

Provost's Report to the Faculty August 2018

Like last year, this year's report will cover eight topics of importance for each of you as faculty members, and for the University as a whole. Some of these items have been a focus of attention and effort for some time, and some are emerging only over the last few weeks. And, while some of these issues can be resolved fairly quickly, others will take some time to fully reach a conclusion. For the first time in a few years, I will not spend an extensive amount of time talking about our re-affirmation of accreditation process with the HLC. This lack of discussion is not because our ongoing efforts to ensure that we are effectively addressing the Core Components of the HLC are not important. Rather, we are seeking to more fully institutionalize and integrate our accreditation work with existing efforts and committees. That is, we are seeking to avoid the need to make a huge push just before an accreditation milestone, by instead distributing the work over the full, 10-year accreditation cycle. But, I am starting to spend an extensive amount of time addressing accreditation, and I promised that I wouldn't do that this year.

As in years past, I am deeply honored to work with each of you. I am consistently impressed by the willingness of faculty members to not simply do enough to "get by." Rather, every day I see and hear of faculty members who consistently seek to excel in what they do, and to provide genuine excellence to our students, to their colleagues, and to the broader community. Each and every one of you understand that we have one of the most important vocations that exist, that of educating and preparing the next generation of learners. Despite our best efforts at assessment and measurement, it is still difficult to fully articulate the incredible impact of higher education, and the change that the students on our campus undergo in four short years. We are blessed that there is such a close relationship between the work that we do, and the impact of that work in tangible ways in people's lives. Thank you for your commitment to the purpose of Valparaiso University. Thank for being such an integral part of our educational program. Our legacy is manifested in the positive changes being accomplished by our alumni and students on a daily basis, an impact that they could not achieve without each and every one of you.

Law School

Significant progress has been made in resolving the long-term status of the law school, while more work lies ahead of us. As you likely remember, last November the Board of Directors directed the University administration to suspend admissions to the law school effective Fall 2018, and to seek strategic alternatives for the law school going forward. A lot of work has been completed since then to bring us to the point at which we are today.

Today, we are working closely with Middle Tennessee State University and the goal of this activity is to transition the law school to Murfreesboro, TN. We have entered into a nonbinding letter of intent with MTSU seeking to accomplish this transition, and we are seeking to complete a definitive agreement regarding the nature of this transition. So, the law school in its entirety would move from being a school within Valparaiso University to being a school within Middle Tennessee State University. Hence, all components of the law school necessary to operate in essentially the same manner in Tennessee would transition to MTSU. A key aspect of this

transition, then, is the transfer of a substantial number of the current law school faculty to MTSU. That is, the American Bar Association, which accredits the law school, is adamant that the essential nature of the law school curriculum, instruction, and program of legal education must transfer to MTSU in order for the accreditation of the law school through the ABA to stay intact. Hence, it is obvious that a sufficient number of faculty must transition to MTSU in order to ensure the continuity of the program of legal education at the law school.

As is probably clear, a key aspect of our work with MTSU regarding the law school has been addressing the expectations of the relevant accreditors and other external organizations which have oversight of higher education and legal education, not just in Indiana, but also in Tennessee, and nationally, as well. First and foremost, we have continued to work closely with the American Bar Association regarding expectations for continuing accreditation throughout and after this transition process. We are seeking to file all appropriate paperwork in a timely manner, and to ensure that we are supporting this overall process appropriately. Additionally, we are working with the two regional accreditors that are relevant to this process. That is, the law school will move from being accredited as part of a Higher Learning Commission, HLC, university in Valparaiso IN, to being accredited as part of a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, SACSCOC, university in Tennessee. We clearly need to work with the HLC as openly and transparently as possible as our ongoing accreditation relationship with the HLC is of central importance to Valparaiso University. I can say that the HLC has been a very good organization with which to work throughout this process. They have been thoughtful, insightful, flexible, and focused on what is best for our students.

In addition to these three accreditors, we also need to be attentive to the expectations of the organizations that oversee higher education in our respective states. These groups, the Indiana Commission of Higher Education, or ICHE, in Indiana, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, or THEC, for Tennessee, have been integral parts of this discussion and we continue to work closely with them. Additionally, legal education in the state of Tennessee is overseen by the Tennessee Board of Law Examiners, and we are working this group, as well. It goes without saying that working with six different oversight organizations, while coordinating with the Boards of both Valpo and MTSU, can be rather complicated at times. This is the first time in history that an effort has been undertaken to move a law school from a private institution to a public institution across state lines. An added complication is the change from one regional accreditor, HLC, to another, SACSCOC.

