates we continue to meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation.*

What we did:

We began our mid-term "assurance" review for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) during the spring semester. Our work for the assurance review includes updating the information we provided to the HLC for our 2013 review and addressing the status of the recommendations of our self-study and the observations of the visiting team. We are doing this through review of committee materials, meeting with committees and Cabinet members, and review of various reports and documents including the Provost's Report and the College's annual strategic priorities reports. One significant accomplishment was that the Educational Assessment Committee worked with the Educational Policy Committee to address the recommendations of our self-study and suggestions of the visiting team pertaining to educational assessment, resulting in a periodic department/program assessment process that is incorporated in the 10-year program review process.

14 September 2016

Contributors:

Sarah Bolton, President
Georgia Nugent, Interim President (2015-16)
Marcia Beasley, Associate Vice President for Human Resources
Ellen Falduto, Chief Information and Planning Officer
Scott Friedhoff, Vice President for Enrollment and College Relations
Laurie Houck, Vice President for Development
Angela Johnston, Secretary of the College & Chief of Staff, Administrative Director Division of Student Life (15-16)
Hank Kreuzman, Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement; Associate Professor of Philosophy
Dee McCormick, Vice President for Finance and Business
Carolyn Newton, Provost