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## From the President, 2016-02

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## Dr. Bardo's February 2016 Newsletter



"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work ..."

-- **Attributed to Daniel Burnham, American architect**

Some long-term faculty, staff and supporters -- people I respect and like -- have told me this is an unsettling time at WSU. They're uncomfortable with the perceived risks of building the Innovation Campus, deepening our relationship with WATC, tying our future to enrollment growth and raising, once again, the knotty question of football.

Strategic initiatives are tied to increasing enrollment and/or placing applied learning and economic growth at the center of what we contribute to Kansas.

We're doing all of this against a background of state budget shortfalls and a growing reluctance to fund higher education.

Why do we persist? Wouldn't it be more prudent to retreat to a defensive posture; to protect what we already have?

I believe inaction is the opposite of prudence. It's reckless. The time to move to higher ground is before the flood reaches your doorstep.

Every option we are pursuing is meant to leave WSU and our region stronger than they are today, more capable of thriving in an age when higher education, business and society are being transformed by technological and political change.

I've addressed Innovation Campus and enrollment issues several times the past few years and will again in coming months. Last week I communicated with you about WATC (<http://bit.ly/1V0YXe0>). So I'll close with some thoughts about why we're looking at athletics this year.

It has to do with growing enrollment and improving the quality of life on campus and in the region.

I announced at the end of fall semester that we would undertake a comprehensive review focused on the strategic role of athletics in positioning the university and greater Wichita for the future.

Although this review will include all of our involvement in intercollegiate athletics, there are two key issues that have made news: conference membership and the possibility of bringing back football. Both of these have significant implications.

WSU has been a member of the Missouri Valley Conference since 1945. This is a well-run conference composed of academically strong institutions. With only two exceptions, however, these institutions are not of the same type and location as WSU. Only Illinois State is classified as a "high research" university of about the same type as WSU, and only Southern Illinois is nationally classified as more complex with regard to its emphasis on research.



### **WSU Football Frenzy**

What the President's office intended as a routine tweet on Feb. 3 turned into an amazing and unusually huge response from social media, reporters, the Wichita community and beyond.

- The initial tweet was a picture of a Wichita State football helmet and the message, "So this arrived. #GoShox." So far, that tweet has received 2,200 retweets and likes. You usually have to be a Kardashian to get that kind of attention.
- A follow-up tweet showing a mockup of band uniforms was also met with interest: about 360 retweets and 440 likes.
- And on Facebook, our two posts got a lot of attention, reaching more than 6,200 people combined. I think it's safe to say that people are excited for the possibilities at Wichita State.

Therefore, WSU's relationships with other member institutions are athletic and not more broadly based. There are other conferences where the universities are more closely aligned in mission with WSU. That is why we are exploring possibilities. In the end the MVC may remain our athletic home, but strategically we need to understand what is possible.

The second issue is football. There are two levels of football at which WSU might compete. The highest is the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and the second is the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS). FBS football is much more costly than FCS. FCS has fewer scholarships (63 versus 85), and all other expenses are lower. The Missouri Valley Football Conference plays at the FCS level, while other surrounding conferences are FBS level.

Either level of football can help the university recruit students, provide on-campus experiences that promote the student's connections to the university community, and give alumni reasons to return to campus. Football at either level also gives the university weekend activities and events that create a sense of life on the campus during the critical early fall period when students are making decisions about where to go to college and at a time when freshmen make critical decisions regarding whether they are going to continue at the university.

A good FBS program can go further and have substantial impact on the community. Just look at the pride and excitement that has been generated by WSU basketball. FBS football can create a similar sense of place and provide quality activities so important to economic development. The costs associated with this level of play are substantial, but the benefits can be just as substantial for the whole Wichita community.

Shocker athletics is an important asset to the university and the community. This review is designed to assure that it continues to support development of the university and the greater Wichita community.

We have hired highly knowledgeable advisers to help us study these issues. We won't move forward on a conference change or football without substantial evidence of student, community and alumni financial support.

I welcome your thoughts and questions on these or other major issues. Send them to [president@wichita.edu](mailto:president@wichita.edu).

