

Provost's Newsletter

Academic Affairs at the University of North Florida

Archives Academic Affairs University of North Florida

December 2008

Dear Colleagues,

With the semester drawing to a close I would like to provide you with a review of some of the activities we have been engaged in over the past several months and give you a preview of some of the issues we are looking forward to engaging with in the months ahead.

In September we submitted our [compliance report](#) to SACS, and two weeks ago we received the results of the off-site committee's review of that report. We were judged to be in compliance with the majority of the criteria on which our reaccreditation will be based. Of those criteria on which we were judged to be out of compliance, some were a predictable function of the absence of financial audit reports that won't be available to us until after the beginning of the year. On at least several other criteria, we need only clarify already existing information in order to demonstrate compliance. The most substantive issues, not surprisingly, pertain to strategic planning and the assessment of learning. In order to give ourselves as much time as possible for greater refinement of our documentation, we have more evidence to share now with the on-site committee than we chose to present at the time we submitted our compliance report in both of these areas, but it is also clear that we will need to sustain the good momentum we have achieved in planning and assessment in order to demonstrate to SACS that we are mindful of our institutional purpose, doing our best to fulfill that purpose, and working diligently to improve student learning in a deliberate and self-reflexive manner. Of course, since these are fundamental values of the university, it behooves us to remain true to them regardless of where we find ourselves in the cycle of accreditation. We will submit our focused report to SACS in mid-December and then host an on-site committee in February. That committee will make a final determination about remaining compliance issues and also judge the adequacy of our Quality Enhancement Plan.

The QEP is reaching completion. The QEP committee has worked hard to craft a compelling proposal that we will submit along with our focused report. As soon as the QEP has received final editing it will be available for viewing on the Academic Affairs accreditation website. I am confident that the program to which this proposal will give rise will provide an institutionalized basis for broad and significant student engagement in community-based learning whose power will reside in the occasion it provides for the transfer and extrapolation of theoretical knowledge to authentic issues and needs in the world beyond the university's campus. We are still searching for the right person to direct our new Center for Community-Based Learning; I commend the CBL search committee for opting for selectivity over expediency in that crucial decision.

Our strategic planning activity is continuing apace. [The Strategic Planning Committee](#) is making good progress in operationalizing the new university vision and mission statements to advance UNF towards becoming "a regional university of national quality." While the economic challenges we are facing surely will affect the speed at which we can move along our intended trajectory toward this ambitious goal, I strongly believe it would be a mistake to temper our ambitions and content ourselves with compromises when perseverance promises so much more in the long run for the betterment of UNF and its ability to serve its students, its community, and its faculty. As I have reported previously, the new university strategic plan also will do double duty as the basis of a compact with the

Recent Events

Academic Affairs held its annual fall retreat on October 31, 2008. Presentations included the Academic Affairs update, CBL presentations from Jorge Febles, David Lambert, and Wanda Lastrapes and a discussion on advancing diversity on the UNF campus led by Dr. Mordean Taylor-Archer. To view the full agenda, go to [AA Retreat](#)

Upcoming Events

12/12/08

On Friday, December 12, 2008, we will hold our fall commencement at 11:00 and 3:00: [Commencement](#)

01/05/09

Spring term, classes begin: [Academic Calendar](#)

Faculty Development

The Sabbatical Selection committee has forwarded its recommendation for awarding half-year, full-pay sabbaticals. Academic Affairs supports the recommendations and funded sabbaticals for:

John Hatle – Biology
 Gordon Rakita – Sociology and Anthropology
 Philip S. Riner – Foundations and Secondary Education
 Aaron Sheehan-Dean – History
 Sharon Cobb – Economics

The Professional Development Leave committee has forwarded its recommendations for half-year, full-pay professional development leaves. Academic Affairs supports the following leaves:

Katharine Brown, Computing
 Judy Comeaux – Nursing
 Julie Merten – Public Health

TLO funding has been allocated for 2009-10 and award letters have gone out. There were 28 proposals funded (15 international) totaling \$300,000. For more information on the TLO program and funding, go to [Undergraduate Studies](#).

SUS. The Board of Governors seems more determined than ever to clarify the place and scope of each of the ten universities within the state system, a need made all the more urgent by the emergence of the new state college system and the budgetary challenges that are being felt state-wide.

There is both bad news and good to report about the budget. The bad news is that the national economy, and Florida's, clearly are still suffering, and there is a real prospect for further cuts to our institutional allocation both this year and next. The good news is that our governor, with what I hope is at least the tacit support of our state legislators, has recognized that the SUS needs more revenue if it is to accommodate and effectively educate all those citizens of the state who seek a university degree. Differential tuition for each of the state's universities, unhinged from Bright Futures, will be on the legislative agenda this spring, and its passage would result in a meaningful increase in revenue for UNF as long as that potential increase is not offset by further reductions in state support. [Click here](#) to read Governor Crist's proposal on tuition reform. Fortunately, "our man in Tallahassee" will be working hard on behalf of UNF and its sister institutions to help persuade the legislature of the enormous intellectual, economic, and cultural benefits to be derived from predictable and adequate funding for the SUS. However this issue plays out, between the challenge of the budget and the search for a new chancellor, next semester promises to be a critical juncture for the SUS.

As we anticipate the momentous events of this coming spring I hope that the fast-waning fall semester has been a fruitful one for you and your students. I look forward to seeing many of you at commencement. Please recall that, in order to make it more convenient for you to attend, the [commencement](#) ceremonies have been moved up to 11 a.m. (for COAS and CCEC) and 3 p.m. (for BCH, CCB, and COEHS). The faculty reception will be held from 1:00 to 2:30 in the President's conference room.

Mark E. Workman Provost and VPAA

www.unf.edu/acadaffairs

Announcements

Honors: Mary Borg will assume leadership over the Honors program as well as retain oversight of the UAEP. Chuck Paulson, director of Honors for almost 8 years, is stepping down January 1 and returning to faculty.

Spring Student Award Convocation: We have moved spring student convocation to the college level. Each college will now be responsible for coordinating a student award ceremony. The decision to move from a university-wide to college-wide program is to help create a more personal and meaningful award ceremony for our students. Most colleges plan to build this event into their reception for graduating seniors.

