

Provost Recommendations on Program Review and Discontinuation

On October 14, 2020, just 3 weeks after returning to EWU as provost, I presented the Proposal for Program Review and Discontinuation. In this document, I incorporated a number of strategies to achieve the expenditure reductions expected from Academic Affairs, realizing those reductions over a period of time. Over the past seven months, while program review and discontinuation have been the focus of public conversation, multiple contributors to costs incurred in the operation of our enterprise have been and will continue to be examined critically. It will take a considerable effort across all of these elements to return EWU to a pattern of growth and regional significance that will assure intellectual and institutional health. At one level, maintaining or eliminating programs is among the least significant of our challenges—those are decisions that should be made on a regular basis simply to maintain currency with the needs of our students and our region.

What are more important are the fundamental values, principles and goals we use to address our institution's vitality. If the *status quo ante* the pandemic was that of a thriving institution, then preserving all that existed might be a reasonable goal; but it was not. Fewer students have been selecting EWU for years. EWU retains and graduates those who do select Eastern at a rate that cannot satisfy any of us who advocate for education as a means of social and economic mobility and the correction of inequities.

Our distinctiveness can come from meeting students where they are and helping them achieve beyond their own expectations. There are many who believe in the talents of every student, who practice pedagogies and learning methods that build student self-confidence, who expect contributions from every student and who engage students in learning that also creates positive change within and beyond the walls of the university. Building on their experiences of working with the whole student and all of the history, family and environment that student brings to the university will take time and considerable investment. Simply shoring up existing programs that do not attract sufficient student enrollment or that cannot at present direct resources in ways that contribute to this goal is poor stewardship of the present and the future.

Ours is not a pandemic-related financial problem. We have had a structural deficit (expenses exceeding revenue) for years, driven by enrollment decline and shifting enrollment and tuition categories. That continues regardless of the ebbs and flows of pandemic environments and responses. While the recommendations below address primarily those concerns raised in the fall 2020 proposal that partially fulfilled the MOU with the UFE, they also address movement toward a different EWU that can better fulfill its mission.

Misconceptions

The dialogue over this past year has revealed a number of misconceptions that have become part of Eastern's lore and legend. Most of these relate to our collective understanding of how a public university operates financially. The move of some graduate programs to an accelerated online curriculum model with extensive marketing in conjunction with Academic Partnerships has resulted in significant revenue growth for those programs in high demand. But this approach also results in lower revenue per full-time equivalent student because of lower program tuition, with 50% by contract going to AP. This high-volume, low-price model successfully generates positive revenue in large programs, but it is not a panacea.

In fact, the entire notion of "self-support" is a misleading naming convention. Putting a program on "self-support" should mean that we do not apply general fund Ledger 1 resources to that program. Yet we do. University-salaried employees (faculty and staff) contribute to the program's operation and are not always fully paid out of revenue from the program. Many academic and student service offices bear considerable workloads in support of "self-support" programs and receive in return only a small allocation of the revenue generated, which does not fully pay for the staff time, salaries or benefits required to support these programs. Tenured and tenured-track faculty who teach in self-support programs are encumbered on the state budget for their salary and benefits. In some cases, the self-support program pays that portion of the workload contributed proportionally to the self-support program. More often, the addition of these classes without reducing the regular faculty workload produces no savings at all on the general revenue Ledger 1 budget.

While these programs bring high-quality online education to a wide range of students who might not otherwise be able to participate, from a financial perspective what they accomplish is to generate resources at the department or college level, as compared to general Ledger 1 tuition generating institutional-level resources. These resources can be and often are applied to hiring non-tenure-track faculty or staff in support of the program, enabling program growth or maintenance. Often, they remain unspent because of restrictions on their legitimate use.

If we are to continue in the direction of mediated online programs, the revenue distribution model needs dramatic revision. In the case of some programs identified for discontinuation, moving to this model is seen as a way to "keep" the program. If that is the case, then all of the Ledger 1 resources previously dedicated to that program need to be withdrawn, and all costs of the program, including any faculty lines dedicated to it, need to be permanently moved to true self-support, with the potential of position losses should enrollment and revenue fail to meet expectations.

