February 2014 Faculty Report to the Board of Trustees

After my October experience with the Board of Trustees, I sense that most of what I have to tell you will be discussed at least once in someone else’s report. The fact that the science facility construction is moving forward rapidly and with significant faculty involvement is in (I am sure) at least three other reports. Yet, this is so significant, that I repeat here the enthusiasm with which the faculty are digging into the new design and the logistics of temporarily relocating during construction of a replacement for Maxon Hall. We have also reached the phase where trepidation sets in. There are so many details and so many issues to resolve, and now we have a very definite time frame for developing solutions. Faculty directly involved in the planning for the new space emphasize to me that the more transparent the decision making processes the better. However, recently disclosed decisions by the executive committee on space usage have disregarded faculty input without adequate explanation. All faculty understand that difficult decisions will need to be made along the way, but that there are no chemistry or biology lab faculty on the executive committee for the planning phase deepens concern. The Faculty Executive Committee recommends that one or two natural science faculty be included on the executive committee to bring needed expertise to the group while enhancing communication channels to faculty.

What I will call the “CCE challenge” remains a focus of both faculty and administration as we enter this critical phase of implementing the Pioneer Core. Similarly, recruiting efforts in the humanities has begun to progress beyond the discussion phase and into action.

In newer developments, faculty on the Program Curriculum and Assessment Committee have been wrestling with the concept of “Certificate Programs,” particularly at the graduate level. They have developed a set of criteria for approval of these Certificate Programs to ensure a graduate product worthy of the Carroll name while simultaneously satisfying a need in the community for these sub-specializations.

The Faculty Executive Committee has been working with the offices of Academic Affairs and Institutional Research to modify the staffing report. While the data to be provided in this report is clearly spelled out in governance, the mechanisms for gathering and reporting this data seemed flawed to us in two areas in particular. We have been meeting with JR Brey and Joanne Passaro to determine the most accurate way to report this data and hope the next staffing report will better illustrate the staffing needs on campus. As a “numbers person,” I hope to be making data-driven recommendations using the revised report. Also within the purview of the staffing report, the Faculty Executive Committee continues to support the target of at least 60% tenure density among full-time, non-clinical, faculty. We aren’t there yet, but we remain hopeful. There is a concern that the pace of staff hiring has exceeded the pace of new tenure-track faculty lines by a wide margin. As we try to do more and be more, let us remember that Carroll University has an excellent reputation for the education students earn. Committing to a well-staffed faculty is essential in maintaining that reputation.

Faculty have been hearing reports from Admissions and from Academic Affairs that our traditional methods of predicting student enrollment from application data are becoming less reliable as applications become more electronic. We have been reassured that efforts in Admissions to recruit a
first-year class of ideal size will not result in first-year class of reduced qualifications. Appreciating that Carroll relies on student tuition, faculty have also valued the increased level of preparation recent students have brought to their university experience. We are glad to hear from other constituencies on campus that there will be concerted effort to enroll students of similar quality in the future.

On a related note, faculty have begun the exploration of possible factors in the graduation rates. We are concerned that Carroll University’s four and five year rates are below those of our peer institutions (although we are told that the six year graduation rate is competitive). For many of us, this information was new and surprising. At the request of Joanne Passaro, a group of faculty have begun an analysis of credit requirements by major in hopes of developing a viable plan for students switching majors to graduate in a timely fashion. We have also begun to study a report of graduation rates by programs, with the goal of identifying programs with above-average graduation rates and determining what they are doing that could translate into other programs.

These are just a sample of the issues on which faculty are focusing this year. To date, faculty have devoted much time and energy to addressing these issues in a manner that best serves both the students and the University as a whole.