

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BY
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Good morning. As you know, my charge at the Board's summer meeting is to offer you some reflections upon "the state of the College," and in doing so today I again will follow the approach I have used in previous years. That is, my report has two distinct components. First, in your meeting books you will find a wide ranging account of the activities of our academic departments and programs and the members of the faculty, and I will be more than happy to answer any questions you have about these. Second, this oral report will focus on a strategic topic that Grant and I together see as key to the strength of the College.

You may remember that, this time last year, I discussed with you the structure of our administrative organization and some of the challenges that structure has created for us. What I'd like to report on today is where we have come over the past year and where we are headed. I'll begin by describing what we have accomplished in reorganizing the administrative work of the College and then I'll move on to anticipate broader changes not only in our administrative organization but also in our system of shared governance. Even though there is a great deal of work in front of us, some remarkable progress has already been made. While many structural details remain to be resolved, I take enormous encouragement not only from the ways in which the community has been willing to accept new organizational ideas but, even more importantly, from its readiness to embrace the underlying ideas of cultural evolution that such changes imply.

Let me begin, then, by describing appointments to three new administrative positions and the ways that these have already begun to affect how we work. First and most significantly, has been that in Admissions. With Mary Karen's arrival last May, we have added a chief enrollment officer to the College and brought ourselves into parallel with our peers. As Admissions Policy heard yesterday morning, while the incoming class is not as large as we had hoped, all its quality indicators are very encouraging and it is especially strong in the number of African American students. Clearly, we are well set on the path to future success in Admissions.

Indirectly, moreover, Mary Karen's arrival has contributed to the work of my own division this year in another kind of recruiting, that of new faculty, and this has helped us achieve unprecedented levels of success in faculty diversity. To this date, we have made 43 appointments to the faculty for next year. Of these 43 hires, 16 bring an element of diversity to the campus; even more significantly, 7 of the 14 tenure-track hires diversify the faculty and thus the campus culture as a whole and the learning experience of our students. This level of success takes commitment by the whole College, and I applaud my faculty colleagues for their skill and dedication in these searches – without their efforts, none of this would have happened. To achieve this success, the faculty also need various kinds of support from those of us in the administration, support that we were able to give them this year: even before his arrival, Grant created a new level of understanding about the ways in which the experience of diversity is an essential strategic element of liberal learning; one result of this has been the faculty's embracing a new program for opportunity hires, which in turn has led to three of the tenure-track appointments. At a more tactical level, in previous years I was often focused upon Admissions work right at the height of the faculty recruiting cycle. We all know that recruiting students to Wooster requires a great deal of individual attention and personal touch; the same is true for faculty, and this year, I have been able to work more closely than ever before with departments and give their candidates the kind of attention and focus that is essential to making successful hires. If I can borrow an analogy from Physics, some of you will know the term the butterfly effect from chaos theory. It refers to the ways in which a seemingly small variation in a system can cause major long term changes. Now, I certainly don't think of Mary Karen as a butterfly and I'm no physicist, but the point I do want to make is that creating her position has already helped achieve other kinds of change from those it was primarily intended to accomplish.

And I believe much the same will be true for the other two administrative hires we have recently completed and that they will also yield similarly important strategic results. These hires are more recent and, indeed, the individuals appointed will take up their positions over the summer, so let me just briefly anticipate what we can hope for from our new Associate Vice Presidents in Human Resources and Institutional Research and Planning.

HR functions at the College have long been divided between three offices, those of: the VPAA, with faculty and some staff contracts coming out of my area; the Secretary of the College, who has responsibility for issues of legal oversight and reporting to the Board; and the HR office itself, which has had primary responsibility for the hourly employees. I spoke last year of the inefficiency created by dividing academic responsibility between the VPAA and DOF; similarly, our human resources work has been made less effective by a comparable division of responsibilities. Even more important than the inefficiencies of our current practice are the opportunity costs created by a structure which has stood in the way of our doing the vital institutional work that a good HR office can accomplish. A newly organized Human Resources will address not only fundamental operational details but also strategically important personnel issues that are essential to creating and sustaining a successful institution.

