

Report to the Faculty Senate
Submitted by Sue K. Hammersmith, Provost
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
April 21, 2004

I. INTERIM DEAN POSITION

As the Chancellor announced last week, Dean Blackshire-Belay's term as LAS Dean will conclude June 30, 2004. I have been in discussion with the University Committee, the Academic Staff Committee, the LAS unit chairs, the Chancellor, and others regarding an appropriate method and process for identifying an Interim Dean for LAS, the term of office that person should serve, and other matters pertaining to the transition of leadership in LAS. My goal is to have the Interim Dean identified yet this semester. Look for further updates and a call for nominations and expressions of interest to come out shortly. Input and suggestions are welcome.

II. REPORT ON INQUIRY

This year some very serious concerns and allegations were voiced by Dean Blackshire-Belay with respect to one of our academic units, Humanistic Studies, involving matters that the University is required – by professional ethics as well as federal statute – to treat with utmost seriousness. In order to appropriately understand and address those concerns, I asked a team with appropriate experience and expertise to assist me in sorting through conflicting reports.

The team recently conducted a full and comprehensive examination of the concerns and allegations that had been voiced. They conducted in-depth interviews with the complainant and with all members of the Humanistic Studies unit, except one tenured member who declined to participate. The interviews were confidential (as to who said what in their interviews). After issuing their final report, the team's interview notes and working notes were shredded. Their written report, which gives summary results and conclusions, will be retained.

The picture is clear: there are no current issues of climate or inequity in the Humanistic Studies Unit. There is a proud record of healthy respect for differences and strong support for its diverse faculty, including those who are female, minorities, and/or untenured.

The conduct of elections for Humanistic Studies Unit Chair, both in December of 2001 and in December of 2003, were also found to be without problems. In each of those elections, Brian Sutton was clearly and legitimately elected Chair.

I am grateful to Sally Dresdow and Dan Spielman, colleagues who invested untold hours and significant professional skill in helping me look into these matters. I also am particularly grateful to all those Humanistic Studies faculty who showed patience, courage, and professionalism as the necessary inquiry unfolded.

Where do we go from here? First, let's "clear the air" of any "hallway history" or malicious gossip regarding the unit in question, its climate, or its practices. Second, I am dedicated to working with you to ensure an administration and a culture where the open and unfettered flows of communication make unnecessary any repeat of the approach to "fact finding" that was recently required because of the conflicting reports.

III. COMMUNICATION

Chancellor Shepard and I are continuing to work to ensure that UW-Green Bay has channels of communication that are open, honest, robust, responsible, and responsive. We need to have free and open communication across units, between offices, and among different constituencies so we can build teamwork instead of silos. Only through such open communication across the institution can we be agile, efficient, and effective.

We also need free and open communication across levels of the institution, so that every level of the organization has access to and robust opportunities to touch base with every other level. Keeping everything within a rigid, hierarchical model of communication is not only dehumanizing, but also terribly inefficient. The hierarchical model increases the probability of bottlenecks, misinformation, mistakes, and missed opportunities. It also discourages the kind of agility, feedback, teamwork, and creativity that we need to prosper.

Consequently, we will expand such practices as open office hours, faculty advisory committees, informal forums, visits to units and offices, and open use of email for ourselves and for the deans. Additionally, we will be including deans in the weekly meetings of the Chancellor's Cabinet. Other suggestions are welcome.

IV. CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP

Last week's **Academic Excellence Symposium** was an impressive display of student work and faculty effectiveness! Thanks to Associate Dean Salisbury for organizing the event. Faculty and staff scholarship and publications will likewise be celebrated this semester in two upcoming events. The **Founders Spring Reception** will be held in the Weidner Center on May 5. The second annual **Provost's Scholars Reception** will be held on May 13, 2:30-5:00. Take a break from grading, enjoy some fellowship, and join us in celebrate your and your colleagues' work over the past year.

Best wishes as your finish the semester and look toward summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue H.

Sue K. Hammersmith, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs