Certified $ Figures and an Uncertain Future

The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle captures a fundamental trade-off regarding what we can know about the physical world; precise knowledge of the location of a particle necessarily entails a large uncertainty in its speed. As this transitional year in the life of Lawrence University progressed a fiscal analog to Heisenberg’s notion has seemed to be at play. Prior to President Burstein’s arrival the faculty perspective on the financial state of the institution was out-of-focus, but we had been getting along year-to-year … with ups and downs to be sure. During this year, Mark and his cabinet’s transparent communication regarding the budget has given faculty a better sense of the challenges we face; however, as the picture of the present state has sharpened, uncertainty about the future has grown. At the April faculty meeting Chris Lee presented a further refined analysis of the budget that, despite collective effort to trim departmental budget requests, had a larger figure in parentheses on the bottom line than in the previous report. His presentation generated questions and concerns that displayed broad appreciation among the faculty for the difficult circumstances we face as we zero in on closing the gap between revenue and expenses and between families’ demonstrated need and financial aid packages.

Committee Restructuring

The Faculty Governance Committee’s proposal on Service and Leadership was adopted by the faculty at the March faculty meeting. The proposal package included an articulation of the purpose and value of, as well as the expectations regarding, faculty service and leadership; it also substantially revised the committee structure. Certain committee assignments are recognized as requiring broad institutional vision and demanding intensive time commitment. Responsibility for such “core” assignments is now placed primarily on the shoulders of tenured faculty and it is expected that such service would be followed by an interval of lighter service expectations. The new committee structure both reduced the number of faculty committee assignments, thereby freeing faculty to engage in service that is not associated with committees, and enhanced the lines of communication among committees and between the faculty and the administration. It created two planning committees (Financial Planning and Physical Planning) that include faculty and cabinet members. An umbrella committee (Resources and Planning) chaired by the President is comprised of cabinet, the Faculty Governance Committee and the chair of the Curriculum Committee; it coordinates the recommendations of the planning committees and those of the Curriculum Committee.
**Title III Project**

The Department of Education funded Title III Project is underway and faculty hold significant leadership roles on that effort. The project has a number of activity areas aimed at improving student success and persistence to graduation. Professor Steve Jordheim (conservatory) is the Project Director. Professors Rosa Tapia (Spanish), Matt Ansfield (psychology), Asha Srinivasan (conservatory), Patty Vilches (Spanish), Garth Bond (English), Mark Jenike (anthropology) and Bart De Stasio (biology) are involved as activity directors and/or members of the Advisory Committee.

**Mellon Grant Initiatives**

At the winter meeting of the Board of Trustees, many of the Trustees met and heard from chairs and program directors from Lawrence’s interdisciplinary programs. Eilene Hoft-March (French) and Jodi Sedlock (biology) gave presentations on the Gender Studies and Environmental Studies programs respectively at the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee. Interdisciplinarity is receiving a boost through a $100,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded to Mark Burstein; the grant helps fund initiatives prioritized by new presidents at selective liberal arts colleges. The President is focusing these discretionary funds on the development and enhancement of interdisciplinary curricular and research projects at Lawrence. Nineteen proposals representing various combinations of more than twenty different departments have been submitted for review. Awards will be announced this summer.

**Senior Experience**

As the 2013-14 academic year approaches its conclusion, Lawrence seniors are busy making post-graduate plans, but they are also engaged in completing Senior Experience requirements in their major(s). The Mellon Foundation is again to be thanked for providing a grant ($350,000) to Lawrence to support the Senior Experience Program. The funds are distributed as mini-grants to students and departments in support of specific project proposals. Senior Experience Director Bob Williams (education) solicits and reviews proposals. The nature of the Senior Experience requirement differs among the majors at Lawrence, but in many cases it involves a significant independent study project or paper. For example, in the physics program, all seniors undertake an independent study project in the fall term that carries 6-units of credit (the equivalent of one standard course). The project culminates in a

![Diagram](image-url)
significant paper and a 30-minute oral presentation that is part of the Senior Seminar series in physics. Many projects evolve from summer research internships with Lawrence faculty or from off-campus research experiences (e.g., LU-R1 projects). Selected titles of this year's physics projects are: Seeing Through Walls: Controlling Light Transport by Wavefront Shaping using a Digital Micromirror Device (Michael Van de Graaff) and Planetesimal-driven Versus Gas-driven Migration in Circumstellar Disks (Joseph Cullen, see Figure above).

