



**President Cheryl B. Schrader**

**Faculty Senate**

**Monday, September 11, 2017**

**2:30 p.m., E156 Student Union**

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- Good afternoon, everyone! I'm pleased to have this opportunity to participate in my first Wright State University Faculty Senate meeting.
  - Before I begin, I'd like to thank all of you for the warm welcome you have given me and my family over the last few months. We definitely feel a part of the Wright State family!
  - There is no doubt that I came to Wright State during a time of incredible challenge and immense opportunity. When I accepted the honor to serve as your president, I knew there would be difficult times ahead. But I am convinced that by working together we can overcome every obstacle.
  - This will not be easy, however. And it is not an exaggeration to say that what happens over the next two years will determine the course of this university for decades.
  - I am invested in getting to know this institution, and to understanding the people and culture of this region. Much of my time is spent meeting and visiting face-to-face with groups and individuals both internal and external to the university.
  - Every day I learn more about how integral Wright State is to Raider Country, to the state of Ohio, and beyond. Every day I learn more about you—the extraordinary people of Wright

State. And every day convinces me of the potential this university has to be the institution Ohio needs it to be.

- The more I work with you, our prestigious faculty, the more I am convinced of and celebrate all that is right here at Wright State.
  - Your commitment to student success is unwavering.
  - Your innovation in the classroom and the laboratory is truly remarkable.
  - Your creative activities and research are diverse and collaborative, and of global importance with regional application.
  - And your stunning work in transforming not only our students but also the communities in which they serve speaks volumes.
  
- The focus in my first year is three-fold: financial sustainability, administrative transparency, and campus conversation.
  
- I have begun assembling a strong leadership team and making necessary changes in structure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
  
- Today marks the day we welcome Walt Branson as the new Chief Business Officer, who will help bring a customer focus and improved services shared across campus. His unquestioned acumen and integrity are a great addition to Wright State. Please join me in making Walt feel welcome!
  
- Walt and I will work together with the campus community to place this institution in as strong a financial position possible by the end of this fiscal year. Great progress has already been made, due in large part to difficult decisions made and implemented over the past six months across the university.

- As you know, we ended FY17 with \$10 million more added to our reserves than initially expected. And we have an FY18 budget that must be strictly adhered to in order to return at least another \$6 million to reserves. This will require continued fortitude without overspending.
- I continue to work with communications professionals to deploy an internal communication strategy that helps inform and engage stakeholders and increases meaningful dialog as we enter this period of necessary change. Different communication strategies create myriad ways to keep up to date on happenings and to encourage input and counsel.
- For example, soon you will be invited to our first “Let’s Talk” forum on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:30am in the Apollo Room. This initial offering will explore the Wright State Research Institute and the Wright State Applied Research Corporation through a panel of experts who will engage in dialog with interested attendees.
- The “Let’s Talk” series is a presidential initiative for all members of the Wright State community aimed at discussing a singular issue or theme in an open forum format. The goal of the series is to create a safe space for open, informed discussion around a campus issue while providing Wright State's campus community with accurate information and perspective. More detailed information is available on the president’s office website, where you can also suggest topics for future discussion.
- I am committed to developing strong relationships with the faculty who form the very heart of this institution. Many of you know that I have invested a great deal of time in campus conversation with faculty, beginning during the search process and continuing today.

- As Faculty Senate is the representative and recognized governance body for faculty, I have worked closely with faculty senate officers and especially Carol Loranger and Travis Doom. I have consulted with them and other faculty leaders on important changes put into motion even before my arrival on campus. And I continue to work to keep communications open and engage faculty in our important work.
- Just last week, for example, I met with Travis and others to tap into faculty expertise in shaping and leading a comprehensive strategic planning process which will begin this semester and continue well into next year. Planning is underway to develop a steering committee that will guide us through this process for a sustained time period, and give voice to what resonates deep within.
- The creation and implementation of a shared strategic plan involving thousands of stakeholders will provide a vision and focus moving forward that directly links resources to our values and strategic priorities.
- In March I spent a very busy week here. Most appropriately, my first meeting was with the incoming and outgoing Faculty Senate executive committees. I listened intently, responded to initial faculty concerns, implemented changes and invited a more comprehensive set of suggestions for consideration.
- In my first week as president I met with Travis to discuss ideas of how faculty and administrators might work more closely together in the coming months and years. We have chatted several times since then on specific as well as general issues, and I purposely delayed some decisions until the academic year began so as to consult more broadly with faculty.