Another misconception that drives behaviors is the belief that accumulating student credit hours protects faculty positions in a department. To my knowledge, we have not based instructional budgeting on such calculations since the late 1990s, and even then, it was tenuous. While a significant loss of enrollment will certainly result in a balancing of faculty resources with student demand, this belief has led to an oversupply of BACR options, duplication across disciplines, curricular accretion and faculty and GSA costs incurred for

functions that are far more administrative than instructional. These behaviors reduce the institution's capacity to invest in growth opportunities, positions, faculty and staff development and student needs.

Moving to Sustainable Behaviors

Our institutional strategic plan offers general directions but few specifics. We have little institutional identity because we have striven to be all things to all constituents. But we often do that through our own eyes and not those of our constituents. We need to follow the general directions in the strategic plan, demonstrate responsiveness to what eastern Washington needs and provide all of our students with an educational experience that both prepares them for careers and connects them to our and their communities.

There are some directives to do this in the strategic plan:

- Percentage goals for service learning within the larger category of experiential education
- 75% of students participate in formal co-curricular learning activities
- Every student to have career-related experiences and professional development
- Research that responds to regional issues and priorities
- Signature arts programming contributing to the region's culture and economy
- Address issues of social justice to improve the lives of vulnerable populations
- Develop curricula that meet the needs of employers/employees and communities
- Partner with businesses and organizations for student internships and *practica*

A number of EWU academic programs historically and routinely meet many of these objectives. Often they are in professional fields where accreditation, preparation or licensing requires specific experiential learning. It is interesting that those disciplines generally have high enrollment and high retention.

Over the past few years, there has been increasing discussion and action within the university to expand and embed experiential learning across the curriculum. These activities most likely grew out of the service-learning movement of the early 2000s, and they encompass such conversations as that around the metropolitan university model and EXP. Yet at the same time, resources for undergraduate collaborative research with faculty have languished, and opportunities for international experiences have declined because of the political and pandemic environments. All of these so-called high-impact practices have demonstrable value for students. They contribute to recruitment of students and to retention and student success.

These practices, combined with a commitment to connect deeply with our region—eastern Washington and its cities, towns and rural communities—and to reflect in our curricula and priorities the needs of our region, can move EWU toward distinctiveness. That distinctiveness can generate excitement about our value to our region and the value of our educational experience to students.

Reflecting the needs of our region in our curricula and in our array of academic programs is one

piece of this concept. In a limited sense, that is how we need to use program review now and in the future. Understanding what programs are needed and what degrees will benefit students is not a mystery. EWU's Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis (IPPEA) has recently completed analyses of degrees awarded across Washington, a good corollary to the EAB Financial Sustainability report of 2020. This data compares degree production across Washington institutions and by individual institutions with labor demand in related areas. We might argue that this approach takes discrete EWU majors and applies them to specific job categories and that this is a mismatch. Yet unless we can clearly articulate the learning and the career-readiness of our graduates who will face unknown challenges in their lives and who will need maximum adaptability, our discrete majors are all that we have.

Program Consolidation, Revisions, Discontinuations

A number of programs originally identified for some form of reduction or elimination have self-assessed and made changes either in line with the original recommendations or designed to improve student performance and program efficiency and attractiveness. I am gratified to see many course changes submitted from programs not even identified for reduction that indicate self-assessment and steps to reduce degree complexity, eliminate unnecessary obstacles to students (e.g. prerequisite courses) and consolidate courses to speed student completion. Programs that are banked may be reinstated in the future if there is evidence of sufficient demand.