**Interdisciplinary Programs**

At the February meeting the Lawrence faculty approved a proposal to elevate the existing Neuroscience Interdisciplinary Area (IA) to a major and to create a new IA in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E). Neuroscience is a rich field that studies brain development, learning and memory, sensation and perception, neurological and psychological disorders, and the molecules, cells, and genes responsible for nervous system functioning. The major includes courses in biology and psychology and includes chemistry and statistics. Professors Nancy Wall and Judith Humphries in biology and Bruce Hetzler and Lori Hilt in psychology lead this program. The I&E program emerged at Lawrence as an interdisciplinary collaboration among a group of faculty motivated to help students adopt innovative and entrepreneurial abilities and attitudes in whatever field they choose to pursue. The Lawrence definitions of “innovative” and “entrepreneurial” that guide this program are that innovation leads to new ideas, products, or services that create value for society and entrepreneurial refers to taking initiative and creating positive change in the world. Professor Adam Galambos (economics) leads this effort.

**December Term**

A proposal is under discussion by Lawrence faculty to create an official December Term (or “D-term”) program whereby short (two-week) intensive credit-bearing (3 units) courses or experiences would be offered during the winter break. The notion for this proposal arose, in part, from the successful Greyfell Theater project at Björklunden during the winter 2013 break. Greyfell was an I&E project that resulted in the performance of four short student-written plays enhanced with musical interludes. Professors Tim Troy (theatre arts), Adam Galambos (economics) and Gary Vaughan (economics) guided that two-week long experience. The proposal for D-term activities includes off-campus or field experiences as well as on-campus intensive courses that offer unusual academic or performance opportunities. Many of these courses would culminate in a weekend at Björklunden.

Poster for "After Lucia", a film by Mexican director Michel Franco that was screened at the festival.
Latin American and Spanish film festival

For the third year, the Department of Spanish presented a festival of Spanish-language films during the second week of April 2014. Eight films were screened (including *After Lucia*, see Figure above), representing efforts from the countries of Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay, and Spain. Directors of two of the films were present and participated in discussion and Q&A with festival participants.

Choral Program Recognized

Both the Lawrence Concert Choir and the Cantala Women’s Ensemble under the direction of Phillip Swan and Stephen Sieck were invited to perform at the regional conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Des Moines, Iowa (19-20 March). That both Lawrence choirs received invitations is an extraordinary honor and speaks to the strength of the Lawrence choral studies program. At the conference, Lawrence's choirs wowed audiences with their extraordinary diversity of musical styles, flowing freely from Renaissance polyphony to Russian Orthodox motets, from Southeast Asian folksongs to *verismo* opera, from Schubert to newly commissioned works.

New Colleagues

Seven tenure-track faculty searches were conducted this year and all have concluded successfully. We look forward to welcoming the following new colleagues to campus in the fall: Associate Professors Amy Ongiri (film studies) and J. Copeland Woodruff (opera studies) and Assistant Professors Jonathan Lhost (economics), Adam Loy (mathematics), Lavanya Proctor (anthropology), Melissa Range (English), and Keith Pitts (theatre arts)

A New Committee

This is my last communication with the Board of Trustees as Chair of the Faculty Governance Committee. I want to thank Terry Franke and all the members of the Board for the warm and generous spirit with which you have engaged with me and the faculty. From my perspective, collaboration and communication between trustees, faculty and the administration has been enhanced significantly during this important transition year for the institution. The next chair of Governance has yet to be selected, but the committee will be composed of continuing members Gene Biringer (conservatory), Andy Mast (conservatory), Dominica Chang (French, term I only); they will be joined next year by Marcia Bjornerud (geology), Peter Gilbert (library), Nancy Wall (biology), and Garth Bond (English).