As of this writing, individuals at Valpo and MTSU are closely engaged with individuals at the relevant accreditors and commissions in order to identify the approach for this transition that best meets the needs of all involved. I must admit that this has been quite a professional experience for me as we have sought to understand the intricacies of this transition, and as we have worked to address challenges that have arisen. At this time, we continue to make good progress regarding these challenges. The list of folks that I need to thank for helping to move this process forward is too long to write out here, and I fear that I would miss someone if I tried. Suffice it to say that the work of many individuals here at Valpo, and at other locations, has been critical in order for us to make the progress that has been achieved. In particular, the faculty and staff of the law school have been tremendously supportive of this ongoing work and I am deeply appreciative of all that they have done and continue to do. The professionalism, wisdom, and insight of those working on this process is outstanding. I remain optimistic that we can bring this transition to a successful conclusion, but there is a lot to be done before we can announce

success. If you have additional questions about this topic, please do not hesitate to let me know. To the extent that I am able, I am happy to address your questions.

Academic Calendar

As you are well aware, significant progress was made with respect to a revision of the Academic Calendar during the past academic year. Faculty and staff members, and students engaged in discussion last year about the academic calendar, culminating in extended conversations at the Faculty Senate and the President's Council. I was impressed by the thoughtfulness of the discussions and the quality of the input from the many individuals that engaged in this process. By the end of May, a number of important changes regarding the academic calendar were approved for implementation by the President's Council, and these changes will take effect for the 2020-2021 academic year. These changes help to ensure that the academic calendar works for all members of the Valpo community and that we are not creating situations that are simply untenable for some of our colleagues.

There was one issue that was not fully resolved last year, and that was the question of the length of Spring Break. Valpo has long made use of a two-week Spring Break, and many folks across campus have found creative and valuable ways of leveraging a two-week Spring Break in order to offer novel and high-impact programming, both for academic credit and non-credit bearing. A number of important questions arose during the discussion in the Faculty Senate about the best length for Spring Break, and there was not sufficient time to resolve those questions appropriately during the Faculty Senate meetings last spring. In particular, questions arose regarding the best way to ensure that novel and valuable offerings centered around Spring Break could continue even if the length of Spring Break was decreased to one week. With these questions in mind, President Heckler asked Keven Goebbert, as Chair of the Faculty Senate, and Rick Gillman, from the Office of the Provost, to revisit the question of the length of Spring Break this fall. The discussion that will occur this fall will seek to fully understand the ideas and issues that were raised last spring during discussions about the academic calendar and the length of Spring Break, and to ensure that these topics are appropriately addressed. The goal is to complete this review by the end of the Fall Semester, engaging with all appropriate constituencies during this review. If you have any questions or comments for Kevin and Rick, please do reach out to them. They are focused on receiving all input that is provided, and then ensuring that a clear summary of this review is provided to the Faculty Senate for its discussion.

General Education

The review of our general education program has been making good progress, and we are poised for some critical discussions in the coming months. Thank you to the many folks who worked to develop and submit your proposals for a revised general education model here at Valpo. The proposals that were received ranged from detailed descriptions of a fully-orbed general education program, to proposals that clearly targeted a specific aspect of general education. As I write this report, I look forward to a robust discussion of general education at the Fall Faculty Workshop. The workshop will start off with a Keynote Address by Timothy Larsen, the Carolyn and Fred McManis Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College, Wheaton,

IL. The title of his presentation is “The Liberal Arts, General Education, and the Idea of a University.” The presentation should provide an outstanding underpinning for the more specific discussions about our general education review that will follow it during the remainder of the workshop. The follow up discussions during the workshop will take place in smaller groups and will be facilitated by members of the General Education Committee. Your input regarding any next steps in the general education review process is important to us, so I ask that you participate in the small group discussions of the faculty workshop enthusiastically and thoughtfully. Thank you.

