

## Knowles Notes

January 31, 2020

At Tuesday's Provost's Council meeting, the council discussed the following items:

1. Lofton "Lofty" Durham, Associate Professor of Theatre History, presented the council with a Funding Equity and Justice Training at WMU proposal. Lofty spoke passionately about his own journey to recognize that racism and oppression exist; he understands that, in order to make our campus as diverse and equitable as we want it to be, we need to think proactively. It is his recommendation that training be easily accessible but completely optional to be most effective.
  - a. His ask was for a \$3,000 investment to get the initiative started; the investment will allow 60 university employees to be trained on eliminating structural racism.
    - i. The Provost's Office agreed to provide the funding in support of Lofty's work.
  - b. The College of Fine Arts has connected with a local organization with a similar mission, ERACCE. If you have an interest in learning more, visit <http://www.eracce.org/> or contact Lofty Durham.
  - c. Although this work is similar to other initiatives on campus (through Faculty Development, Diversity and Inclusion, and Institutional Equity), Lofty has communicated with the heads of those units to minimize the potential for overlap. He will continue to keep those lines open, but the council also recognizes that improving the university's culture is not a single unit's responsibility.
2. Academic Affairs budget protocol rankings were deliberated. Each unit submitted individual funding priorities for the council to consider and rank. The ranking will be submitted on behalf of Academic Affairs for the Cabinet to ultimately render financial decisions for the upcoming budget year.
  - a. Discussions included the importance of prioritizing funding request submissions that had the broadest reach (beyond an individual college or unit).
  - b. All members of the council expressed their support of "completion and financial aid optimization" as the top priority for AA to take to the Cabinet for funding consideration.
  - c. Other high priority items included: OIT's request for splunk software, which would provide real-time data security for the entire university; a multi-college request for finding temporary "homes" for renovations refugees displaced as a result of the Dunbar building improvements project; and the University Libraries' request for expanding some key acquisitions.

In other news, Provost Bott had an opportunity to participate in the following events and discussions:

1. A lunch with MAC Academic Leadership Development Program Fellows. An engaging conversation about leadership in higher education and encouraging a culture for change at WMU took place, and the fellows shared their collective findings on culture change (conclusions will be shared in November at a MAC retreat).
2. Similarly, the Academic Leadership Academy (ALA) invited the Provost to join them for one of their regular lunch meetings to discuss her career path and professional leadership experience. The ALA allows an opportunity for faculty and professional staff members to develop leadership skills through networking and practical application discussions. Learn more at <https://wmich.edu/facultydevelopment/programs/leadership>.

3. The Faculty Senate executive board met on Friday morning; both the Provost and Maria Gigante, faculty development fellow, attended as guests. Provost Bott provided comments, including a coordinated discussion on Writing in the Disciplines as it relates to WMU Essential Studies. Details can be accessed via the [meeting minutes](#), available on the Faculty Senate website.