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PROFESSIONAL SENATE

Unclassified Professional Senate



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To: Dr. Jay Golden, President – Wichita State University
From: Executive Leadership Team, Unclassified Professional Staff Senate
Date: January 10, 2020
Ref: **Response to 'On Boarding Materials'**
Cc: Dr. Rick Muma, Provost – Wichita State University
Additional Materials: [UP/USS Survey Results](#)

Thank you for seeking our input about shared governance and the dual role the UP Senate can serve in leading upward to University administrators and leading across to our staff constituents. Your efforts to gather the Senate's input early in the process is a noticeable and welcome shift from our past experiences with shared governance.

In your first 100 days (and every day thereafter), we believe nothing is more important than your visibility on campus – walk outside the doors of Morrison Hall to meet and engage with the students, staff, and faculty of this great University. Above all, during those engagements, we urge you to listen. Come learn who we are, what we do, and most importantly for staff, why we do what we do. We are university professionals who strive daily to make the vision of Wichita State a reality. The Unclassified Professional (UP) Senate serves more than 1,200 unclassified professionals across Wichita State University. Drawn together from the ranks of administrative professionals, advisors, accountants, analysts, counselors, directors, research engineers, nurses, programmers – among many others – the UP Senate represents a diverse body of professionals who are committed to the mission of the University.

Here are the things we believe are needed to ensure Wichita State is better tomorrow than it is today:

- In order to lead the University effectively, University leaders are willing to hear truth to power and recognize the value of all stakeholders and contributors to the mission.
- We need to build the future together. To maximize the impact and generate the flow of information and input in both directions, the right parties are brought to the table early and often, and the University has expanded its efforts toward trust, transparency, and shared governance.
- The University embraces its role in serving a socio-economically diverse population of students and invests its dollars appropriately to generate meaningful, life-changing, outcome-driven impacts for its unique student body.
- The University defines its own success by the students it graduates, the research it produces, and the community it builds, rather than in a constant size comparison to KU and K-State.
- The University implements change only when it is accompanied by a well-defined purpose and a process plan that includes the relevant stakeholders in the decision and timeline.
- As we embrace a changing world by 2025, staff, faculty, and students at all levels are not only empowered to attempt positive risks and take on new challenges, but also are rewarded for the outcomes.

We know you will consider our responses below carefully and respectfully, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue in the coming months as we all work together to make Wichita State more impactful for its students, employees, and community.



Executive Summary

- ➔ Hands down, what makes Wichita State great is its people. Employees who choose public service are unique from those in private industry, and the individuals who work in our beloved Shocker Nation are committed to the vision and mission. We invite you to meet them and see first-hand what they do and why they do it.
- ➔ Be present, engage with all levels, and listen actively to capture and impact University morale.
- ➔ The foundations of shared governance are trust and communication, and those connections between staff and administration have been eroded (or perceived to be eroded) over the past decade. Let's work together to reconnect staff by enhancing communication and rebuilding trust.
- ➔ Transparency and shared governance require bringing the necessary leaders and stakeholders to the table early and often for engaged input rather than mere rubber-stamping. We look forward to participating in open and ongoing dialogues to share our expertise and outline our views of advantages and disadvantages to key University decisions.
- ➔ Many departments have been feeling intense pressure to perform at breakneck speeds and to produce ambitious results. The accompanying stress has left its toll on staff. When it comes to the speed and processes for implementing changes, we implore you to engage the affected departments and professionals within the University to determine the timelines and impact for the proposed changes.
- ➔ An engaged employee must be given the freedom to speak truth to power, and we encourage you to recognize the value of the dissenting opinion. In most cases, questioning a decision or an idea is not meant to be anti-administration, but often an attempt to better understand where the administration is coming from. Without the ability to ask questions openly, staff will clam up and disengage just so they will not be perceived as being against something.
- ➔ Budgetary cuts over the past decade, coupled with the previously held, "enrollment growth at all costs" mindset, have required professionals to meet higher expectations with fewer resources – essentially to do more with less. At some point, if these cuts continue, staff heartbreakingly predict that the outcomes may eventually produce less with less.
- ➔ Together, let's recreate the culture of appreciation that highly values the contributions of employees and ensures executive administrators and managers connect with staff regularly rather than only engaging when something goes wrong.
- ➔ Given the challenges over the past decade with both funding and leadership, staff, undoubtedly, are somewhat fearful that history will repeat itself. However, based on the recent positive experiences with Dr. Tompkins' participatory and transparent style, we are hopeful for the future.
- ➔ Examine the results of the [Spring 2019 UP/USS survey](#), and together, let's identify actionable items we can achieve in the short- and long-term. We look forward to working with you to ensure Wichita State is a destination employer in the surrounding community and in public higher education.



