A Foundation for Improvement

During the first several months of this academic year, the Retention Task Force (RTF) diligently pursued an ambitious mandate to devise a tactical student retention plan for the college. Our process included several overlapping and iterative phases of discovery and ideation, which were managed by four different working groups. Even with an arguably aggressive project schedule, these teams made significant gains in understanding first-year students and their likelihood for success at Calvin, reviewed the current retention efforts employed at the college, and studied contemporary best practices. While fully acknowledging that there will always be more to learn and understand about student persistence at Calvin, the RTF confidently completed its work on January 31 with a set of recommendations that it believes will strategically bolster student success efforts and better position the college to achieve its established goals for retention and graduation.

The current draft of the retention plan, titled **A Foundation for Improvement**, is available to Calvin faculty and staff via a shared OneNote notebook (Sharepoint), organized in five sections:

- **Introduction**: Explanation of the context, format, and organization of the plan
- **Team Reports**: A summary of activity from each project team leader
- **Initiatives and Strategies**: A comprehensive list of vetted strategies within a framework of seven initiatives (expand the left sidebar to see all the content)
- **Year 1 (FY16–17)**: A prioritized selection of strategies to be employed during the next year
- **Appendixes**: A supplemental index of relevant materials, which are referenced throughout the plan

When reviewing the proposed plan, please understand that, given the limitations of the relatively short project timeline, many of the items listed are still very much in draft form and will need refinement and feasibility assessment. In other words, this plan is intended to serve as a dynamic roadmap for student success and will require adjustment as we more carefully determine how each strategy fits within broader institutional priorities. Continuing our momentum in this important work also will require further collaboration, so please let us know if you are interested in joining the team as we move to the implementation phase of this project.

**Todd Dornbos, director of retention, on behalf of the Retention Task Force:**

*Christina Edmondson, Lauren Jensen, Tom Steenwyk, John Walcott, and Paul Witte*

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Committee Elections: COG and PPC

The Committee on Governance announces the following new committee members, elected to four-year terms beginning September 1, 2016, by a majority of votes cast:

- PPC, SSCD faculty: Christina Van Dyke (Philosophy)
- PPC, staff: Michael Wildschut (Event Services)
- COG, at-large faculty: Larry Louters (Chemistry and Biochemistry)
From the Faculty Activity Reports


Be sure to fill out your Faculty Activity Reports regularly, and don’t forget to indicate FEN-related activities. If you have questions regarding the process, see the FAQ page.

Coming Up on Campus

Monday, March 21
- Chapel. Holy Week: “God So Loved the World ... A World Divided by Racism.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel

Tuesday, March 22
- Chapel. Holy Week: “God So Loved the World ... A World Stricken by Disease.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Town Hall with President Le Roy. 6:30 p.m., Commons Cave

Wednesday, March 23
- Chapel. Holy Week: “For God So Loved the World ... A World Filled with Violence.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Henry Institute lecture. Rebecca Samuel Shah. “Christianity among the Marginalized: Empowering Poor Women in India.” 3:30 p.m., Prince Conference Center Willow Room

Thursday, March 24
- Chapel. Holy Week: “God So Loved the World ... A World Burdened by Poverty.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Henry Institute lecture. Luis Avila and Douglas Koopman (Political Science), “Upcoming Challenges for the next President: Immigration.” 3:30 p.m., DeVos Communications Center lobby
- Chemistry seminar. Presentations from Herb Fynewever (Chemistry) and Kylee Rosette. 11:30 a.m., SB 010

Friday, March 25
- Good Friday; campus closed