The following degrees have been deactivated:

- Bachelor of Music/Jazz
- Bachelor of Music/Musical Theatre
- Master of Music/Performance
- Master of Music/Jazz Studies
- BA and BS Journalism
- BAE Visual Arts Education/Secondary (elem. and sec. combined into one K-12 degree)
- BAB Supply Chain/Operations Management
- BA Humanities

The following programs originally identified for review in October 2020 were removed from further review over the course of the year:

- BA Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies
- MS Athletic Training
- BS Manufacturing Technology
- BME Music

The following programs are recommended to continue with substantial changes identified by the department:

- BM Music (Instrumental Performance, Piano Performance, Vocal Performance)
- BM Music, Composition
- BA Music, Liberal Arts

Teach-out

From NWCCU policy:

A teach-out plan is a written plan that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study. In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, the institution is required to submit the teach-out plan to NWCCU for approval prior to its implementation.

The institution must immediately provide written notice to NWCCU, the USDE, and appropriate state agencies as soon as it is aware of a circumstance that requires a teach-out plan.

The institution must submit teach-out plans and teach-out agreements to NWCCU for review and approval prior to implementation. The institution must identify an estimated teach-out period during which time it will complete the teach-out plan and any teach-out agreement(s). The length of the teach-out period could range from 12 to 18 months for a plan based solely on transfers to other institutions to 24 to 36 months for a traditional teach out of a closing academic program.

In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, NWCCU will review the teach-out plan(s) to ensure it meets its Standards for Accreditation and Policies including, but not limited to: the teach-out plan is comprehensive and capable of implementation; the teach-out plan provides for the equitable treatment of students to complete their education; the institution specifies and provides written notice to students of additional financial charges, if any; and, the institution provides specific details and custodial agreement to create a long-term repository for student academic records and transcripts and will indicate how transcripts will be made available to individuals impacted by the closure without charge during the teach out period.

Should the Board of Trustees determine to bank or eliminate a program at its June 2021 meeting, new admissions to that program will be stopped for the entry dates following that meeting, while prior commitments such as graduate admissions already offered by then will be honored.

“Self-Support”

A number of programs have asked to move to self-support, primarily through the Academic Partnerships platform. As noted above, this approach does not immediately resolve disparities between resources and enrollment. It offers the possibility of expanding enrollment with the potential for increased volume-based revenue to offset state budget costs in those programs. There is no guarantee of enrollment growth, and even those programs that are rapidly growing on the AP platform are likely to plateau and potentially decline over time. In addition, 50% of gross revenue from all Academic Partnership programs goes directly to AP.

BS Business and Management Education: This is a certification program with two pathways, so the number of majors reflected on Ledger 1 is misleading. The courses for this certification will all be offered through Ledger 2, and that revenue will also cover all of the program costs going forward. **There is no need to alter that plan.**

MA History: The MA in History is an example of a program that hopes to maintain itself by moving to the AP platform. The History Department does not have sufficient flexibility to

actually accomplish this unless there is significant enrollment growth through the accelerated curriculum model. This growth will need to offset the expenses currently devoted to the in-person MA program in order to be considered successful. **I recommend that History be allowed to launch the MA on the AP platform. This will require close monitoring of progress on enrollment and revenue and a subsequent review after the first year of operation (winter 2023).**

MM Music: see below.

Program Revisions and Discontinuations

MA and MM in Music: Graduate student assistants largely fill out the enrollment in the MA program, and that requires permanent faculty teaching capacity for graduate courses, stipends and tuition waivers, as compared to non-benefit-bearing salaries for quarterly faculty, part-time lecturers or advanced undergraduate students, who could fulfill some of the same functions as the GSAs. As of spring 2021, APS listed 3 students currently enrolled in the MA program. WSU offers both in-person and online MA in Music degrees. **I recommend the elimination of the MA in Music.**

Music programs in Cheney should focus on undergraduate music education, music technology and limited ensembles that enrich our students' lives as participants (majors and non-majors) and audience members and that contribute to the cultural life of our region. A mission of being the strongest undergraduate music program in Washington is achievable and should become the focus of the department. This could result in considerable savings in GSA costs, reassignment of workloads from graduate to undergraduate teaching and advising and more limited approaches to ensembles based on more readily available instrumentation. This change might also result in an ability to restore the banked undergraduate majors in specific genres of music.

The department has proposed moving the MM in Music Education to an AP platform. This is more attractive as a professional degree in line with our other AP offerings and a strong set of Education programs already on AP. Given the competition, the success of this online program is unpredictable. **Music is allowed to move the MM online through AP. This program will require close monitoring of progress on enrollment and revenue and a subsequent review after the first year of operation (winter 2023).**

BA, BS, BAE in Physics: It has been stated that eliminating only one or two of the undergraduate degrees in Physics saves no resources, as the courses are overlapping in the degrees. This then raises the question as to whether eliminating all of the degree programs in Physics would save resources. The number of students enrolled in these degree programs in the current spring 2021 quarter as majors are BS 8, BA 2, BAE 1, per APS data. There are a number of courses offered only to serve the BS majors and as electives for BA and BAE majors, with current average enrollments of 8 in upper-division lecture/lab and 7 in upper-division laboratory classes. Eliminating the BS degree would reduce the necessary sections by

approximately 20-23 credits spread over annual section availability patterns. This would still be a minimal saving at best. However, Physics is still an important service department providing core courses in Physics sequences for engineering and other programs. **The cost savings do not warrant eliminating degrees at this time. I recommend Physics remain intact. Academic Affairs will continue to monitor metrics in these majors, including discussion about consolidating BAE/science degrees, comparable to social science and models at other universities.**

MS Communications: The MSC program has had enrollments varying between 31 in 2016-17 and 14 in the current spring 2021 quarter. The department's undergraduate program has remained strong and is now offered both in-person and fully online, an option likely to satisfy many students and add to both recruitment and retention. Over the course of multiple meetings between the department and Provost's Office staff, various proposals were put forward to reinvigorate the graduate program and to create a program that was more attractive to the working professionals in communications-related fields, a student market that was once the staple of this degree but that has declined. These proposals for "stackable" certificates remain somewhat undeveloped and lack firm market research to determine their likelihood of attracting graduate-level students, particularly in our region.

Another proposal has been to develop what is in effect a five-year BA/MS option (4+1). Given the strength of the undergraduate Communication Studies program, this might be an intermediate option that could help grow the graduate program, albeit with continuing EWU undergraduates. Considering that the program's historic primary market was professionals in the communications industries, this would not be a significant qualitative change. Moreover, the marketplace is replete with online, accelerated and low-cost communications graduate degrees, with the Murrow College of Communications (in-person and online programs and certificates) in our backyard at WSU.

I recommend the discontinuation (banking) of the Communication Studies MSC degree. The department faculty noted that the field now requires expertise that is not present in the department because of the absence of new hires over a number of years. This situation results in the need for part-time faculty hiring to cover these areas of expertise. At such time as faculty hiring can occur, the department can then reconceptualize its curriculum to reflect greater currency and a clearly identified market. In the meantime, this will require teaching out the current program, eliminating graduate assistantships as students complete the program and closely scrutinizing the need for CMST 200 sections.

Economics: The Economics Department was already facing three retirements that ended up being four by the end of this academic year. In light of this and the identification of economics as a low-enrollment major, the department undertook serious introspection, resulting in a reconceptualization of their programs that allows for reductions in the required credits for the majors and the number of economics courses that need to be offered. **These changes have all coursed through the appropriate governance process and have provost approval.** The department has been allowed to search for an additional lecturer for 2021-22 to offset the

significant loss of faculty numbers over the past years. This is an important department in serving multiple majors through pre-requisite and BACR contributions. As these reductions in faculty numbers have already occurred, we can quantify the savings generated by these changes as \$473,416.

Art History: This program had no faculty in 2017-18, with new faculty hired and added in 2018-19. It has shown slow growth since then. The program director completely overhauled the curriculum in support of university and disciplinary diversity goals. As a university, we will need to engage in a dialogue relative to the visual world that now more clearly envelops traditional departmental structures (Art, Design, Education, Anthropology, History, diversity programs) to determine how to gain better recognition of the roles this learning plays in our communities and how we can more deeply embed faculty and student efforts in community development across our region and beyond. As I prepared this set of recommendations, I have learned that the program director has taken a position elsewhere. **I recommend that the BA in Art History continue with departmental attention to more collective responsibilities for assessment and capstone experiences across its majors, thereby freeing up faculty time for teaching, student project management and program development. Academic Affairs will continue to monitor majors and enrollments closely.** This will result in one full-time faculty reduction.

