

Faculty Senate Report
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 25, 2024

Faculty Senate has had two meetings since the start of the 2024-25 school year. At our August 27 meeting, Interim President Matt Schroeder presented his vision for the University of Toledo and answered questions submitted by faculty and staff. Although the conversation was wide-ranging, here are the major takeaways:

1. Faculty are generally receptive to the Interim President's vision of the University as a regional powerhouse with new student recruitment focused on the radius where we have traditionally recruited well.
2. Faculty are generally receptive to administrative cost reductions if they do not degrade the services we provide to faculty, staff, new and continuing students, or impede our ability to enroll new students and retain current students.
3. Faculty strongly believe declining enrollment is a crisis for the University. It is not enough to "right-size" the University. Other, similar, universities are growing enrollment while our enrollment is declining. Leadership in our enrollment enterprise is lacking and it is not clear that we are implementing the strategies offered by consultants, such as the Art and Science Group. Faculty are interested in helping to recruit students to the University but need help organizing those efforts.
4. Faculty question the wisdom of searching for a permanent provost while we have an interim president. This may lead to further administrative turnover in the near future if the next permanent president does not prefer the provost hired this year. Also, because the provost office is expanding to include more areas in Academic Affairs and changing to a new advising system, it is not yet clear what areas of expertise are needed in our next provost.

At our September 10 meeting, Interim Provost Scott Molitor presented the new, much expanded, provost office organization chart (in draft form) and discussed the planned change from decentralized/distributed advising to centralized advising. Most of the meeting was focused on discussing the data driving the centralized advising push. Here are the major takeaways:

1. Faculty are concerned that the provost office is being given too much responsibility without having an appropriate increase in resources and staffing to successfully serve students, faculty and staff in the division of Academic Affairs.
2. Faculty are skeptical of the data being used to justify the change to centralized advising. While it is clear that we need to continue to improve our retention and graduation rates, we were not presented with any data that convincingly showed centralized advising will achieve these goals.
3. There has been no discussion of how to achieve improved student retention and graduation rates by means other than centralized advising.

4. It is not clear that students have been involved in the discussion about centralized advising.

5. Although Interim Provost Molitor assured Faculty Senate that centralized advising will not be used to cut the number professional advising staff at the University, this continues to be a concern raised by faculty and staff.

We appreciate the willingness of Interim President Schroeder and Interim Provost Molitor to engage Faculty Senate in their planning for the future of the University. On October 2, Interim Provost Molitor will present his plan for academic program prioritization to Faculty Senate. We are hopeful that this year's prioritization process does not distract us from the important work of recruiting new students and retaining and graduating continuing students.

Submitted on behalf of Faculty Senate

Jerry Van Hoy
Faculty Senate President