Shared Governance

Engaging your team, please provide your written input on the following broad topics and feel comfortable to attach any supplemental materials.

What is great about our University?

There are many things but, what are some of the wonderful aspects about Wichita State University including traditions? Are there programs that we should further emphasize and promote? How can the president play a role to support?

UP Senate Response

Hands down, what makes Wichita State great is its people. Whether these people are the diverse, about-to-change-their-lives-forever students we engage with, the co-workers we work alongside (and who pour their blood, sweat, and tears into making this place great), or the community members who support our initiatives, the best thing about Wichita State is the people who collectively make the traditions and culture something worth being part of. Stories abound for the lengths staff members will go to help a student and work together with various functional offices to reduce barriers for students today and tomorrow.

Regarding our students, next year, we look forward to you meeting the students who compete in our Distinguished Scholarship Invitational – afterwards, you'll know the future of our world will be in good hands! Plus, our student life and experience has witnessed exceptional growth and improvements in recent years to ensure students can leave with a robust college experience. We also welcome your support to encourage or incentivize staff, faculty, and administrators to participate in or volunteer for student-related events.

The students change and grow every year, and with that growth, they breathe new life into the University and leave their imprint on its cultural landscape. Speaking of landscape, Wichita State is a beautiful campus in the Midwest. From the foliage and flowers to the sculpture collection and several buildings with awe-inspiring architecture, the campus sets an inspiring scene in which staff can be proud of where they work. In fact, many of us enjoy taking our families on walks throughout campus. Moreover, working at the University affords staff opportunities to learn and the freedom to pursue research and try new endeavors.

Wichita State offers a handful of well-respected, student-focused activities like Hippodrome, Shock the Yard Step Show, SongFest, and Shocktoberfest. Honestly, though, we wish we had more traditions to engage our students and to draw in our surrounding community. Not as many traditions have stood the test of time for staff and faculty, as those events have often ebbed and flowed depending on the president and his level of engagement on campus and support of activities. For staff, traditions offer the opportunity to foster further buy-in to the mission and loyalty to the institution. In speaking with our constituents, some meaningful traditions that came to mind were: the annual Holiday Celebration (President and Mrs. Beggs knew how to decorate for and host a party); the Benders of Twigs Ceremony and Years of Service Recognition Events; the Shocker Picnic (although, not held in recent years); and Convocation at Koch Arena (transformed into an Academic Convocation for the past several years).



How can you support Wichita State as the president? Attendance is key; be present and engaged at events on campus. Students and employees need a president and first lady who naturally want to participate in campus activities and meaningfully engage in the culture of Wichita State. Countless staff members recalled the years in which the Rhatigan Student Center Ballroom was decorated for the winter season for the Holiday Brunch, and all executive leaders attended to welcome employees as they entered – even Santa Clause (who drew a remarkable resemblance to Dr. James Rhatigan) often made his appearance. It was an opportunity to come together and celebrate.

Events like these demonstrated there were no walls between administrators and staff who daily carried forward the mission and activities of the University. As we look forward to rekindling the fire of institutional loyalty and engagement, we welcome the concept behind Elon's Coffee Tuesdays that invites everyone to the table. Let's work together to design what this can look like in our community of 17,000 students, staff, and faculty. We're all in!

Engagement

I am eager to hear from you how engaged university leadership (not just the President) has been with you and those you represent. This includes critical elements such as shared governance, strategic planning and establishing university priorities, transparency, approachability, active listening and responsiveness.

What has been positive and what can be improved? Provide examples of engagement by prior presidents that you have worked with that you would like to see continued and what additional engagement you would like to see from the new President.

As the new president, what advice and requests do you have of me? Are there any specific requests of me in the first 100 days?

UP Senate Response

When President Bardo took the helm, he assembled a team known as the President's Council, in which constituent leaders were invited to bring announcements/issues to the President's Executive Team on a monthly basis and receive status updates on initiatives affecting the University. He also held regular one-on-one meetings with the constituent heads. In theory and optics, these levels of participation for Senate leaders are positive, but to maximize the impact and generate the flow of information and input in both directions, we hope to expand these initial efforts toward transparency and shared governance. We appreciated being invited to the table, but often times, past Senate presidents reported the information at the meetings was frequently one-directional and rarely an opportunity to voice concerns and know that their feedback would be considered in advance of a decision being made.

When items are brought to the Senates is also critical to ensure the Senates' input is valued long before policies and decisions are signed, sealed, and delivered to the Executive Team for review. In the last decade, staff have reported that Wichita State has felt more like a corporate, behind-closed-doors, decision-making environment rather than one focused on collaborative and transparent governance; however, given your emphasis on shared governance, staff are hopeful for the future under your leadership.



At times, staff have reported that University leadership is out of step and out of touch with the culture and climate of its employees. Two recent examples:

- Proposed changes to the compensatory time policy
- Professional development policy that nearly bypassed the normal channels for shared governance

University leaders left staff bewildered and wondering, “Do administrators even understand what we value in our work environment and why we work at Wichita State?” Thankfully, at the last minute, leaders delayed their decisions/proposals, reviewed the feedback from the constituent groups, and produced better, more collaborative outcomes. But, the wounds from these missteps were deep and further eroded the trust staff have in believing their work is valued. Rebuilding that trust will take time and intentional efforts, but we believe if you bring the right parties to the table early and often, staff can assuredly support your vision.

Despite the past, though, we can see that our University leadership has been taking recent steps toward better transparency, with the October NetApp announcement chief among them. In fact, our Senators noted that many staff across campus initially were wondering why they were being told about a project that may or may not come to fruition, and then they realized this early sharing of information demonstrated transparency at its finest – an opportunity to bring voices to the table early in the process rather than to serve as a mere checkmark in the box of shared governance. When you announce decisions, we encourage you to readily share the rationale (when possible) for how and why you chose this direction. Wichita State has shown it can get it right through intentional planning; let’s build on these small steps of shared governance set by Dr. Tompkins, restore the pride in working at Wichita State, and set the standards for an engaged University at all levels.

Admittedly, staff have not always kept up their end of the proverbial bargain for shared governance; after all, it is meant to be a two-way street of collaboration and engagement. However, some of the recent disinterest in participating in efforts for strategic planning stems from former experiences in which they actively engaged in the process, but then, when the final outcomes were released, they failed to see their voices represented. Employees have lost sight of the relevance of participation when, during past experiences, they felt like their opinions and – more importantly – their professional expertise were not being heard. When requesting staff engagement, we need leaders to convey to employees why they should engage and demonstrate that their voice matters. Often, staff have felt their requested participation is merely meant by the administration as a required check-marking of the shared governance box without giving it real value.

In other cases, departmental pressures (the need to complete the business of the University) have precluded staff involvement, as some supervisors advised they could not spare someone out of the office. Similarly, sometimes the requests for participation came at the last minute and it was difficult for staff to rearrange their schedules during peak business months with little advance notice. Last summer, for example, we were invited to attend an all-day training event offsite related to shared governance, but were given only one week notice.

One of our constituents astutely identified that shared governance “starts at the top” and then permeates through each level of leadership – administrators, upper level managers, middle-managers,



and contributors. Upper level staff need training on and buy-in for shared governance. On many occasions, Senators have been informed (or experienced it themselves) that staff are not allowed by supervisors to attend meetings, join committees, or be part of the discussion. Of course, all offices' priorities must be about the primary work and functions they are tasked to do, but if shared governance is going to be anything beyond a buzzword for optics, then it must be participatory at all levels and supported (within reason) by all departments. Moving forward, it will be helpful to ensure participation in the shared governance process is recognized as valuable professional development for the employee and the department, and adequate timing needs to be considered. We urge you to consider monitoring which departments do not regularly send staff to on-campus trainings, meetings, and events.

Additionally, to a certain extent, staff feel over-surveyed and overwhelmed by requests for more input sessions. At some point, staff expect action and outcomes, with specific results tied to what leadership learned during the sessions. Given the results of the April 2019 UP/USS statewide employee climate study, let's work together to designate which actionable items we can work on today and which ones will take longer to address.

When it comes to engaging with staff, we want to highlight one Vice President in particular for his consistent engagement in offices and throughout campus. In nearly every President's Council meeting, the UP Senate encourages the Executive Team to meet the staff outside of their divisions. We commend Werner Colling for his efforts to engage across the University and are hopeful other executives will do the same. Connections are key as we all focus on enhancing the student experience and growing enrollment. Making genuine referrals are more impactful when you transfer a current or prospective student to a specific, trusted colleague rather than a vague departmental office.

Over the past seven years, divisions have grown more siloed and offices have felt intense pressure that they can't take time away to participate in the traditions or activities that had long-been the glue that connected our offices. Rebuilding the bridges of collaboration and the networks of a single University community will ensure Wichita State's student experience is second to none. As we work to reduce the barriers for students, let's ensure there are no walls separating staff, faculty, and administrators in our joint efforts to serve the public good.

Culture

How would you describe the culture of the university? This is a broad question which also requires an appreciation of how the university is perceived by faculty, staff, current students, prospective students and their families and high school officials, our peers in the state and region, industry, and community leaders.

Is there a culture of willingness to change, adapt, and be nimble, or is it a culture of "we can't do it here or have never done it here so we should not do it here?" Has there been too much change too quickly in the past? What advice would you provide to the new president?

I have a few programs I would like to implement next fall and would appreciate your feedback. One you heard about which is my hosting students at the President's House on Sundays. Another way I would like to build a stronger sense of community is what is done at Elon: [blog](#) and [video](#).



I would like to send a representative from each of your organizations to Elon and other locations to learn and come back to WSU and help to create community-inclusiveness programs here. Opportunities to improve engagement between students, faculty, staff and leadership is imperative. Also, we need to help build a sense of belonging to our 1st year students as well as our new faculty and staff.

UP Senate Response

Many members of the Wichita State community have been incredibly adaptable over recent years as the landscape of public higher education has shifted in Kansas and across the nation. Staff, in particular, are not afraid of change when the mission is clear and the process plans are well-designed. However, the pace of change has taken its toll on staff over time, and many have felt the University chases each new shiny thing, without an overarching plan/process for initiatives and allocation of resources.

Some departments have been feeling intense pressure to perform at breakneck speeds and to produce ambitious results. The accompanying stress has left its toll on staff. We are coming out of a mission that requested unattainable enrollment growth that left staff wondering, “Where did the goal of 22,000 students even come from; what data supported that such a goal was attainable – or even a stretch goal?” Ultimately, it gave the perception (and possibly the evidence) that the president was not in tune with the realities of Wichita State, our community, and the needs of our diverse student body. When it comes to the speed and processes for implementing changes, we implore you to engage the affected departments and professionals within the University to help determine the appropriate goals, timelines, and impact for the proposed changes.

Moreover, despite staff’s professional skills, they do not feel free to share concerns when implementing a new project without the fear of retribution or being seen as anti-administration. An engaged employee must be given the freedom to speak truth to power, and we encourage you to recognize the value of the dissenting opinion. In most cases, questioning a decision or an idea is not meant to be anti-administration, but often an attempt to better understand where the administration is coming from. Without the ability to ask questions openly, staff will clam up and disengage just so they are not perceived as being against something.

President Bardo initially began a series of monthly “Breakfasts with Bardo” in which he brought together groups of staff and faculty from various departments and divisions across campus and shared the latest topics affecting the University. In those small settings, he disseminated the information effectively by sharing the why behind his goals. It could have been even more effective if he had also demonstrated a willingness to hear from the departments what challenges were on their plates and how those same topics might affect their corners of the University. We encourage you to consider ways, like Elon’s Coffee Tuesdays, to disseminate information effectively and always remember to share forward the reasoning about why decisions are being made and how they support the University’s mission and priorities.