CHSPH: The College of Health Science and Public Health is strong and generally growing up to the limits of its resources with many programs capped by accreditation or licensing criteria and by clinical limitations. Some programs within the college, however, have struggled to maintain enrollment. These programs were identified in my original recommendation and are discussed here.

Health Services Administration: This program has seen considerable enrollment decline and low completion rates over the past four to five years even though Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate a rapid increase in the need for trained and licensed professionals in health administration. **This program should remain in the Department of Public Health and Health Administration, continue to move to fully online (internal platform) with quality-approved courses and continue to maintain and develop industry connections and maintain accreditation, particularly important for the placement and enrollment of veterans. This plan will require a reinvestment in a TT faculty position for the 2022-23 academic year.**

Public Health BS: This program developed within WAMS as a stand-alone program that was not affiliated with the MPH program in the Department of Public Health and Health Administration. **This program should continue and relocate to the PHHA Department to allow for all public health faculty to be in the same department, to reduce a program director position by moving responsibilities to a chair and to revise the BSPH into a degree that can feed into and develop into a reduced-time MPH (e.g. 3+2).** The dean will present this as an organizational change in 2021-22.

Outdoor Recreation Leadership, Recreation and Tourism Management: **I recommend that we accept the revision proposed by these programs that would reduce faculty costs and curriculum while merging three majors into one with tracks.** The immediate savings will be

moving from 4 T/TT and 0.5 Lecturer to 2 T/TT and 1.5 Lecturer across ORL and RTM. T/TT faculty resignations from this year have already contributed to the FY 2022 reduction. Additional savings accrue from 1.0 Lecturer as opposed to 1.0 T/TT. **This arrangement will require ongoing monitoring by the dean of CHSPH.**

Therapeutic Recreation: This program has shown signs of slow growth. While maintaining the salary savings and curricular reduction noted above for ORL and RTM, **I recommend merging this program with the Occupational Therapy Department** as faculty credential cross-over can benefit both TR and MOT. This approach may, of course, require some juggling, revision and cross-listing of the core curriculum that has become common to the various WAMS programs addressed in this paragraph. Growth of adaptive sports clubs at EWU can serve as additional recruiting incentive. There is also strong potential for veteran student recruitment. One or the other of the OT programs (MOT or Therapeutic Recreation) will need to move to the other's calendar.

Efficiencies: There is much about EWU that is unlike other institutions. Some call this exceptionalism; I call it peculiarity. We then accept our peculiarities as normal. They cause unbelievable complexity across the institution. Degree programs are so complex we need advisors with master's degrees to help students navigate them. Why not simplify the degrees so that students and their faculty advisors can more easily figure out a pathway to graduation? We maintain semesters, quarters, multiple summer sessions and parts-of-term sessions. Our financial aid staff (already below the staffing level of our immediate competitors) is left to apply 70 "cost of attendance" calculations annually. Admissions, Graduate Studies, Records and Registration and Student Financial Services also need to compensate for this dizzying range of schedules and payment scales. Our enterprise system partner does not believe they've ever seen this level of complexity, and it results in decreased service to students.

- Move to a common calendar across the institution. If the primary objective is to create better student learning through active, community-based and experiential learning, then my preference would have us seriously plan to move to semesters. High-impact practices take time to evolve. The quarter does not support getting students out of the classroom and into practical work environments. There is no continuity: one is either starting, taking mid-terms or taking finals in rapid succession. There is too little time for significant project-based work or substantial reading/writing. It is, in my opinion, time to join the 95% of American universities on the semester system. Having fewer terms also improves operational efficiency in university service units, enhancing student service. Our scheduling practices reflect Taylorism in the extreme. Even high schools have moved to block scheduling.
- Provide multiple-year course schedules and multiple-term registration. Create confidence among students that the courses they need to graduate will be available, and allow them to plan out their pathway effectively. This would also allow us to better anticipate needed course sections and to cancel poorly enrolled sections early enough to be able to reassign faculty time usefully and to find alternatives for students. This should also have the benefit of reducing the occurrence of underenrolled sections.

