

# 'Another step in college growth'

## College prepares plan for transition after Thyreen's tenure as president

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In an effort to look towards the future, Waynesburg College announced plans to implement a plan of succession that will ensure an "orderly transition" following current President Timothy Thyreen's tenure. The President does not plan to leave the office in the near future, though; he expects to be president for at least five more years.

"I still have a burn in my belly for this college," Thyreen said. "There are a lot of things I still want to accomplish as president."

The plan, developed by the Board of Trustees and the President, includes Thyreen agreeing to serve as Chancellor after his tenure as President, in which he will serve as an "ambassador of goodwill" with a focus on fundraising.

After stepping down as president, Thyreen's role as Chancellor will focus less on the daily operation of the college and shift to one centered off campus on fundraising and developing contacts for the college.

"I won't be involved in the running of the college. The new president will do all of those things, but I'll continue with all of those networks that I have developed for the college. It's really an ambassador's role," he said. "But that's years from now."

The plan of succession also includes the creation of a new administrative position. The position of Executive Vice President will be the most senior administrative officer reporting directly to the President and, according to Thyreen, whoever fills that role could be in a very good position to succeed him as president. The addition of the new position is "just another step in college growth," he said.

"This position is directly related to the succession plan. If this person comes in and is successful - and the board feels that this person is good and has done a good job and they feel they're ready for the presidency - they would be a very, very, very strong candidate for the presidency," Thyreen said. "[The Board] will have witnessed first hand the abilities and the achievements of the individual."

Though just going into effect now, the process began years ago, Thyreen said. It was worked into his contract to ensure the college's success continues and the transition after his retirement is smooth. Through a plan of succession is being implemented, Thyreen intends to continue as president for "more than five more years."

"We've had some wonderful, significant years and the Board years ago wanted to make sure there was an orderly transition. That doesn't mean that I'm leaving the presidency - I'm still going to be the president. I'm healthy; my wife's healthy and we're going to be here several years as president," Thyreen said.

"But we also know the responsibility of thinking long term. We have a very proactive Board and I'm very much committed to making sure the college continues to move."

The process was instituted by the Board of Trustees, which announced the plan to the campus community via email on Jan. 21.

"We trust that our President will continue to serve the college for many more years," Jeffrey M. Wymard, chair of the Board of Trustees, said in the memo. "We are deeply grateful for President Thyreen's inspired leadership that, in the company of a fine faculty and staff, has brought



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TIMOTHY THYREEN  
Waynesburg College President

Waynesburg College to a unique and admired place in American Higher Education."

By putting in place the process for his retirement, Thyreen, who has been president since 1990, admitted that many others in his position might feel concerned, but he remains confident in feeling that he and his wife were called to this position. He said other presidents might worry that they would be seen as weak or as a lame duck with a plan of succession in place, but he is very comfortable with the plan.

"I'm no lame duck," he said.

In fact, the plan of succession secures Thyreen's role in the administration after his retirement. It represents a very long term commitment by Thyreen and his wife to serve the college by searching and networking resources for this institution.

"That's what this board and this presidency has always been about. We take on these issues well in advance. I don't think too many presidents in the middle of their presidency would be comfortable with the board talking about a succession plan. That talks about the wonderful respect and trust that the Board and I have with each other," Thyreen said.

"Most presidents would say 'oh no, no' but we know this is a very special place and this is a very special time and we want the ef-

forts that we've all made here - many people have contributed to what this college has become - to live on beyond all of us."

The other part of the plan of succession is the addition of the Executive Vice President. One of the role's primary responsibilities will be fundraising and whoever fills the role will initially assume current tasks from other areas and then over time the person will take on additional responsibilities. Though adding an administrative salary to the payroll, according to Thyreen, the position will actually produce more income fundraising opportunities. According to Richard "Skip" Noftzger, senior vice president for institutional planning, research and educational services, this position was not created out of any current deficiencies that needed filled, but instead as a far-looking decision.

"Whether it's this position of anything else, it's always a matter of making priority choices," Noftzger said. "In this case the decision by President and the Board it is an investment in the future."

Thyreen does not expect the addition of a senior level administrator to result in immediate wholesale changes to the administration, but that the college will "grow into a kind of restructuring."

"We're very lean at the administrative level as compared to most other

schools, so there's nothing wrong with us having additional people to advance the mission of the institutional," Thyreen said. "The other piece of it is we've stayed the same for how many years and we've grown from 1,000 students to 2,000 students. We've become a very complex college. And with those complexities brings on the additional need for support but also leadership, and then of course creating grants and gifts and fundraising for all the additions."

Dr. Thomas Pavick, professor of history, will chair a committee to conduct the national search for the new position. The committee will include trustees appointed by the Board Chair and an administrative staff member.

Most search committees do not contain Board members, but this committee will feature several because of the nature of the position. The additional members of the search committee are currently being selected by the chair of the Board of Trustees.

According to Pavick, the hardest part of this kind of search is finding the applicants. Once quality candidates are discovered, he said, things move downhill and the process moves to interviews on and off campus. The application process is extremely confidential since most applicants are already employed during the application process.

Searches like this can run into difficulties including applicants dropping out of contention or being hired by someone else, which can require the search committee to essentially start over. Most of all, he said, these searches are very time consuming.

"I don't think it's good to rush into these things just to get it done," Pavick said. "I think that's why they're doing it now, so you're not up against the wall doing it. That's important."

A potential applicant, Thyreen said, would be a person who's been a positive voice for change within their organization, possesses an understanding of higher education and Christian higher education and has a passion to advance this institution. The President expects the search to take a maximum of a year and ideally he would like someone to have been hired by this time next year.

"It's a rather lengthy process because we want to make sure we get what's best for the institution and get the very best person that's out there. We're not going to hire somebody just to hire somebody," Thyreen said. "That's the reason to do these things very early."

Of course, beginning the process of planning for a successor has led to speculation that Thyreen's tenure at the college is nearing an end, but Thyreen is quick to dispel those rumors, "I'm not going anywhere," he said.

"I'm going to be here several years as president, but we also know the responsibility of thinking long term." Timothy Thyreen  
Waynesburg College President

# Steeple is raised over campus

## High and lifted up

Roberts Chapel construction continues, workers finish installation of steeple



This is exactly how the Yellow Jacket presented its photo coverage of the raising of the steeple on Roberts Chapel

Photos by Amanda Rice, Gregory Reinhart and Lisa Jaeger

The steeple arrived on campus last week on three trucks (top left). On March 16 and 17, workers hoisted the two sections of the steeple onto Roberts Chapel. The Chapel is scheduled to be completed by August.

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