As mentioned earlier, staff have lost some of their pride in our University because they are lacking the connections with administration and even their colleagues across campus. Even though employees can get excited about the innovative culture of the University, some people and offices have felt left behind and do not have the same relationship they once believed existed. Staff, in particular, have felt there is



little room for growth, promotion, and raises; we are anxious to understand and see the transition to market-based compensation program put into action.

There is some tension among various constituent groups about seemingly different expectations and the speed of acceptance. True or not, some staff believe that faculty are afforded the luxury of time when implementing changes, while staff are tasked with being responsive and agile. Take for example, the Shocker PROUD expectations that are a required component in the UP and USS performance review process, but are seemingly absent from faculty evaluations. Let's all work together to ensure the values of being professional, responsive, open, understanding, and dedicated permeate all levels of leadership, employees (staff and faculty), and students at the University.

Earlier, we mentioned how University-wide traditions are important, but staff also shared specific building and/or departmental activities they find meaningful for generating a sense of community and belonging, such as Jardine Hall's annual Pig Out and various departments' Thanksgiving luncheons. Unfortunately, in some pockets of the University, other staff mentioned that over time, some of their traditions like annual pot-luck days have fallen by the wayside as new leaders failed either to carry the torch or to recognize the value of supporting such initiatives. Leaders should feel empowered to allow their employees opportunities to engage in both university-wide and departmental community-building and shared experiences.

Connection among staff members and celebrating successes together (like at years of service recognition events) are vital components to an engaged and effective employee base. Moreover, these connections are one of the many things that set the public service employment experience apart from the corporate work environment. Many staff reported they felt a greater emphasis during President Beggs' era to show appreciation for and recognition of employee service and contributions. Recognition opportunities still exist today, but they have not appeared to be as highly valued by the recent administration.

Undoubtedly, we believe the Wichita State community is hungry to once again have a relationship with its top leaders. We believe when the leaders engage regularly and meaningfully, it is easier for people to gather behind the vision and share in the responsibilities to carry Wichita State forward through the next decade to be better than it is today. Staff regularly see the effects on our students in which administration has been disconnected from them. We love that President Bardo hired students to work in the President's Office, and we hope you will do the same – and more! Engaging with students at your home on Sundays, plus attending various student events, will go a long way in restoring our hope and pride in Wichita State's community.

President Tompkins made it a habit in only eight months to not just appear at campus activities, but to engage in them. He even showed up and helped staff a FAFSA completion event in Shocker Hall. Attendance and participation at events shouldn't be the anomaly, it should be the norm from all leaders at our University. Operating from the mindset that it is people who move ideas (think about every great movement in American history... it required great leaders to inspire people to action), let's join together as one community to transform the climate and culture of Wichita State.



Priorities

What are the priorities of you and your members this academic year?

UP Senate Response

In collaboration with our counterparts in the University Support Staff (USS) Senate, the UP Senate is working on the following priorities this year:

- Release the UP/USS Staff Survey Results (completed October 2019)
- Identify short-term and long-term initiatives with University leadership as a result of the survey (Spring 2020)
- Initiate an annual campus-wide employee service project to raise awareness about food insecurity within the campus community (completed November 2019)
 - Stock the Shocker Support Locker Challenge: Staff v. Faculty
- Develop a three-year strategic plan/goals for the Senate, including identifying the Senate's vision for what role it should play within shared governance (ongoing, Spring 2020)
- Policy review participation (ongoing)
 - Created a Joint Policy Review Committee with USS Senate to review and provide formalized responses to proposed policy changes/updates
- Enhance staff recognition and awards (ongoing, Staff Recognition Task Force Recommendations sent to Human Resources, October 2019)
- Develop Senate committee handbooks to assist with leadership transitions, reduce the annual learning curve for members, and improve continuity in achieving long-term Senate goals and initiatives (ongoing, Summer 2020).

Concerns

Are there any current and emerging "hot topics" that you think I should be made aware and what are your suggestions for addressing? This is obviously a broad topic. Please feel free to expand on any area spanning athletics, finance, morale, campus culture, infrastructure, etc.