Similarly, our new AVP for Institutional Research and Planning offers exciting new possibilities for us. Since Michael Thompson's departure last summer we've come to appreciate even more deeply just how important his position was and how much of a loss it was not to have the data analysis capabilities that he brought to the College. With the appointment of his successor, however, we will not only rebuild our reporting capacity but also develop an entire planning capability that the College has not previously possessed. For in Ellen Falduto, who is with us today and will be joining us from Hartwick College later in the summer, we gain someone who brings enormous experience as an institutional researcher, chief financial officer, and chief technology officer. Moreover, to leverage Ellen's capabilities and experience, we are

making a structural change and integrating our relatively new Office of Educational Assessment, itself only created two years ago, into the new office of Research and Planning. As a result, we will establish an essential connection between assessment, institutional research, and planning. Given the work before us later today on visioning Wooster's future direction, I cannot imagine a more helpful development to setting the College's future course than this integration of these two key strategic functions.

Let me turn now from the strategic outcomes of these individual appointments to larger organizational issues and, in particular, to the organization of Academic Affairs. In this area, the past year has been a time in which we have developed a fundamental conceptual model that builds upon the ideas I presented to you in my report last June, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the creativity Shila has brought to this project as she and I have worked through multiple drafts of our ideas.

I do want to emphasize that our thinking is still just a possible design at this stage; nothing is as yet decided. What is important to emphasize, however, is the ways in which the new model we are trying to develop embodies a new cultural understanding of administrative work and the relationship between that work and the work of the faculty. Let me say something about this before I discuss the model in more detail.

Our current structure, as you know from my report last year, bifurcates the work of the Chief Academic Officer into two positions, those of the VPAA and the DOF, with considerable overlap and redundancy built into them. Furthering the overlap and redundancy is the fact that these two positions are expected to perform both high-level strategic and lower-level tactical functions. In addition, the assumption that the DOF will always be an internal appointment and the VPAA an external hire creates an unusual situation and one that I believe is unique to Wooster: on the one hand, the VPAA is the Chief Academic Officer and second in line to the President; on the other, the DOF is privileged by being a campus insider, a member of the same

culture into which the VPAA arrives and with which he or she is inevitably largely unfamiliar. Add in the lack of a developmental pathway to prepare members of the faculty to assume the major responsibilities of the Dean and you have, well, a model that is based upon outsider talent and its serendipitous chemistry with the faculty leadership embodied in the Dean. It's not exactly an intentional recipe for successful leadership and administration. Happily, however, over the past five years I've been extraordinarily fortunate to work in partnership with Shila in ways that I have certainly found deeply rewarding and that I hope have been richly successful – but if our work together has been either of these, it has been so despite and not because of the structure in which we are situated. Now, with the presidential transition accomplished and with two years remaining in Shila's term, we are at a point when the desirability of thinking of a better way to organize the future work of academic leadership at Wooster dovetails with the expediency of doing so.

Hence the structure you see in this possible model. The most dramatic and important change is the folding of our two positions into one, possibly titled Provost and Dean of the Faculty, and the creation of three new Associate Deans who will serve perhaps three-year terms and then rotate back into the faculty, as is the pattern at many of our peer institutions. What do we hope that a change like this would accomplish? First, by rolling our two positions into one, the CAO position and thus the academic program as a whole will be given a single point of focus and leadership. Second, through the creation of the Associate Deans, the whole, vast, and sprawling amount of administrative work that currently falls to the VPAA and DOF will be rendered manageable and consolidated into areas of natural connection. Third, since the Associate Deans will be drawn from within the faculty, a developmental pathway for faculty leadership will be created, and this may ultimately be the most important change of all. For, by bringing faculty colleagues into these administrative positions leadership talent will be developed at a level between that of the department chairs and the senior officers of the College,

and a pool of experienced faculty leaders, capable of moving on to the CAO position will eventually emerge.

Again, I want to stress that both the details and the timing of these changes remain to be worked through a great deal of discussion on campus, but, whatever the eventual outcome, there is one crucial underlying theme. And that lies in the potential this model has to challenge one of the most corrosive assumptions in academic life. By that, I mean the easy, but all too dangerous, opposition between faculty work and administrative work, an opposition that is found too often throughout the academy and is certainly not unique to Wooster. Entrusting more of the work of academic administration to members of the faculty and providing a structure that enables them to carry it out successfully will be vital to creating a culture of not only shared governance but also of shared leadership, authority, and responsibility.

As I mentioned earlier, these ideas have been part of the campus conversation during the past few months, and Grant formally shared this draft model with the faculty at its April meeting. One of the most heartening developments over this past year has been the enthusiasm my faculty colleagues have indicated for the kinds of change this model suggests. Our work together now is to carry the conversation forward next year and to evolve the model further, establish methods for selecting the Associate Deans, and move towards appointing them. I would hope that, by June 2010, say, we will be able to report to you that we have reorganized ourselves in ways that will enable us to pursue our strategic goals far more effectively than we are currently able to and that will allow us to benefit from the other changes that are taking place throughout the organization.

So far, I have concentrated upon administrative restructuring, although, as I have just suggested, to change the structure of our work also inevitably provides opportunities to reinvent our organizational culture. Now, and as my final point, let me say a little about the reinvention of

our system of faculty governance that has also begun this year, for in this, more than anywhere, can be seen indications of the cultural shift I mentioned at the start of my report.

Just as I see a new readiness to explore changes in the administrative structure, so too the past year has seen an important shift in the way the faculty is coming to view the nature of the shared governance system. If I had to summarize that shift succinctly, I would say that it involves the faculty assuming greater authority over its own work, and this change thus anticipates the kinds of structural and cultural evolution that the model I have just described provides for administrative work.

Let me point to some early examples of this change, examples which will also come up later in the report from Faculty Relations. The first instance was one that resulted when early in the year Grant spoke of his sense that it wasn't quite appropriate for the president to chair meetings of the faculty. Strange as it seems now, there was some initial surprise and even push-back at the thought. Quickly, however, the idea took hold and, as you know, has been implemented. The faculty selected Susan Clayton to be its first chair, the whole transition has gone off with great success, and faculty meetings are now truly run by the faculty. Following on from that first change, others have followed. For instance, the Financial Advisory Committee has moved to having a faculty member, rather than the VPAA, serve as its chair. Moreover, in conjunction with the VPFB and working with the newly established Classroom Stewards group, FAC has begun to take on more responsibility for and authority over the decision-making process for investment in the campus infrastructure. Other conversations have begun, too, some with your active support and encouragement, such as that about the grievance and dismissal processes. All in all, then, we are thinking about reshaping the ways in which we govern ourselves as we have not done for many years. It is still early days, and we have much to learn here, but the shift towards greater faculty responsibility over governance is clearly under way.

Now, this is not easy work: faculty governance goes to the very heart of campus culture and any process of change must thus be delicate and deliberate. If I have any concern about how we are tackling this work, it is that we may be doing so piecemeal and without a clearly defined underlying model. Last year, I made the case for organizational change by looking at how other institutions are structured – and the model I shared with you earlier will bring Wooster much more into the mainstream of institutional organization. While the governance system will and always should reflect the values of the local campus culture even more powerfully than does the organizational structure, I do wonder what we might learn by carrying out a similar study of other campuses and the ways in which they govern themselves. Rather than simply modifying the existing committees and processes, ultimately, I would suggest, a deeper revisioning of the relationship between governance and institutional work is what is needed to help us operate effectively, on the one hand, and be a healthily functioning community, on the other. Admittedly, it is much easier to change one piece of the governance system at a time; whether that will produce the best outcome overall may be something for us to consider.

These, then, are exciting times at the College, and much good work is being done to strengthen the operational functioning and communal vitality of the campus. We still have much more to do, but it **has** only been eleven months since Grant took office, and I take enormous encouragement from what has happened so far and what is in the offing. For I believe that we are rapidly building two things simultaneously: on the one hand, the capability to develop a visionary strategic plan for Wooster's future; on the other, the capacity to implement that plan successfully through a much more effective administrative structure and a governance system that embodies the values of transparency, accountability and shared responsibility for the future of this remarkable College. Thank you.