Ah, summertime, and the living is…filled with meetings!

Spring commencement ceremonies went smoothly, as some of you whose flights were cancelled well know. The campus is considerably quieter and greener than when you were last here in late April. Behind the scenes, however, faculty work continues. Many faculty (myself included) use this time for extended research projects. Others teach summer courses, or engage in off-campus learning such as Engineers Without Borders or Innovative Month classes.

Here on campus, faculty and staff are working on current initiatives and continuing preparation for the 2015 reaccreditation visit. A number of faculty groups including Senate Executive Committee, Department Chairs, QI Taskforce, and the Course Credit Taskforce (aka the 3/4 Credit Taskforce) have been putting in time working with administration to make positive steps toward our goals.

Recent activities include:

• Visit from curriculum consultant David Maddox. Dr. Maddox met with various faculty constituencies to discuss the parameters of his curriculum analysis. The purpose of the audit is multifold, but a primary objective is to help administration (provost, deans and department chairs) estimate staffing requirements. Currently Fort Lewis College has ≈120 tenured/tenure-track faculty, and offers 74 distinct degree major options. At 1.6 faculty per major option, it comes as no surprise adjunct requests continue to rise.

• Selection of finalists from responses to the Degree Audit, Planning, and Tracking Technology RFP issued by the QI Taskforce in March 2013. Vendors Ellucian and CollegeSource will present their services and software in late May. The new technology is designed to streamline and clarify advising, ultimately aiding in student success.

• Assessment Workshops. Assessment Director Lisa Snyder held two assessment workshops in May, with more to come in August and September. Typically the word “assessment” causes faculty to run screaming from the room, but feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The workshops help faculty design program assessment plans by first defining student achievement goals, then writing measurable learning outcomes. The key words here are “defining” and “measurable.” Accreditors will be seeking meaningful assessment data that is in alignment with program outcomes and the broader mission of the college.

More activities for the summer are planned, including a three-day QI Taskforce retreat, ongoing work by the Course Credit Taskforce and Curriculum Committee, and Senate Executive Committee meetings to determine Senate membership metrics in response to school reorganization. Each step brings us closer to the achieving goals of the Strategic Plan, the Performance Contract, the QI Initiative and all of our reaccreditation efforts. I look forward to updating you on our progress at the next Board meeting.

Respectfully,
Amy K. Wendland
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Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees