Purpose of Submittal:

An opportunity for the Board of Trustees to meet and connect with academic leadership of the university, and a discussion of Academic Affairs priorities by the Provost and Executive Vice President.

Background:

With an influx of new leaders, Academic Affairs looks a little different this year. Three new Academic Deans join along with three internal deans who have been appointed to fixed two-year appointments. Each new academic leader will spend a few minutes outlining their journey to Western Washington University and sharing a little about what brought them to the WWU community and their new roles.

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President will share his priorities for the Academic Affairs division for the 2023 –2024 Academic Year. These include a framework built from three essential contexts, with the intent of building a pathway to changing important internal processes such as scheduling, and ultimately, aligning programmatic resources to a stable equilibrium throughput.

Strategic Questions:

1. How best can Board of Trustees members partner with academic leaders?

2. Working within a constrained budget issue, what will Academic Affairs leadership be focused on doing to enhance education at WWU?

3. How do Academic Affairs priorities align with university priorities?

4. What challenges will academic affairs be facing this year, and how will leadership be approaching them?
Introductions of New Deans

Dr. Christopher Bianco, Dean of the College of Fine and Preforming Arts

Dr. Christopher Bianco serves as the Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts at Western Washington University. Dr. Bianco, who previously served as Chair of the WWU Department of Music and Director of Bands has taught at the WWU since 2006; he came to Bellingham from a faculty position at Baylor University in Waco, Texas and earned his doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin in 2004. He has held positions at Libertyville High School in Libertyville, Illinois, Boise High School in Boise, Idaho, St. Francis High School in St. Francis Minnesota and Baylor University in Waco Texas.

He received a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. While in the Chicago area, Dr. Bianco maintained an active trumpet studio as well as holding the position of Artistic Director and Conductor of the Wilmette Community Band.

He completed his formal training at The University of Texas at Austin as a student of Jerry Junkin where he served as a teaching assistant for the conducting program, UT Wind Ensemble, Chamber Winds and Longhorn Band. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Wind Conducting in December of 2004.

In addition to his work with Jerry Junkin, Dr. Bianco has studied, conducting with John Paynter, Kevin Sedatole and Steve Bolstad. His trumpet teachers have included Vincent Cichowicz, Ray Sasaki, Steve Bolstad, David Coleman and Vince DiMartino.

Dr. Bianco has served as President of the Northwest Region of the College Band Director's National Association, President of the San Juan Music Educators Association, Executive Board for the Washington Music Educators Association, an organization that awarded him WA Higher Education Educator of the Year in 2015. He served a three year term on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Schools of Music, and is a member of the International Council of Fine Arts Deans.

He lives in Ferndale WA, with his wife and partner Laurie and their daughters Elena and Sophia.

John Danneker, Dean of Western Libraries

Following a nationwide search, John Danneker was hired as the Dean of Western Libraries in spring 2023, starting officially on August 21, 2023. Danneker came to Western from the University of Washington in Seattle, where he was serving as the director of Learning Services and the Odegaard Undergraduate Library for UW Libraries. He held a concurrent role as a Strategic Projects Librarian for the Research and Learning Services division, which spans most user services ranging from teaching, scholarship support, and access to collections and spaces. He joined the UW in 2014.
Professionally, John is particularly interested in how we translate the concept of belonging into our learning environments and incorporating sustainability into these efforts. He regularly writes about and presents on collaborations and partnerships in academic libraries and their roles toward holistic student success, and he is active in several regional and national libraries organizations. He is interested in furthering the Western Libraries’ reach in supporting students’ exploration of their roles in our information ecosystem throughout their lives, particularly around current topics of mis- and disinformation, information ethics, and digital privacy.

Danneker earned his bachelor’s degree in Music History at Bucknell University, a master’s degree in Musicology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and a master’s degree in Library and Information Science from The Catholic University of America. Before joining the staff at the UW, Danneker held a series of positions at The George Washington University, including director of the Eckles Memorial Library.

**Dr. Deanna Kennedy, Dean of the College of Business and Economics**

Following a nationwide search, Dr. Deanna Kennedy started on September 18, 2023 as Western’s Dean of the College of Business and Economics. Kennedy comes to Western from the University of Washington at Bothell, where she was the Associate Dean for Academics in the School of Business. Kennedy earned her bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences from the University of California at Davis, her MBA in Operations and Supply Chain Management from Golden Gate University, and a doctorate in Management Science from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Before joining the faculty at UW Bothell, she held a visiting professorship at Texas A&M University.

Her research spans across fields where she has over 30 publications including refereed papers, book chapters and books. She studies the operations, communication, and processes of project teams. Recently her research team introduced the new framework of mental model shifts to explain how teams work at being on the same page. Her work has been funded by NASA and the Army Research Office and she is an Associate Editor focused on team-based approaches and research at the *Group and Organization Management Journal*. She is also an avid speaker and writer about the need for Native American and Indigenous business research and teaching that advances diversity and culturally based values in business strategies. Such work supports the training of a global mindset for all students, and particularly addresses approaches of Native entrepreneurs and business leaders in driving the future of Native economic development. She is a founding member of the *Indigenous Business and Public Administration Journal*, a lecturer in the Renewing Native and Indigenous Economies at the Hoover Institution and serves as co-chair of the taskforce for increasing the pipeline of black and indigenous talent as part of the state working group of Washington Business School’s for Racial Equity.
Dr. Janelle Leger, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering

Dr. Janelle Leger was appointed as Dean of the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) at Western Washington University in Fall 2023, after serving in that role in an interim capacity during the 2022/23 academic year. Dr. Leger joined Western as an assistant professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy and the Department of Chemistry in 2008, and was promoted to full professor in 2016. She served as Director of the Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Center (AMSEC) from 2017 to 2019, and as Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy from 2019 to 2022.

Dr. Leger holds a Ph.D. in physics from the University of California, Santa Cruz and a B.S. in physics from University of California, Davis. Prior to coming to Western, she was a postdoctoral research associate and National Science Foundation Discovery Corps Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Washington’s Department of Chemistry.

Dr. Leger’s research explores organic and hybrid materials for electronic and optoelectronic devices such as diodes, transistors and solar cells, as well as structures for subwavelength optics. She was awarded the NSF CAREER award in 2011, and has mentored over 50 students in interdisciplinary research projects since joining WWU in 2008. She was awarded Western’s Paul J. Olscamp Research Award in 2017, and the Alumni Association’s Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award in 2016. In 2015, she was named a Cottrell Scholar by the Research Corporation for Science Advancement.

Dr. Kevin Roxas, Dean of Woodring College of Education

Dr. Kevin Roxas serves as the Dean of the Woodring College of Education. Since 2014, Dr. Roxas has served Woodring College as a Professor, the Department Chair for the Secondary Education Department, the Associate Dean for Student Success, and now as Dean.

Prior to his appointment at WWU in 2014, Dr. Roxas taught in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Wyoming for six years and was a teacher and upper school principal at the Marist Brothers International School in Japan for 10 years.

Dr. Roxas holds a doctorate in Teaching, Curriculum and Educational Policy from Michigan State University, with a master’s degree in Educational Administration from the University of San Francisco and a bachelor’s degree in Government and Accounting from the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Roxas has been a principal investigator and co-investigator on several grants that focus on social justice, retaining faculty of color and supporting immigrant students, and his publications share a similar focus on access, diversity, equity and inclusion. His most recent research project focuses on work with immigrant students, parents, and other family members as they use photography and visual and written narratives to powerfully describe their experiences in U.S. public schools and local communities.
His honors and awards include winning the Carl A. Grant Outstanding Research Award from the National Association of Multicultural Education in 2019 and a 2016 Best Paper Award from the American Educational Studies Association for his article “Multicultural education and newcomer youth: Re-imagining a more inclusive vision for immigrant and refugee students.”

**Dr. Keith Russell, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Following a national search, Dr. Keith C. Russell, Ph.D., was hired into his new role as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, starting on August 1, 2023.

Dr. Russell, grew up in Oregon, received his Ph.D. at the University of Idaho and taught at the University of New Hampshire and the University of Minnesota prior to arriving at WWU in 2008. He chaired the department of Health and Human Development from 2015 - 2023. In 2020, he received the Faculty Leadership award for his work chairing the department during the renovation of the Carver Academic Facility and in helping establish WWU’s first human cadaver lab to better prepare our pre-healthcare students for careers in allied health. In 2010 he received the Distinguished Researcher Award from the International Association for Experiential Education and has served the profession in many roles, including recently serving on the American Camping Association’s National Research Advisory Board (2016 - 2023). He teaches courses in research methods, adventure education and therapy, and human relations.

His research over the past 15 years has involved working with non-profit organizations in Alberta, Canada and Southeast Alaska that serve primarily First Nation and Alaska Native youth and young adults struggling with addiction. His over 60 publications have appeared in Psychotherapy, Group Dynamics, Mindfulness, Journal of Health Services Psychology, Residential Treatment for Children and Youth, and Child and Youth Care Forum. He is the author of several book chapters and is a co-author of the text titled Adventure Therapy: Theory, Research and Practice (2nd ed. 2020; Routledge Mental Health) with Michael Gass and Lee Gillis.