May 7, 2014

University Senate
Western Connecticut State University
Attn: Dr. Karen Koza, Senate President

Dear Honorable Senators:

On March 5, 2013, the Enrollment Management Committee met with Mr. Chuck Spiridon, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services. Mr. Spiridon provided the Committee with information regarding the Fall 2014 enrollment. The Committee believes that given the seriousness of the issue, it should formally apprise the Senate of the information he reported to us. Specifically, he reported:

1. As of March 3, 2014 the University had received the following number of applications as compared to last year at the same time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>3072</td>
<td>3,273</td>
<td>+6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>+20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,525</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>+8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The initial recruitment strategy of increasing the Admissions’ staff and expanding the recruitment region beyond the historical 45 mile radius is showing positive results. The University will begin using the Common Application for the Fall 2015 recruitment cycle. That should also add to an increase in applications.

3. While the trend upward in applications is encouraging there are other factors in our student recruitment that have continued and warrant further investigation and discussion. Over the past five years there has been a significant increase in the number of applications where students are not selecting a major. Exploratory Study applications (no major selected) for the Fall 2009 semester totaled 779 (14.5% of all applications received). Exploratory Study applications for the Fall 2013 semester jumped to a total of 1,312 (27.4% of all applications received). That trend is continuing for the Fall 2014 applications. To date, 27% of the applications that we have received are for Exploratory Study.

4. The fallout result of the application trend is that there are a greater number of admitted students beginning their academic career unaffiliated with an academic department or major.
In the Fall 2009 243 student (14.5% of the admitted class) began in Exploratory Studies. In the Fall 2013, 338 students began in Exploratory Studies (23.6% of the admitted class).

5. These trends indicate that fewer and fewer students are considering WCSU for a specific major or department when applying to WCSU. That makes the branding of academic programs (majors) and connection with prospective students a challenge. The University has been operating with a limited marketing budget for year. The University has allocated $200K for undergraduate and $50K for graduate marketing. Given these limited budgets, the University is only able to do a bit of generic marketing on a very broad basis.

Both Mr. Spiridon and the Committee believe that it is important to reverse the trends described in Items 3 – 5, above, so that more prospective students are attracted to specific academic programs. Further, that it is desirable to have students align with a specific academic department and program as soon as possible. Efforts towards these goals should aid Departments in increasing the number of majors in their respective programs, the number of graduates and graduation rates. These efforts should also help with planning course schedules, course rotations, budgeting, etc.

The Committee and Mr. Spiridon generally agree that the entire WCSU community should make efforts to help recruit students to individual Departments. While Admission’s staff can help recruit students, they usually cannot substitute for the connection that a prospective student would make with a faculty member. Accordingly, the Committee will be working with Mr. Spiridon’s Office to encourage faculty and Departments to become more actively engaged in recruitment. Towards this end, the Committee welcomes ideas from the Senate, Departments and individual faculty members on how to accomplish this goal.

Respectfully submitted,

Professor Thomas J. Monks
Chair, Enrollment Management Committee