It is worth noting that the General Education Committee has been busy helping to prepare for the Fall Faculty Workshop. In early June, a subset of GEC members attended a week-long institute about general education that was sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, AAC&U. This institute focused in particular on assessment issues related to general education and how to best ensure desired outcomes are being met for students. A very encouraging aspect of this institute is that the GEC members learned that the approach for general education review being undertaken at Valpo is consistent with current best practice in higher education. Additionally, the assessment approach used at Valpo is strong and at least as robust as the approach at many other institutions. The GEC members also had the opportunity to grapple with topics related to general education that are challenging many institutions of higher education, including the use of e-portfolios; the need to ensure that our students develop a sense of “digital citizenship,” that is, that our students not only know how to use technology, but that they address the broader cultural implications of that technology; and, that our general education program reflects “inclusive excellence,” whereby we seek to ensure that students from all backgrounds can succeed at Valpo.

Following the Fall Faculty Workshop, the General Education Committee will continue to be engaged with the wider campus as they begin the process that will lead to the crafting of the draft proposal for the general education program at Valpo going forward. Please reach out to your representative on the General Education Committee with questions or comments. In December, the General Education Committee will meet for a retreat during which they plan to draft a working proposal for the general education model. This proposal will be tested with various groups during the Spring Semester, as initial checks are conducted regarding the overall feasibility of the proposal. Then, at the Spring Faculty Workshop in May 2019 the committee will present a revised draft of the general education model to the faculty for discussion and input. While the process to review our general education approach is lengthy and time-intensive, this work is of fundamental importance to the University as a whole based on the important role that general education plays in helping to define what we all mean by a Valpo education.

Interim Deans

Over the past several months we have had some changes of those serving as deans at Valpo, so I would like to provide some background information about how we will be moving forward with these transitions. As most of you are aware, Trisha Mileham is serving as the Interim Dean of Library Services, and has been doing a strong job since April. Trisha succeeds Brad Eden who is currently on sabbatical. Trisha is celebrating her 20th year here at Valpo, having joined our faculty in 1998. Trisha was promoted to Associate Professor in 2004 and she was granted tenure in 2005. She holds a Master of Arts in Library and Information Science from the

University of Iowa. Significantly, Trisha was selected to be a member of a 17-person cohort of Library Senior Fellows at UCLA. The cornerstone of the fellows program is a three-week program in Los Angeles that brings together significant topics facing library leaders today. At this time, we have not yet determined the best approach for a long-term appointment for the Dean of Library Services. However, I continue to work closely with Trisha and others regarding this question, and we will certainly seek to resolve this question in a timely manner.

David Cleveland succeeded Andrea Lyon to become the Interim Dean of the Law School on June 1st. Andrea is now serving as a Professor of Law and has been busy giving presentations at a range of conferences and meetings. David joined the faculty of the law school in 2012, and was promoted to full professor in 2015. David earned his J. D. from the Georgetown University Law Center. David is clearly taking on the role of Interim Dean of the Law School at a critical time. While he is providing essential leadership to the law school and its academic programs, he is also deeply involved in the work to transition the law school as described earlier in this report. His ability to work closely with representatives of the American Bar Association will be essential as we move forward. I will continue to work closely with David as we seek to support the current work in and for the law school. David is joined on the leadership team in the law school by Rebecca Huss, who is serving as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and Derrick Howard, who is serving as Associate Dean for Experiential Education and Administration.

Christina Grabarek has taken on the role of Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Continuing Education. Christina is succeeding Jennifer Ziegler who has accepted the position of inaugural Graduate Dean at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, NE. Christina will take on the role of Interim Dean on August 31st. Christina first joined the faculty at Valpo in the fall of 2000, with a full-time appointment following in the fall of 2001. Christina was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 2010, and she has previously served as Acting Chair of the Department of Education in 2012-2013, and as the Director of Disability Support Services from 2001-2005. Christina also was a participant in the Thrivent Fellows Program in 2011-2012, a program providing leadership development with a focus on working at a Lutheran college or university. With Christina's transition to the role of Interim Dean having occurred so recently, Christina and I are working with others in order to plan our next steps in determining how best to ensure that the Graduate School and Continuing Education thrives in the coming years. A decision regarding long-term leadership for the GSCE will be made in the coming months.

Philanthropy Program

Due to the generosity of two long-time friends of the University, we will have a new resource going forward at Valpo. Recently Katherine and Mark Helge provided a gift that allowed us to establish the endowed position of the Katherine and Mark Helge Director of Student Philanthropy. The Director will work with faculty, staff, and students from across campus in order to develop and implement curricular and co-curricular programming with the intention of helping to develop and instill a philanthropic mindset in our students. Additionally, the Director will help to create programs that will help students to develop the skills necessary to be philanthropic themselves, and also to lead philanthropic activities. So, this position is not simply intended to support those students who are interested in pursuing philanthropy as a career path. This position will also support programming that will help all students to develop a generous, "philanthropic" perspective in all aspects of their lives. This work and the resulting programs

should become a core part of overall student development at Valpo. Hence, the new Director will work closely with Campus Ministries, Student Affairs, and Academic affairs to appropriately engage the constituents in these varied areas. This new position will report to the President through the Office of the Provost, thus emphasizing the cross-cutting and University-wide nature of these activities.