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## **A message from the assistant to the president for diversity**

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Greetings. I hope your semester is off to a great and diverse start.

My commitment regarding diversity can be accomplished through the support of allies who are committed to fostering diversity. The way to build a solid network of allies is to build trust. In my opinion, people in the majority who commit to being allies for diversity can be far more effective in resolving issues of insensitivity to other cultures and, when allies help, the burden doesn't fall solely on those in the minority.

The purpose of goal No. 6 of the WSU Strategic Plan is to ensure that the composition of the faculty, staff and students at Wichita State University mirrors the variety of the types of people

found in society, especially race and gender. We want to be a campus that reflects — in staff, faculty and students — the evolving diversity of society. Wichita State cannot fulfill its mission without executing this goal, and we need your help as a campus. We learn by being in a diverse setting and environment. Diversity is imperative for the growth of the university.

There are many exciting diversity events upcoming. President John Bardo's follow-up Diversity Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19, in the RSC's Gridley Room (301). Please bring questions or concerns to be addressed by the president. I hope to see you there.

I would also like to congratulate the first members of the President's Diversity Council, named in February. The 25 members are listed at <http://bit.ly/1S17FLc>. The council is a group of faculty and staff that will meet regularly to engage with President Bardo regarding current events, issues and campus updates. These meetings will provide faculty and staff direct contact with President Bardo for an opportunity to ask questions, address concerns and advise the president on diversity. Go to <http://bit.ly/1ULvpB1> for more information.



— Marché Fleming-Randle, Ph.D.  
assistant to the president for diversity  
Wichita State University

**“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.”**

-- Author Unknown

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## **Ana Shocker You Should Know: Ana Lazarin**

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In her nearly 8 years at Wichita State, Ana Lazarin has done a lot to encourage diversity and empower underrepresented students.

Until recently, Ana was director of Programs to Broaden Participation in Engineering. In her role, she focused on recruitment, outreach and retention of underrepresented students in engineering, managing such programs as Engineering Summer Camp, Changing Faces Program, Bridge for Engineering and Engineering Technology Students.



The importance of Ana's work did not go unnoticed. In 2013, she was chosen for the inaugural \$10,000 Global Engineering Dean's Council Airbus Diversity Award.

"I was humbled and honored to have been chosen for the award," Lazarin says. "The programs that I developed or participated in had a great impact in the award selection."

This past August, Ana transitioned into a new role as part-time engineering educator, teaching Engineering 101 and Service Learning in Engineering. She made the move so she could spend more time with her 2-year-old daughter.

This different position allows her to continue with her goal of increasing retention of engineering students and underrepresented students.

Ana herself is a product of diversity in education. When she first came here from Mexico, she was a scared 13-year-old who didn't speak English. She says she overcame a number of obstacles to finish college and continue to succeed.

"I was a first generation and underrepresented student in engineering, so I am very familiar with the obstacles that underrepresented students need to overcome," Ana says. "This helped me a great deal to better serve our current and prospective students through outreach, recruitment and retention programs."

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## What I'm Reading- Achieving an advanced economy that works for all

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There's a useful report from Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program about the uneven economic recovery.

I'm especially interested in the ways WSU can contribute to creating what Brookings describes as an "advanced economy that works for all." Components include:

- Increase the share of their economies in innovation-intensive advanced industries.
- Engage in the global marketplace to maximize productive trade and investment.
- Increase the number of good jobs in their labor markets and the number of workers with the requisite skills to access them.
- Narrow gaps in access to opportunity by place, race and income within metro areas.

Read the report here: <http://brook.gs/1Wb9AV2>

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## About this Newsletter

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### OUR MISSION

The mission of Wichita State University is to be an essential educational, cultural and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good. The President's Message is a monthly newsletter that highlights the university's progress toward fulfilling that mission.

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### CONTACT US

We would like to hear from you. Please send your comments and suggestions for future newsletters to [lou.heldman@wichita.edu](mailto:lou.heldman@wichita.edu)

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### PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE TEAM

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