

**College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning Committee
Subcommittee #4 Report, March 1, 2013**

“Increase the visibility and understanding of the accomplishments of CAS faculty and students through improved internal and external communication and through proactive efforts to enhance faculty and student recognition.”

The question arises as to how the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) can increase the visibility and understanding of the accomplishments of CAS faculty and students through improved internal and external communications and through proactive efforts to enhance faculty and student recognition. The subcommittee studying this issue interviewed and/or received comments from CAS Chairs, Directors of Schools, Programs, Centers, Institutes, and Museums, and CAS staff members on 4 questions:

1. What are the major impediments to the visibility of scholarly, creative, and teaching contributions of our college? How can these be overcome?
2. What are the most important constituencies for a college communication plan to reach, and how do the optimal strategies for reaching these constituencies vary?
3. How do we enhance the opportunities for recognition of our best faculty and staff in a time effective manner? How do we cultivate successful nominations and applications to prestigious external honors and fellowships? How can we determine if the strategies we implement are working?
4. How can faculty and student achievements from all WSU campuses be efficiently recognized both locally (at their home campus) and throughout the college, university, and beyond?

Specific answers and recommendations for each of these questions will be addressed below (and a raw summary of comments will be appended). There are three items that became most prominent and should be addressed from the start. First, staffing levels were a primary concern to every constituency. The general feeling is that in order to increase our visibility efforts we need to hire more staff to be available to assist at both the college and departmental/unit levels, and there needs to be adequate coordination between them. Second, the goal of improving visibility should first involve enhancing communication *within* CAS, perhaps in the form of an internal newsletter or other type of publication so that we might get to know each other's work and then be able to speak with a more coherent voice about all the work the College does. This may also help enhance communication between the departments and the CAS Dean's office. Third, the college's communication staff needs clear priorities and goals to work with in order to best utilize their limited resources. The College's Mission and Vision statements, as presently formulated, are too broad for our current level of staffing to address. Clear guidelines as to what to emphasize at this stage are important.

Question 1: Staffing issues are a prohibitive impediment. Current levels leave individuals overworked. Websites and newsletters, which can also help with recruitment efforts, need more consistent updating. CAS has not been able to fully utilize social media for visibility efforts.

With the new administrative structure of the college there are no clear lines of communication upwards to disseminate information. There is also an apparent lack of desire within the university to disseminate information about the successes of the college. Compounding this is a need to identify the key audiences that the college should focus on reaching.

Solutions suggested to overcome the lack of visibility commonly referenced the need for members of the college to brag better and become better press agents for college/departmental successes. A college-level equivalent of WSU News was suggested as well as more user-friendly ways of updating departmental/unit websites. Additionally, the college should consider ramping up its use of social media.

With respect to communications in the form of a college-level newsletter, it is also important for the college not to waste communications resources. For instance, daily emails often have little impact due to their frequency. High volumes of email mean that much is often deleted, not read, or considered “noise.” Fewer and more impactful communications are desirable.

Regarding websites, departments are currently forced to hire support staff in hopes of creating websites that are informative and helpful. Results are spotty. Given the importance of websites for student recruitment, providing a centralized resource for web development would greatly benefit departments. Units that feel they are successfully promoting themselves attribute it to their financial and staff investment in this endeavor.

Question 2: This question received less input, but a couple of themes emerged. The need to specify and prioritize which constituency should be targeted first was discussed as an overall concern. Targeting the internal audience (within CAS) first would help with morale building within the college. At the same time, we could work toward making the college culture amenable to reaching out to external constituencies via improved internal communications.

Question 3: The consensus with respect to this question is that departments/college should form committees to nominate people for awards because either chairs do not have enough time or staffing to adequately do so, and people generally do not want to nominate themselves. In some instances, people do not realize that it is in their best interest to nominate others. Internal awards are good, but the process should try to become less onerous on the nominee. Similarly for external awards, we should aim to provide some sort of support for the nominees in assembling packages.

Question 4: The general point on this question is to ensure highlighting of faculty and student accomplishments on all campuses on department and college-level websites. Similarly, faculty from Tri-Cities and Vancouver should be included in nominations for college and university awards. Overall, a committee whose sole

responsibility is to seek out awards and find suitable faculty and students to nominate is desirable.

Raw Comments

1. What are the major impediments to the visibility of scholarly, creative, and teaching contributions of our college? How can these be overcome?

Impediments (representative comments)

Staffing:

- staffing issues are prohibitive—chairs don't have the staffing they need
- in terms of faculty accomplishments, departments don't have the staffing to do this
- chairs are overwhelmed, over-worked, and they were already stressed
- understaffing is the main issue here (branch campuses compound this issue)
- websites and newsletters, which also help with recruitment—but need someone to help maintain websites, etc. (or a few website people at the college-level)
- issues of resources and who will update websites or monitor Facebook, etc.
- more has to be done, but the question is who is going to be responsible for doing it
- the College only has two communications people—we need more resources here
- loss of web coordinator at the college-level in December 2012

Routing, Tracking, and Communication:

- chair collects good news items every Friday, but there isn't a way to channel these upward (reduce duplicative efforts)
- the college communications people could try to survey departments every week, collect, and amass materials
- departments don't feel they've had good success with communication vis-à-vis the college
- need to capitalize on stories a little better—a central depository
- failure outside the college to do the college justice—larger communications outside the college is relevant here (what they publicize isn't attentive to us)
- even major successes within the college get very little attention outside the college in terms of promotion and successes
- WSU Homepage needs to represent the university
- fragmented efforts at the College-level; need for goals and priorities
- need to clarify audience (central?, external constituencies?)
- need to clarify message being sent
- recent formulation of a CAS Mission and Vision statement too broad to implement
- university needs a way of tracking graduates—the university doesn't have an effective way of conveying to us where graduates are, etc. in terms of jobs they have and what their successes are

Ideas and Suggestions

- a college-level newsletter (a college-level equivalent of the WSU News)
- generally ramp up publicity
- utilize newer technologies—Twitter, etc.
- could stand to have a room where on-line visibility can happen (Skype)
- highlight multiple spaces
- we need to learn to brag better and need to be press agents
- more user-friendly ways for departments to update their webpages
- give a survey to faculty asking what would be most useful to them

2. What are the most important constituencies for a college communication plan to reach, and how do the optimal strategies for reaching these constituencies vary?

Internal

- Need more knowledge about what other units are doing—improving morale and facilitating collaboration as main tasks
- Use what others have done as a morale-building device in departments

External

- we need a college culture around reaching out to external constituencies, etc., but not everyone is well-suited for it

3. How do we enhance the opportunities for recognition of our best faculty and staff in a time effective manner? How do we cultivate successful nominations/applications to prestigious external honors and fellowships? How can we determine if the strategies we implement are working?

- it takes energy to tell people what we're doing
- either the chair needs to nominate people or you need a committee (chair is too busy and doesn't have enough staffing)
- a lot of the internal awards are good, but make the process less onerous than at present
- people often don't want to nominate themselves; form a committee and the committee drums up support—could be done at the college-level—what are the external awards?, identify people and then drum up materials and support
- issues of nominating folks for recognition—need to convince colleagues that it is to their benefit to nominate colleagues and support the recognition of colleagues

4. How can faculty and student achievements from all WSU campuses be efficiently recognized both locally (at their home campus) and throughout the college, university, and beyond?