

Dear Students,

Last month, I shared an email update to returning Mary Baldwin students on the work faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees have undertaken as part of our ongoing efforts to redefine the MBU undergraduate residential experience as well as actions that the Board of Trustees will consider when they meet in October.

Mary Baldwin senior and studio art major Charlotte Bradley replied to my email, saying she thought we needed to do a better job integrating the liberal arts with skills that prepare students for post-graduation success in the workforce: "Integrating technology into our learning and understanding how to use it is important, and it would be very beneficial for students about to enter the workforce."

Since January many on campus have been working toward Charlotte's goal by thinking about ways to evolve academic programs, meet student needs, and adapt to the changing world of work.

Last week, two MBU academic leaders presented our latest work to modernize our campus offerings to the Board of Trustees. Academic leaders met with the Faculty Council earlier today and I'm writing to also update you on our progress and provide more information about our next steps.

### **Academic Portfolio**

Dr. Paul Menzer, dean of the university faculty and vice president and dean of the Gold College of Arts and Sciences, is leading the work of a creative team, composed of faculty, staff, trustees, and administrators, and charged by the Board to advance MBU's academic offerings. This summer, the team guided the reconceptualization of the MBU general education curriculum and has now introduced a new approach to aligning majors within academic pathways or degree categories that correspond to industry needs. This approach will clarify the path from major to career outcomes or graduate study.

In addition to the new approach, the team's report included recommendations of which majors to discontinue, which to continue, which to

consolidate/reconceptualize, and what new majors to create. It also shared some of the data points the creative team considered in its endorsement, including market demand and an analysis of how many students MBU graduated in each major for the previous seven years.

### **Engaged Student Experience**

Will Webb, chief academic officer and executive vice president and dean of the Palmer College of Professional Studies, also presented to the Board. Webb has led the Engaged Student Experience creative team, which is divided into three subcommittees, focused on 1) expanding the MBU learning experience beyond campus, 2) creating engaged learning pathways and faculty development, and 3) developing cohort-based living and learning communities. Composed of faculty, staff, and administrators, the subcommittees will work through September to prepare materials for the Board of Trustees to consider next month.

An enhanced advising model is already in place to support your experience, and the newly launched [McCree Center for Life Success](#), offers all MBU students opportunities in career development, civic and global engagement, and personal development.

### **Next Steps**

The challenging and exciting work ahead will enable the university to better serve students. But changing our academic offerings will impact students, faculty, and staff in different ways. We will do our best to update you regularly and to create opportunities for you to share your ideas and concerns. Each student who is affected will have the information and support they need and, regardless of program decisions, will be able to complete a degree at MBU in their chosen major.

Teach-out planning for potentially discontinued majors will begin immediately, following guidance from our accreditors, and involving faculty members in the related departments. The Academic Portfolio creative team will also begin the work to sequence the new gen ed curriculum, and further market research on the reimagined majors will begin immediately.

I welcome student voices throughout this process. If you have any questions or concerns, or simply want to weigh in, please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing **[reimagine@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:reimagine@marybaldwin.edu)** or to me directly at **[president@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:president@marybaldwin.edu)**.

All in for Mary Baldwin,

Dr. Jeff Stein

President