

WSU Board of Regents Meeting – Comment Period

June 9, 2023

To members of the Board of Regents:

My name is Glen Duncan. I am a Professor in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology, and Director of the Washington State Twin Registry. I have served in those roles since joining WSU in 2015. I am also a Faculty Senator, having served 3 years as the At Large representative for the college and the last three years as a Regional Campus Senator for the Spokane Health Sciences Campus, where I was one of two Spokane Campus representatives to the Senate Steering Committee. I come to you today in my capacity as a Faculty Senator, bringing forth serious concerns that have been raised by my constituents and shared by myself. All of these concerns have been discussed extensively in various senate meetings, and have been reported in the media.

WSU is facing very substantial problems on multiple fronts that have increasingly degraded WSU's academic and research performance and reputation. I will highlight six major concerns today.

- Several years of declining enrollment that have outpaced declines among all other 4-year public universities in Washington State, the latest academic year decline being 7.7% for WSU versus a 3.2% decline for others, or a 2.4 fold higher decline for WSU.
- Repeated budget cutting that is degrading academic programs, with the latest cut being 6% for this coming fall on top of previous recent budget cuts.
- The research enterprise has stagnated. For details, please see the post titled 'Re-Imagining WSU's Research Enterprise' that Jon Oatley and I wrote under the constituent concerns portion of the Faculty Senate webpage.
- There has been a steady and precipitous decline during the last few years in WSU rankings issued from a number of popular and professionally respected sources that signal WSU's decline in reputation.
- The out-of-control athletic expenses and accumulating debt have not been mitigated. The latest report of an \$11.5M budget deficit for the athletic department was shocking to many faculty and staff, and I am sure to students, parents, and taxpayers as well.
- The morale among faculty and staff is low and declining, and is reflected in a lack of trust and confidence in senior leadership based on results from two university wide surveys (the WSU Employee Engagement and COACHE [Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education] surveys).

As my term ends this August, I want to report back to my constituents the concrete steps and action items that will be implemented to substantively address these and other problems WSU is facing, substantially increase WSU's national and international rankings and reputation, and put WSU back on a path to academic and research excellence.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Glen Duncan