UP Senate Response

A specific concern our constituents requested we bring to your attention is regarding Human Resources (HR). In recent years, HR has transitioned to a new service model that – right, wrong, or indifferent – has not been accepted (yet) by the wholesale University community. Many staff are concerned the “inbox” mentality in which you email a generic account rather than a specific person lends itself to a corporate rather than personal focus. It is a change of culture that may be necessary, but we want you to be aware there is tension from this new model that, in combination with the missteps with the compensatory time policy, have caused some individuals to lose confidence in their HR team. We are working with HR on how to address these challenges, and most recently, HR willingly brought its entire team to the semiannual UP/USS general meeting and introduced them. It might take some time, but with more engagement and collaboration across the University, we assuredly can come out on the other side of this with a win-win.



As the UP Senate, another concern right now is with employee morale and helping bring hope, pride, and recognition back to the employees at Wichita State. President Tompkins, in just eight months, boosted morale as he actively listened when engaging with staff. Likewise, staff are hopeful such an active presence and engagement will continue under your tenure. We look forward to doing our part to support your initiatives, but we are cautiously optimistic about how you will carry forward the innovative legacy of President Bardo without using the same methods. Some staff are concerned history will repeat itself. We urge you to allow employees the freedom to generate great ideas based on their expertise and to support them when that same expertise requires them to speak truth to power.

First 100 Days

I am going to have a very busy 100 days listening and learning on-campus and within our community. But, what would you like to see me pay special attention to during this time?

UP Senate Response

Most importantly, in your first 100 days (and as many days as possible thereafter), be visible, be present, and listen. In [Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action](#), Simon Sinek reminds us, “The role of a leader is not to come up with all the great ideas. The role of a leader is to create an environment in which great ideas can happen.” Guided by this principle, we urge you to rely on the expertise of the motivated staff at Wichita State who are primed and ready to let their ideas flourish. Many of the staff are experts in their fields and bring a wealth of knowledge and abilities to the table.

As we all know, change is necessary in the rapidly evolving climate of higher education, but when you are deciding on new directions, lean on the professionals from the offices and departments who can inform you about the prevailing trends in their areas of expertise. Not only do they know their field, but they also know the culture and demographics of Wichita State, the temperament of the Midwestern student (and staff member), and the speed at which initiatives can be effectively implemented or modified. Of course, we expect you to challenge our University to achieve great things, but, at the risk of sounding like every Midwestern grandparent imparting wisdom to future generations, remember that anything worth doing is worth doing right.

Don't underestimate the value of understanding the deeply rooted populism that undergirds Kansans' values. While staff will respect you as the president based on your authority and position, there is often a mistrust of the “elite establishment.” Among those staff members who choose to stay and raise their families in the Midwest, it is important to understand that Kansans hold tightly to their values, trust must be earned, and integrity matters.

In order to earn trust with staff, you will need to re-establish the feeling of people being heard. Staff have been asked to participate in a variety of listening sessions over the past decade, but two themes surface: staff either don't see their responses in the final outcomes, or, for a period in the mid-2010s, they were fearful to even bring their concerns or questions to the table out of fear of retaliation. Trust and feeling heard will help people form a connection to you as the President and support your initiatives.



Pay attention to the themes in the UP/USS survey, digest the results, and work with the Senate and your leadership team to identify actionable things that can be done. Next, if you do something, take credit for it being as a result of the survey. Directly connect changes to the feedback received. Then, as you implement any new initiative moving forward, explain the reasoning behind the decisions when possible so people can see all sides were at least considered and valued. Above all, always explicitly tie decisions to how they support the mission and vision of the University.

Infrastructure

I have followed from a distance some of the issues regarding efforts to improve infrastructure including the failed Shock the Future initiative. I would like your input on infrastructure needs of the university, priorities (be specific and provide a reason for the priority), and items that are not priorities but would be nice to see implemented.

There also seems (from a distance) that there might not have been active participation by all the different constituencies at the University in prioritizing and communicating the different needs. How can the university more effectively ensure the broader WSU community participates and has a voice in such matters?

UP Senate Response

We know the infrastructure that impacts the student experience must be our first priorities, but in addition to classroom needs, we urge you to consider the value of the physical spaces occupied by staff who work directly in support of student success; some of our offices work with students throughout the entire student lifecycle from recruitment to retention to post-graduation. We'll defer to the students on whether they would value a singular building for student services enough to raise the necessary student fees, but we certainly would support initiatives that encourage bringing staff together under one roof and in collaborative ways that promote student engagement and achievement.