- Reduce the multiplicity of options students have for Gen Ed and BACRs. These course lists keep growing. Academic Affairs is trying to get a sense of the real scope of options (how many offered, how often). Gen Ed course-taking patterns will change, and we need to respond to those changing student preferences. Reducing the options will make it easier for students to create pathways to completion and will also allow for more confident multi-term advance scheduling of the core and elective courses that remain.
- Commit fully to community-engaged student learning experiences, particularly in undergraduate majors. Multiple campus-wide continuing projects could support participation by faculty and students across the disciplines and create opportunities for students to work in teams, develop work-related skills and contribute to worthwhile projects across eastern Washington, even in their own hometowns. Such a commitment will require prioritizing faculty activities within their “service” workload elements, recognizing community-based teaching and research (including SOTL) as important contributors to promotion and tenure and reducing “service” time spent on internal committee work.
- Increase actual teaching credits. The EAB report posited a large gap (\$3.4M) between our theoretical teaching capacity (everyone teaching to CBA standards) and our actual teaching capacity. Noting the nuances absent from that report, we nevertheless looked at faculty release time this year and found that total reassignments of faculty from teaching to other duties amounted to the equivalent of 55.6 full-time equivalent T/TT faculty. About a third of that is required by CBA agreements about department chairs and others. Even accounting for those requirements and agreed-upon college and department duties, we still have 27.8 full-time faculty equivalents reassigned from teaching to other duties. We are working with the UFE to determine equitable compensation for program directors, including some reassigned administrative time, and will continue to closely monitor and question other forms of release and its cost-effectiveness.
- Eliminate courses previously offered under EWU Online that were on self-support but allowed EWU state-support student enrollment within the credit plateau for full-time tuition.
- Continue to explore and mine the opportunities for various forms of hybrid learning that could benefit continuing EWU students while also expanding the university’s appeal to working and non-traditional students unable to always participate in person. Continue to work with IT and faculty input to achieve useable technology solutions and to provide the training needed to maximize their benefit.

Program Growth: Considerable program growth has occurred in online programs delivered through Academic Partnerships on a self-support model. This has yielded approximately \$4M in institutional funds before expenses in 2020-21. These have been used both to maintain program delivery and growth and to fund positions that are in the category of academic support or that teach in state-funded undergraduate majors within the participating departments. At the same time, these programs have replaced state-support graduate programs in MBA, Education and Public Health with a resultant decline in state-support graduate enrollment. Nonetheless, total graduate enrollment has grown through these

programs. Advances and declines in program enrollment at the undergraduate level often reflect a redistribution of students more than net new students. Overall, undergraduate growth programs have numbers too small to warrant celebration. Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Business and the Health Sciences belie this trend, continue to be robust and could help sustain future growth. These programs match closely with the job growth and degree distribution study by the IPPEA. Additionally, standing up a nursing program would continue to draw high-performing students and retain those unable to gain admission to the WSU consortium program with its limited spaces. There remain areas that we have not been able to fully explore between October and the present, such as data-science-related areas that have not matched growth in job opportunities with growth in enrollment. There remains a robust agenda for the immediate future.

Program Review: Program review will continue in two forms. The traditional form is the seminal multi-year review (usually 5-7 years). The PRC is working to bring the extant policy AP 303-40 into concordance with alternative principles passed by the Senate in 2019 that would significantly reduce the data collection and writing burden of the extant policy. Additionally, Academic Affairs will develop metrics to distribute to colleges, departments and programs (quarterly and annually) to capture short-term changes that might signal the need for attention, such as shifting student enrollment and performance patterns that might indicate a significant change or that might result from faculty leave patterns. Knowing the changes and their causes through ongoing assessment and communication can reduce surprises over a longer term and provide data to support resource allocations.

BLS 5/14/21