A successful search has identified the first Director of Student Philanthropy at Valpo. Ryan Cole will join us on August 13th and will immediately undertake his work with regard to student philanthropy. Ryan earned his Bachelors in Biology, with a minor in Psychology, from Allegheny College in Meadville, PA, and his Masters of Science in Public Health in the Environmental and Occupational Health Division at The University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. Ryan has worked extensively with community development and grant-funded projects. Most recently, he has been a research associate overseeing a training grant at the University of Illinois at Chicago funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Education and Research Centers program. In this role, he has responsibility for the administration of the \$1.5 million grant, he implemented and maintained interdisciplinary activities for about 30 graduate students, planned and taught a weekly seminar for students and guests, and partnered with a local professional safety group in order to provide networking opportunities for students, among other duties. As a part of the Americorps*VISTA Service Learning Office at Gannon University, Ryan developed and co-facilitated a course for faculty members, oversaw a grant program for community improvement, and worked to establish and enhance community partnerships to support student volunteer opportunities. At the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Meadville, PA, Ryan served as a Community Coordinator, helping to develop a Neighborhood Revitalization Comprehensive Plan by working to include all stakeholders in the planning process.

We are pleased with the opportunities that this generous gift has made possible, and it is a pleasure to welcome Ryan to campus. Please introduce yourself when you meet Ryan around campus, and don't hesitate to let Ryan and me know if you have any questions about this position and the related program opportunities.

Provost Office Staff: Changes and Updates

A number of changes have occurred in the Office of the Provost and will continue to occur over the coming months. As most of you are aware, Heather McGuire, who had worked directly with Shankar, moved to an opportunity at another institution last spring. After a thoughtful planning and search process, Allison Kroft was selected to succeed Heather, and she started work in mid-July. Allison has been a great addition to the office, and we are pleased that she has joined us. In the near future, you may also see another face in the Office of the Provost working directly with Shankar in support of the Confucius Institute at Valparaiso University, or CIVU. CIVU has been active and has continued to grow in programming scope over the past few years. This growth has led to the need for extensive administrative support for the operations of the CIVU. It would not be appropriate for the University to subsidize this work going forward, and so Shankar is seeking to obtain financial support from the funding agency for the CIVU to support an administrative assistant who will support the CIVU operations. Assuming that we can obtain the external funds to support this position, we will likely hire someone in the near

future to carry out these functions. It is great that we will be able to support the CIVU in this important manner without a need to impact the University budget.

As I will discuss at the Fall Faculty Workshop, we are all going to need to deal with an impending change in the Office of the Provost that will impact all of us. It is with mixed feelings that I am sharing that Jeanie Johnson will be retiring in less than a year. Jeanie has been, and will continue to be, a vital part of the Office of the Provost. I know that I personally will miss her very much, but I am also happy that she will be able to explore this upcoming stage of her life. Based on this coming change, we have already started the planning process to ensure a smooth transition as Jeanie moves on. The Office of the Provost has been working closely with the Office of Continuous Improvement in order to explore the best configuration for the Office of the Provost and the support positions within our office. We are seeking to be as efficient as possible, while also ensuring that all important functions are covered in a timely manner. During this review process with the OCI, we have clarified different types of roles and made progress in determining how best to organize activities in our office. It will take thoughtful effort and planning to replace Jeanie, and there will certainly be some growing pains.

As noted, throughout all of these changes, we are focused on making the most of this time of transition in order to configure the Office of the Provost as effectively as possible. It is clear that there will be at least one new face in the Office of the Provost as Jeanie makes her transition, in addition to the CIVU support person that will likely be added from outside the University budget. All of these changes need to be made in an environment in which the funding for all of Academic Affairs, and for all areas that report through the Office of the Provost, will continue to remain flat. Hence, any adjustments that must be made in the Office of the Provost must be made only through re-allocations of existing funds available in the Office of the Provost. Further, I am seeking to ensure that no funds currently committed to faculty lines are re-allocated for administrative purposes. That is, any re-allocations that are made during this time of transition in the Office of the Provost will be made within the administrative side of the budget, alone. No administrative funds in the Office of the Provost will come from faculty funds.

