

## UFC Chair Report – October, 2018

On October 18, 2018 I met with three representatives from Huron Consulting, the financial advisors brought in by President Paino to provide advice on our current financial difficulties. We spoke for over an hour and I felt that the meeting was positive and informative for both myself and the consultants (I found them very human, curious, honest, interested, amusing...).

Prior to the meeting, I had explored their web site (<https://www.huronconsultinggroup.com/>) where under Industry>Higher Education>Our Services one can read about their services (e.g. Financial and Operational Excellence, Budgeting and Financial Management). There is more under Resources>Higher Ed, and Higher Ed-Interview on the main page has Ed Tech Times interviews with administrators & leaders about higher education (#5 with the Huron CEO is worth listening to). We know that they have worked with GMU and VCU in Virginia.

The charge of the consultants is

1. To see if our room and board prices are in line with those of similar schools and can support our operations
2. To explore the impacts of our current tuition model and what impacts a per-credit model might bring
3. To explore differential tuition pricing
4. To explore out-of-state tuition pricing

They will be putting these questions into a broader context of pricing and enrollment goals over the next five years or so.

I asked how they do these things: they have computer models, into which they would plug numbers to see what the possibilities are and what the best solutions might be. For the comparisons, they will use what we define as ‘cross-application’ schools (e.g. CNU, JMU) as well as other COPLAC and aspirational schools.

They were clearly impressed by our campus, by our residence halls, by our general appearance; I think they were expecting much worse based on the reports of our lack of maintenance in residences. We laughed about some ‘soviet style’ residences that they have toured at other institutions, and others that smelled bad. They made it clear that they think we have a lot going for us.

We talked a lot about what UMW is, what makes us special or standout, whether our promotional materials show what I think are our strengths. The admissions materials they shared with me *DO* represent UMW, but I would have included more about academics, about how we know our students, any student can do research, might attend a conference, obtain an internship, possibly publish their work. I would emphasize our teaching and involving students in our research, and/or our research in our classes. In my mind, it is personal attention that differentiates us (I am aware that our admissions material is geared toward 18 year olds, and perhaps they don’t want to see academics front and center).

We discussed the liberal arts and that employers really do want employees with broad and deep skills, as from an institution such as UMW, and that we are preparing students for their fifth job,

not their first. We discussed that we are a public institution, so that ought to attract more students as prices are lower than at a private school. We discussed how there seems to be a general lack of knowledge about UMW, what we are, where we are. We noted that on none of the admissions materials in the room stated that UMW is a public liberal arts university. They mentioned specifically – and applauded – how we appear to have combined more modern “professional” skills with the traditional liberal arts – examples being the digital humanities, digital communications, domain of one’s own, and geographic information science.

They had already met with several other administrators and staff members. When I said something about football and Greek life, and they stopped me, to point out that some others had said the same thing. Apparently, “we” (often?) lead by saying what we are not: we are almost apologizing for ourselves, rather than celebrating UMW. It was an important point and one that should be taken to heart – we are excellent at what we do; we should say so!

They asked me what the faculty want. I replied ‘stability’ and went on to explain that I meant not a financial crisis, not an admissions crisis, not a hiring freeze. In hindsight, I wish I had set the bar higher! – we want more than a minimum. I feel sure that there will be an opportunity to meet with them next time they are on campus to expound upon that.

Overall, my impression was that the consultants are experienced, practical, and data-driven. They wanted a broad view so as to better understand UMW even though their charge is fairly narrow.

I would like to encourage UFC members to talk to their constituents about what the General Education Committee is discussing. Minutes of 9-17 include reports on FSEM and retention; the Questions to Consider are really interesting. Minutes of 10-3 discuss results of an Alumni Survey, and have another set of questions to consider. We might all be considering those questions!

Regarding the University Budget Advisory Committee, which in its spring 2018 report called for its own dissolution, I have spoken with former UBAC Chairs Dr. Janet Asper and Dr. Will Mackintosh, as well as some others; I have input from President Paino from a meeting last year (9-12-17 minutes) and via email; and I’ve looked at the duties as currently described as well as the University Budget Development Calendar (on BoardDocs). I recommend that the current duties should be updated and changed, to more regularly collect data from UFC about budget priorities and to better match the state calendar. Given the change in duties, we might give the current committee members the opportunity to step down, followed by appointment of new UBAC members.

I am pleased to say that the CAS web page has been updated to include more details about faculty governance (see <https://cas.umw.edu/faculty-2/cas-faculty-governance/>), including links to CAS committees. The CAS Faculty Council meeting schedule and minutes can be found here.

Finally, I will meet with the BOV Executive Committee on Thursday, along with Anand Rao (CAS & UFC & Faculty Senate of Virginia), John Broom (to represent CoE) and Dave Henderson (CoB representative). The Executive Committee specifically wants an update on how the review of general education requirements is going.