

Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience

Charge

January 12, 2016

Vision

Case Western Reserve University strives to be an educational institution that attracts accomplished, engaged and intellectually curious undergraduate students from across the nation and the globe. The university will be known for preparing students for success in the future, as lifelong seekers and creators of knowledge, and with a strong appreciation for their academic and student-life experiences at the university. The university will build on its robust strengths and vigorous activities in research, scholarship and creative endeavors to create an environment for the undergraduate programs in which intellectual and personal growth for each student are a constant ideal. Excellence in education and successful innovation in pedagogical approaches will ensure that undergraduate students will have the skills and confidence to flourish beyond the university in the world's constantly changing future environment.

Purpose

The Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) will be expected to develop proposals, creative within the context of the university, for advancing the quality and excellence of CWRU's academic offerings and undergraduate student experience. The CUE will propose initiatives, including those that are bold and transformative, that will strengthen CWRU's residential campus environment by enhancing its intellectual vibrancy and supportiveness of learning. CWRU anticipates that major investments in the undergraduate programs (up to a few million dollars annually) will be available to enhance or transform the academic offerings and student-life experiences that contribute to the learning of CWRU's undergraduate students. The Commission will identify priorities and formulate investment recommendations.

As described in the charge below, the Commission will consider which programs and initiatives CWRU should continue to pursue, describe how others should be modified, and prioritize opportunities for the university to add to its academic and student-life offerings so that the appeal, overall quality, and long-term financial viability of CWRU's undergraduate experience are strengthened.

Membership and Structure

Members of the CUE will include faculty members from the CAS, CSE, Nursing, WSOM and the School of Medicine along with selected senior administrators. Faculty members serving on this Commission are selected by the Provost with input from the Deans but are expected to adopt a university perspective in their work on the CUE. One of the faculty members will be appointed

Chair by the Provost and will be supported in the leadership of the Commission by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Other members will be added to the Commission as needs arise.

The CUE will have the authority to conduct assessments as it sees fit. The CUE will also have the ability to form and oversee subgroups or independent working groups to address specific portions of its charge.

The Commission will report to and function in an advisory capacity to the Provost. The Commission's proposals and recommendations will be submitted to the Provost. At the conclusion of the project, the Commission will submit a final comprehensive report to the Provost. At appropriate junctures in the process, the Commission will submit interim reports and recommendations to the Provost, present interim recommendations to the Deans and engage with Faculty Senate and other committees. Implementation of any curricular changes or institution of new or revised academic policies that require faculty governance will follow the standard review and approval processes within the schools and/or Faculty Senate.

The Commission will also serve in a liaising role with major third-part engagements (such as with the Art and Science Group) related to the university's strategic initiatives for the undergraduate programs.

Charge to the CUE

The work of the Commission is expected to be extensive and is anticipated to be completed over approximately a 2-year span. The charge to the CUE includes the following specific tasks:

- 1) **Develop and articulate a philosophy for advancing CWRU's undergraduate experience.**
 - ***Identify the themes and characteristics that are or can be hallmarks of a CWRU undergraduate education.*** As part of this process, the Commission should:
 - Assess the current status of CWRU's overall general education programs that are now individualized by school and degree program. Determine whether the current goals for general education are appropriate, or should be modified so that CWRU undergraduates are better prepared for future success.
 - Evaluate the success and efficacy of the SAGES program (the portion of CWRU's general education requirements that is common across all schools). Make recommendations on the future of SAGES.
 - Consider and recommend whether the university can move toward a set of general education requirements that are thematically uniform across schools.
 - ***Consider and make recommendations on existing or emerging opportunities for new academic programs and teaching pedagogies for the undergraduate programs.***

- Identify opportunities for building on CWRU's strengths in research and scholarship to develop new undergraduate curricular offerings and/or learning enhancements.
 - Assess opportunities for using or developing new learning technologies to advance the excellence of the undergraduate programs.
 - Consider the desirability and opportunities for online education to enhance undergraduate learning within CWRU's residential academic environment.
- ***Evaluate and make recommendations on the degree to which "experiential education" should be emphasized and integrated within the academic programs.*** Consider whether CWRU should expect/require all of its undergraduates to take part in at least one major type of learning experience (undergraduate research, study abroad, internships/Co-ops, service learning, or other) outside of the degree program.
- 2) **Explore how CWRU's residential campus environment could better support learning and provide a more intellectually vibrant experience for undergraduates.**
- ***Evaluate whether there exist opportunities to augment the effectiveness of student-life resources and programming in supporting learning.*** Determine whether the student-life support services now in place are successful in supporting the academic growth of CWRU's undergraduate students. Evaluate whether there are other opportunities or needs for resources to support learning that are not currently being addressed.
 - ***Investigate whether campus facilities/infrastructure improvements (e.g. classrooms, teaching laboratories and/or performing arts spaces) would lead to enhanced learning, student satisfaction or other learning efficiencies.***
 - ***Recommend improvements in the manner in which CWRU supports its undergraduate students' academic learning, social awareness and maturation, and other needs.***
 - ***Explore approaches for improving faculty-student connections and interactions. Consider potential improvements to academic advising.***
- 3) **Engage with the consultants from the Art & Science Group LLC as they help CWRU to understand external perceptions about CWRU's undergraduate programs and how any changes that may be implemented would be perceived.**
- ***Initially, this engagement should include:***
 - providing guidance and feedback to the Art & Science Group

- brainstorming big picture questions that might be raised during campus conversations
 - requesting and reviewing benchmarking information about peers and aspirants
 - providing feedback on the research instruments used in interviewing prospective students
 - sharing insights regarding the best way to involve faculty, staff, students, administration and/or representatives of the Board
 - participating in early-stage planning – scope, methods, participants, etc.
- ***At critical junctures and at the conclusion of the research, the engagement will include:***
 - reviewing findings from each phase of the research
 - discussing research findings, implications and strategic recommendations
 - discussing timing considerations for project activities