The next few months will certainly be a time a change in the Office of the Provost, and we appreciate your patience as we all work through these changes. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions about these changes. Rick Gillman will also be a great resource to address any questions that you may have. Finally, over the next few months, please feel free to let Jeanie know how much you appreciate the great service that she has provided, and will continue to provide, to Valpo, to our students, and to each of you. She will be missed, but we are also happy for her.

Adjusting to the Administrative Restructuring

As most of you are likely aware, President Heckler recently introduced some significant changes in the senior leadership structure for the University. While many of the senior leaders at the University experienced a change in report structure and in their direct reports, at least one area did not change significantly. As you probably noticed when reviewing the chart laying out the new organizational structure for the University, there were no changes in the titles or individuals reporting to the Provost. Hence, at this time, the same individuals and areas continue to report to me as had before this re-organization. However, this re-organization does present an opportunity to review the areas within the Office of the Provost, as well.

With this opportunity in mind, I will be working closely with Rick Gillman, Shankar Raman, Stacey Miller, Bonnie Hunter, Brian Johnson and the Deans in order to review the activities currently within the purview of the Provost in order to determine if there are opportunities for re-organization within these areas. The guiding principles undergirding these discussions will be as follows: a) Seeking approaches that are as efficient and effective as possible; b) Seeking to ensure that all individuals have the capacity to properly oversee the areas within their responsibility; c) Ensuring that any changes are accomplished without additional impact on the University operating budget. The budget for the areas within the Office of the Provost continues to be flat, and so any changes must occur within that reality. These discussions about re-organization are just beginning, and could take place over several weeks or months. While I do not foresee any major shifts as a result of these discussions, there could be some adjustments in the coming months. We will certainly seek to fully inform anyone who may be affected by any adjustment before the change takes place. If you have any questions about these discussions, or if you have ideas or suggestions for changes that could be beneficial, do not hesitate to let me know. To be honest, it is often someone from outside of a process or activity who can see ways that the process can be improved. I appreciate the wisdom and insight that so many of you have shared and are willing to share.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan has been fully implemented at this time and we are seeing good progress in many areas, already. After the input and work that so many folks put into the process of developing our current Strategic Plan, it is wonderful that the plan is being carried out in so many areas with great effectiveness. Thank you for your great work in developing our Strategic Plan, and for carrying this good work forward.

An additional component of the Strategic Plan is currently being addressed by the members of the Strategic Planning Committee and other key colleagues. While we have a clear idea of the tasks that we are undertaking in support of the Strategic Plan, we do not yet have a clear plan for how to report our progress on the Strategic Plan. In particular, we need to ensure that we have a concise, accurate, and effective approach for communicating progress on the Strategic Plan to the members of the Board of Directors. With this need in mind, the Strategic Planning Committee is working to develop a dashboard of items that will quickly and effectively convey progress on the Strategic Plan. The goal is to produce this dashboard using existing resources as much as possible, while still conveying key information effectively. Based on current plans, the dashboard reporting items should be ready to share with the Board of Directors for the October Board of Directors Meeting. Please do all that you can to support any requests for input or data that will be required to complete this reporting dashboard. Kevin Goebbert, with support from Greg Stinson and Rick Gillman, is doing a great job of developing dashboard items for the Holistic Education aspect of the Strategic Plan. If you have any questions about the development of these dashboard items, please let Kevin or me know and we will be happy to respond. And, again, thank you for your great work on the Strategic Plan.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report to the faculty. As I noted last year, I do understand how valuable your time is, and what a busy time of the year this is for each of us. I

have tried to keep this report as concise as possible. If I have not addressed some topic of importance to you that I could help to address, please do let me know. Hopefully, through an email, phone call, or discussion we will be able address your question. Further, if at any time of the year you have a question or concern that you believe I am the right person to address, please do let me know. I want to be as open and transparent as I can possibly be and so it is important for me to know about your concerns. As the saying goes, with regard to concerns, I would rather work with you to put out a small spark, than seek to put out a raging forest fire at a later date. I am deeply honored to work with each of you. I appreciate your commitment to our students, to each other, and to our mission. We provide an education of lasting value and impact at Valpo. I look forward to working with you as we seek to become even more effective at what we already do so well. Again, thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark L. Biermann
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs