

College of Arts and Sciences
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ALL-COLLEGE ASSEMBLY MEETING
Tuesday, October 22, 2013
Varner Hall 205

Members present: Berven, K., Burrington, Chapman, Cheng, Corso, Dulio, Dvir, Eis, Epstein, Giberson, Grimm, Grossman, Hastings, LaRock, Li, Lorca, Martic, Meehan, Pfeiffer, Reger, Rigstad, Roth, Wiggins, Wood

Members absent: Connery, Hansen, Ludwig, Purdie, Smith, Wang

Ex-officio present: Corcoran, Stewart

I. Call to Order

Dean Corcoran called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

I. Marian P. Wilson Award

Dean Corcoran announced that this year's winner of the Marian P. Wilson Award for writing excellence is Jeff Insko, for his essay "Passing Current: Electricity, Magnetism, and Historical Transmission in *The Linwoods*," in *ESQ A Journal of the American Renaissance*. Mr. Corcoran observed that since Mr. Insko's essay grew out of a class project, this shows that teaching and research can each inspire the other. Mr. Corcoran read the citation on the plaque that he presented to Mr. Insko, as follows:

Jeffrey Insko, your article, "Passing Current: Electricity, Magnetism, and Historical Transmission in The Linwoods," is about a little known early nineteenth-century novel set in revolutionary war times, but your engaging style tells a much larger and important story about its place in American culture and politics. While your writing fully represents the Marian P. Wilson criteria for clear, well-organized presentation of ideas and graceful expression, your carefully crafted prose is like an electric current itself, passing through an astonishing range of subjects, from Electricity and Republicanism, to the Metaphysics of Sympathy and the purported healing properties of Animal Magnetism. In the process, you transmit to your readers a super-charged sense of the interconnections between life and literature. Your essay will excite students and scholars of American Studies for many years to come.

II. Invited Guests: Interim President Betty Youngblood and Provost James Lentini

Mr. Corcoran introduced Interim President Betty Youngblood and Provost James Lentini, who came to address the CAS Assembly. Ms. Youngblood spoke first, expressing her desire to be brief in order to make sure there was plenty of time for CAS faculty members to ask questions or express concerns while she was present at the meeting with the provost. Her updates included the following items:

- Construction on campus: All of the building projects on campus are on schedule and on budget.
- Enrollments: Enrollment is at a historic high of 20,169 students. While retention is up 8%, graduate, transfer and international enrollments are down, so these issues need to be addressed. Policies and procedures are being examined to make sure that they are not road blocks to progress.
- Capital Outlay: The top priority of the Capital Outlay will be the expansion of Varner Hall.
- Meetings with all Schools on campus: Ms. Youngblood and Mr. Lentini are starting a series of meetings with the CAS and all of the Schools on campus for the purpose of opening the channels of communication.
- Presidential search: Ms. Youngblood indicated that there is no report at this time because the presidential search committee has not met yet, but there will be reports when the search begins.

Mr. Lentini spoke next, adding the following items to the updates that had been provided by Ms. Youngblood:

- Graduate education: Graduate education needs attention soon because the university has grown at a steady rate, which is good, but there are also infrastructure problems resulting from the growth. Eighty percent of the OU budget comes from tuition, and so we need to diversify revenue and improve retention rates. There are about 3500 graduate students, and Mr. Lentini plans to look at the structures that exist for graduate programs. He noted that graduate programs are generally not money makers for the university. We need to think about quality and the importance of peer recognition and raise the visibility level of graduate education. He pointed out that retention and graduation rates are at the center of this issue.
- Diversity: Diversity is an important area that needs to be addressed.
- E-learning: He will be studying the status of “e-learning” and noted that most institutions have not made a lot of money on it, although they may have expected to do so.
- International students: He stressed that we need to recruit more international students and also get more OU students to study abroad.

Mr. Lentini then opened the floor to questions, comments, and concerns. ***The faculty member’s question, concern, or observation is listed first, and a brief summary of the reply follows.***

- We need to look into the matter of providing housing for international students that come to OU to study. *Ms. Youngblood: There are potential plans for new housing.*
- What is the vision for the humanities when it comes to the new efforts in the area of branding OU, since we are growing in the STEM areas? Visual identity is important, but it needs to be well-planned and well-balanced. *Mr. Lentini: We need to make the liberal arts a central part of the dialogue, and not just the STEM part. CAS provides the curriculum that is at the basis for all students at OU. Ms. Youngblood said that the liberal arts are the foundation of everything at OU.*
- When it comes to graduate education and looking for a model for Graduate Studies, the Research Office might be a good model to pattern after. The two offices must work together.

Ms. Youngblood: The infrastructure has not kept up with the enrollment growth. She emphasized the need for the reorganization of the office of Communications and Marketing and indicated that this is a process that is going on now for the first time in years.

- Because the number of staff employees has not kept up with the growth of the university, a study is needed on the salaries of staff members. *Ms. Youngblood: Soon there will be a report on this subject, but OU cannot be all things to all people. The focus will be to maintain quality.*
- How can we raise the profile on campus locally? People drive by the campus every day but do not know what is going on inside because the university looks from the outside like a kind of fortress. For instance, people have no idea that there is more than one theatre on campus—they generally think that Meadow Brook Theatre is the only one. *Ms. Youngblood: Communications and Marketing is looking at an approach to marketing that would be local, regional, state-wide and also national. Mr. Lentini: The way to raise the visibility in the near locale is to create good programs. We need more name awareness, but the academic part should be at the core of it.*
- Who handles the billboards that can be seen all over the area? *Ms. Youngblood: Communications and Marketing is responsible for the content. Mr. Lentini: We need to balance what the advertisers like with what the academic people would like to see. He emphasized that we do not want to advertise ourselves as something that we are not. Ms. Youngblood said it is important to remember the target audience when it comes to advertising, and she recalled the dancing bear advertising concept that was popular among high school students, who were the target audience, but that it was a campaign that was not popular with faculty members. One faculty member made the wry observation that the problem with the dancing bear idea was that when the freshmen enrolled at OU, they may have been disappointed to find out that there were no dancing bears on campus.*
- Help was requested for the people in Varner Hall who have serious space issues, with no help in sight for quite some time down the road—and yet departments are divided up, classroom space is not available, and scheduling is difficult. Scheduling is even driven by space considerations. A related question was asked as to whether there were empty buildings somewhere, such as in Pontiac, that could be used to relieve the space issues due to the problems in Varner Hall. *Ms. Lentini: With the Varner expansion, there will be space available for the shifting of other departments. Also, there will be new classrooms in all the new buildings.*
- Who will get the space in the Science & Engineering Building when the School of Engineering moves to their new building? *Mr. Lentini: It is not clear what space is available, and it will be necessary to work with the deans. As far as he knows, no decisions have been made.*
- Related to the above space issue, it was noted that OU needs a campus “feel,” a sense of identity, a place for students to be, to sit, and common areas for them to gather. Students should not have to sit on the floor in hallways in order to talk to each other. Buildings are not accommodating to students, and gathering together is difficult because hallways are narrow and dark.
- A faculty member raised a concern about the importance of processes related to shared governance at OU. On Senate committees, for example, people feel that they are just rubber-

stamping decisions that were already made. *Mr. Lentini: Shared governance is the essence of the institution, and we need to figure out how to be more productive. He plans to be looking at the Senate committee charges in this regard.*

- Observing that already there was a long “to do” list that has been created, the question was asked as to what Mr. Lentini would consider to be the top priority item. *Mr. Lentini: Graduate education needs fixing now. Space allocations need to be improved. International education needs to be looked at. These things will be difficult, but there are many opportunities available right now for improvement.*
- A faculty member stated that efforts should be made to reduce the number of students in 100-level classes so that teaching can be more effective.
- There was concern about the corporatization of the university and departmental websites, because departmental websites now look like the registrar’s website. The faculty member believes that Communications and Marketing has drained the individuality out of departments by looking for consistency of websites, and now there is no individuality. Communications and Marketing has even altered the content of websites in some cases. There should be more freedom and richness in department websites. *Mr. Lentini: It is difficult to find a solution that fits everyone.*

III. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dikka Berven (secretary)