Undoubtedly, deferred maintenance disproportionately affects certain areas of the University, especially departments housed in older buildings. These issues go far beyond the complaints from employees about inconsistent temperature settings, faded/peeling paint, and worn/broken facilities. These issues impact departments' abilities to respond nimbly and adapt their business structures in an increasingly technology-based world.

Budgetary cuts over the past decade, coupled with the previously held, "enrollment growth at all costs" mindset, have required professionals to meet higher expectations with fewer resources – essentially to do more with less. At some point, if these cuts continue, staff heartbreakingly predict the outcomes may eventually produce less with less. Indeed, it is a struggle for staff to be innovative and proactive to changes when they are already squeezing every departmental penny.

Improvements are costly and are only growing higher with time. If a room/office lacks certain outlets, network drops, etc., but the department wants to set up resources to help staff work more effectively or serve students in a new capacity, they must allocate those funds from their departmental budget (sacrificing something else) in order to be adaptive in their approaches for the 21st century. Yet, interdepartmental transfers of funds for services like telecommunications and facilities updates is



challenging when GU-funded (and some RU-funded) departments already have scant budgets and are forced to cut budgets further every year. Additionally, many offices would be happy to be on board with a go-paperless model, but if the technological support and systems are not centrally funded and adequately staffed, these solid dreams will melt into air.

There is a perceived notion that much of the University's funding supports the high-profile colleges and programs – engineering and business – while the rest of the University must share the burdens of the costs. The newest programs and offices always appear to get preference in funding, so we would welcome a transparent process for determining how funds will be allocated across the University, both for recruitment and retention, but also technology upgrades and facilities improvements. At the departmental and building level, please consider requesting wish lists of the specific needs/wants, gathering constituent feedback through the appropriate Senates, and then prioritizing the projects with transparent short-term and long-term timelines.

Our Joint Future

Describe your hope of where we collectively take Wichita State University in 5 years. How would you like to describe WSU in 5 years? What type of efforts/programs (of any kind) would make WSU stronger, more impactful and better recognized by our peers? What programs and culture in 5 years would lead to WSU being an even greater place for our students, staff, faculty, and community?

UP Senate Response

In five years, we hope every student is proud to have earned their degree from Wichita State and that they walked across the stage having had a unique collegiate experience in which they are well-prepared with the adaptive and applied skills necessary for an ever-changing global community. We hope Wichita State has become a destination employer not only in the Wichita community, but academically as a mid-sized, public university. We hope we've improved our retention rates and graduated historic numbers of students in new and traditional programs. Moreover, we hope the entire Wichita State community has rebuilt its trust in its leaders and once again takes pride in being an employee, student, or teammate in Shocker Nation.

Of course, predicting where we hope to be as a University in five years is a difficult challenge, as there are many factors that cannot be controlled, but here are the things we believe are needed to ensure Wichita State is better tomorrow than it is today:

- University leaders are willing to hear truth to power in order to lead the University effectively and recognize the value of all stakeholders and contributors to the mission.
- To maximize the impact and generate the flow of information and input in both directions, the right parties are brought to the table early and often, and the University has expanded its efforts toward trust, transparency, and shared governance.
- The University embraces its role in serving a socio-economically diverse population of students and invests its dollars appropriately to generate meaningful, life-changing, outcome-driven impacts for its unique student body.
- The University defines its own success by the students it graduates, the research it produces, and the community it builds, rather than in a constant size comparison to KU and K-State.



- The University implements change only when it is accompanied by a well-defined purpose and a process plan that includes the relevant stakeholders in the decision and timeline.
- As we embrace a changing world by 2025, staff, faculty, and students at all levels are not only empowered to attempt positive risks and take on new challenges, but also are rewarded for the outcomes.

Above all, we believe we need to undertake the planning for and implementation of Wichita State's future together. Guided by the principal of moving together and recognizing the value and expertise of all contributors, we know Wichita State will be unstoppable as it tackles the next five years. Welcome to the team, President Golden; let's do this!