

Provost's Newsletter

Academic Affairs at the University of North Florida

October, 2008

Colleagues,

This is the first of the periodic updates I will be sharing with you throughout the year on activities going on within Academic Affairs. The current year promises to be an especially important one for UNF and for the State University System, so there will be much to report upon.

Among the responsibilities we will be dealing with nothing exceeds in importance our SACS reaccreditation review. I am very pleased to say that we shipped our mandatory compliance report on September 8 to the team that will be serving as our off-site peer review committee. This report represents the culmination of several years of intensive effort on the part of many members of our university community. While the report covers virtually every aspect of UNF's operation, perhaps the most significant component of this report, centered on the core of the university's mission, is the evidence generated at the department level of student learning and the efforts that departments have made to improve upon their pedagogical efficacy. I am grateful to you and your chairs for the critical work you have done in this regard.

We claimed in our report, honestly and with conviction, that we are in compliance with each of the criteria that we were required to address. While I recognize the value of cognitive non-sharing, in this case I would be quite delighted if the off-site committee fully accepts our privileged view of our own universe. But more realistically I anticipate—based upon my own experience serving on such committees—that we will be required to provide further evidence of our compliance with at least several of the criteria. If that is the case, we will produce what is referred to by SACS as a "focused report," concentrating only on those criteria where our compliance has been deemed to be problematic. The focused report will be reviewed by the on-site peer committee that will be visiting UNF in February, for the purpose both of resolving any remaining compliance issues and assessing the adequacy of our Quality Enhancement Plan.

The QEP Committee also has been hard at work in drafting the document that will provide the blueprint for our initiative on community-based transformational learning. Community-based learning opportunities already abound across the campus, both within academic programs and in Student Affairs. What the QEP commits us to is advancing the breadth and depth of these opportunities even further, so that every student who wishes to will be able to participate in such a "situated" learning experience in which he or she can translate theoretical learning into unscripted practice in the context of addressing some genuine community need. We still are engaged in a search for a director of what will be our Center for Community-Based Learning; this center will work collaboratively with academic departments and Student Affairs in facilitating, organizing, and assessing the myriad CB-L activities that already exist and that will be created in response to this enhancement of our curriculum.

One of the factors that the president and I found compelling about the proposal on community-based learning, and that contributed significantly to its selection as the university's QEP, was its fundamental alignment with the mission of the university. As I trust you are aware, the expression of that mission

Upcoming Events

10/28/2008

Presidential Lecture, **An Evening with Steven Levitt** 7:30 pm, UNF Arena. Levitt's bestselling book, *Freakonomics*, is being read by all fall 2008 freshmen and many others in the campus community as part of the UNF Reads! program. For more on the program, visit: [UNF Reads!](#)

10/31/2008

Summer Development Grants- Teaching, Research, and Proposal Development applications due October 31, 2008.
Download applications from the AA website [Faculty Resources](#)

12/12/2008

Fall Commencement- with the endorsement of President Delaney, we have moved the commencement ceremonies to 11:00 and 3:00 (instead of 3:00 and 7:00). This time change should not only create savings (overtime costs) but also increase faculty participation.
Visit the commencement website [Commencement](#)

SACS

You can review the full UNF compliance report at the [SACS reaffirmation website](#) and review the [timeline](#) for both the SACS off-site and on-site process.

Search News

Three important searches are currently underway within the Division of Academic Affairs:
Dean, College of Computing, Engineering and Construction
Executive Director, Fine Arts Center
Director, Center for Community Based Learning

Recent Events

On September 19th, we celebrated UNF's 37th fall Convocation. The program includes President Delaney's State of the University Address and this year's Distinguished Professor speech by Dean Pamela Chally. More information about the fall Convocation is at: [Fall Convocation, 2008](#)

Approximately 52, new full-time, non-visiting faculty attended the Academic Affairs New Faculty Orientation program on August 15th. To view the new faculty profiles, visit the AA website: [New Faculty Profiles](#)

Academic Affairs also worked with the Council of Chairs to provide an academic chairs orientation. We welcomed several new chairs:

was considerably sharpened last year by the faculty task force that I had the honor of leading. The next step in this process is to utilize the revised UNF mission statement as the basis for a new university strategic plan. To that end I am now leading a planning council, which has broad representation from across the university, charged by the president with precisely this responsibility. Our goal, which we certainly will reach before the end of this academic year, is the delineation of a benchmarked strategic plan that will guide the growth and development of the university over the next five years towards its ultimate ambition of becoming a "regional university of national quality."

There is no question that, while our trajectory will remain fixed, our progress toward realizing this ambition will be affected by the fiscal crisis occurring in Florida and nationally. The impact of this crisis has been felt by every department on campus as Academic Affairs, in consultation with the deans, has had to claim vacant positions in order to meet its share of the university's budget reduction. And since AA utilizes the majority of the university's resources (approximately 70%), it is not surprising that AA has been called upon to provide the majority of the university's savings. Offset as this may have been by a concomitant reduction in enrollment, it is still regrettable that of the approximately 40 lines not currently occupied by a permanent professor or instructor, approximately 75% will have to remain unfilled. Nevertheless, I am pleased to say that, with the president's endorsement, there have been no reductions in support for faculty development, either with regard to travel or summer grants, and I know that if there is any way that he can secure a sufficient amount of recurring funds for the purpose of providing faculty raises, the president is deeply committed to doing so.

The challenges we are grappling with locally are of course consonant with those being faced by the SUS generally. The recent announcement by the chancellor, Mark Rosenberg, of his intention to resign from his position in February is in many ways the result of the economic circumstances in which we find ourselves. At the same time, the chancellor's resignation also attests to the determination of the Board of Governors to forge a new and more positive relationship with the state legislature, which has expressed recognition of the need for greater revenue to develop and sustain a university system adequate to the complex social and economic needs of the State. With the emergence of a new state college system, the transformation of community colleges into baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, and the shortfalls in SUS funding, there is no question that there is some turmoil in the state of higher education, but there is also reason to be optimistic that the turmoil is prelude to greater coherence, mission clarification and differentiation, and a commitment to provide a level of resources adequate to meet the diverse educational needs of the citizens of Florida.

In the meanwhile, I am heartened by the fact that UNF will continue to play a critical role in its capacity as the prominent public comprehensive university in one of the major metropolitan areas of the State. The achievements of those of our colleagues who were recognized at the recent fall convocation confirms that there is a level of educational excellence at UNF of which we can all be justifiably proud, and which Academic Affairs will do all that it can to preserve and nurture.

I wish you a good semester.

Mark E. Workman Provost and VPAA

John Venn - COEHS, Leadership, Counseling, and Instructional Technology
 Ronghua Ouyang - COEHS, Childhood Ed
 Jeffrey Cornett - COEHS, Foundations and Secondary Ed
 Michael Togliola - COAS, Psychology
 James Garner - COAS, Chemistry and Physics
 Courtney Hackney - COAS, Biology
 JoAnn Nolin - BCH, Public Health
 Cathy Christie - BCH, Nutrition and Dietetics