- And many of you may know that I spent a good deal of time in July and August meeting with each of the 33 academic department chairs and many faculty as well, learning about opportunities and strengths and seeing firsthand some of the amazing contributions in teaching, research and scholarly activity, economic development and community engagement. This was one of the best investments I could have made!
- I also spent a day at the Lake Campus in August, and had opportunity to meet with faculty in groups and individually there.
- I will continue with meetings with the deans and colleges during the fall semester, and will continue to meet directly with faculty as well.
- From the moment I first set foot on this campus, you have been open and honest with me. I appreciate your candor, ideas, eagerness and willingness to create a new path forward. You can expect the same from me.
- You have demonstrated to me that you want what is best for the future of Wright State University and for our students.
- And so now, we will forge a new path together as we begin creating a bold, comprehensive strategic plan that will guide Wright State into its next 50 years.
- Beginning with the search process and in many venues since, I asked you to share with me your vision for Wright State.
- You might remember me asking you to consider this question:

*Imagine that it is 10 years from now and Wright State University has met its most important goals. What does the university look like and how is it different from today?*

- When you answered me, several themes quickly emerged around the university's financial health, academic programs, campus life, and morale.
- Ten years from now, you hope Wright State will be financially healthy. You envision a university with sound business practices, accountability measures, and a transparent budgeting process.
- In a decade, you hope our academic programs are even more robust. You see our colleges, departments, and programs collaborating across campus, disciplines, organizations, and traditional boundaries. You envision that in 10 years our Lake Campus has grown into an even larger powerhouse.
- Your vision for Wright State includes enhancing and expanding campus life, making Wright State the university of choice for students. You want to enrich residential experiences for students, provide better recreational and dining facilities, and create more opportunities for fun on campus.
- Over the next 10 years, you also hope our students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel a reinvigorated sense of pride in our university. You recognize that our people are our biggest asset and you want to make Wright State a happier place to live, learn, and work.
- I share your vision for Wright State. Together, we will make this vision a reality.

- The financial challenges of the last few years have been a stark wake-up call that business as usual is not an option. We can't go back to the way we have always done things. There needs to be a change that enables the best characteristics of this institution to flourish.
- I know that change can bring anxiety, and that change is not always welcomed with open arms. But I encourage you to think of this requisite change as an investment—an investment in our future that will make us leaner and stronger. That will bring us to a place where we can invest in our priorities to achieve the vision we set together.
- Many challenges face higher education today. Among them are:
  - Keeping tuition affordable while maintaining and improving quality
  - Ensuring we meet the needs of a changing student body
  - Finding resources to grow while determining what we will no longer do
  - And increasing public trust and support for our institution
- If Wright State is to succeed and thrive in the 21st century, we must be able to rise above those challenges.
- I have no doubt that—if we all work together—we can overcome any challenges that come our way.
- Wright State forms the very fabric of our region. As goes Wright State, so goes the region.
- We need to be strong—for our students, for our region, and for each other.

- I look forward to collaborating with all of you on a strategic plan that will utilize your talents and extraordinary capabilities to make the dreams of our Wright State family come true.
- And, as we begin our strategic planning process this fall, I hope you will never lose sight of one thing: Excellence abounds at Wright State and you are all part of that excellence.
- To that end, I would like to issue a personal invitation to the University Convocation and Awards Ceremony this Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00p in the Student Union Apollo Rm. Join us for faculty and staff excellence awards brought together for the first time along with the State of the University Address. A dessert reception will follow.
- Please keep sharing your hopes and dreams for our university. Your interest, input and engagement are vital to our success.
- I look forward to working with you to boldly lead Wright State University into its next 50 years!