

# Provost's Newsletter

Academic Affairs at the University of North Florida

Archives Academic Affairs University of North Florida

## April 2009

Dear Colleagues:

We are coming to the close of what in many ways has been a remarkable year. While the anxiety that accompanied preparation for our SACS review certainly has subsided, what bears repeating is the fact that we earned highly affirmative reviews from our off-site and on-site colleagues. No one appreciates more than I the broad and concerted effort this achievement required, and for which I would like to once again express my gratitude.

As provost, of course, my job is to remind everyone that, our brief moment of celebration behind us, we must now begin preparing for our next review that will occur in a mere nine years. I am joking, of course, but the point is well-taken. What we demonstrated to SACS is that we have processes in place that will enable us to generate data which, used properly, will enable us to make UNF a better institution. But as I am sure everyone will concur, those processes themselves could be greatly improved upon, and the day will come soon enough when we will need to demonstrate that we really have put our data to good use. It is for that reason that I eagerly await the arrival of our new Executive Director of Assessment Dr. Judith Miller. I am confident that we will benefit from her expertise, particularly because she will be sharing it at an optimum time, which is just after rather than just before a SACS review.

Successful as the SACS visit may have been, we are far from finished with the formal report that we must submit before we can gain official reaccreditation. To that end work continues on the refinement of our [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) and the development of our Center for Community Based Learning under the direction of Dr. Mark Falbo. I have heard some concerns expressed about the costs entailed in getting this center up and running. While I certainly appreciate those concerns in light of our fiscal situation, I have to remind everyone that we are operating under a mandate from SACS not only to fund the center at the level planned for in the proposal, but to increase that level of funding as need be in order to maximize the reach and impact of our plan. And that indeed is the important point: while the QEP will require precious resources to bring to fruition, that investment will result in a deepening and enrichment of learning for our students. Thus, it represents an affirmation of rather than a distraction from our fundamental mission.

With regard to our fiscal situation, there is not much to note beyond what the president shared with those of you who were able to attend one of the many conversations he and I had over the past two weeks with our colleges' faculties. The president remains cautiously optimistic that we will not be as severely impacted by the State's declining budget as first feared, but

## Current Projects

The department of English has been working on a new initiative - UNFWrites. This effort aims to increase student awareness university-wide of faculty expectations of writing skills, and that writing is a practice students will continue to use beyond their undergraduate experience. [UNFWrites](#)

The Faculty Association has approved new General Education student learning [outcomes](#):

Know the World  
Think Critically  
Solve Problems  
Respect Others  
Express Yourself

The Office of Undergraduate Studies has coordinated the New York Times Readership Program for two years and has developed an evaluation of that program. [Read the report](#)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been completed. Approximately 24% of our sample of freshmen and seniors completed the survey. We expect to have results in July.

Our first-time participation in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement provides an opportunity for faculty to their own perceptions of student engagement in their classes. To date, we have a 40% faculty response rate. Results from FSSE should be available this summer. [NSSE](#)

## Upcoming Events

04/18-24/09

Final Exams scheduled. [Finals](#)

04/24/09

On Friday, April 24, 2009, we will hold our spring commencement at 11:00 and 3:00: [Commencement](#)

05/11/09

Summer A&C classes begin: [Academic Calendar](#)

President Delaney was careful to qualify his optimism by acknowledging the uncertainty which hangs over the State and national economies. What is important to reiterate is that UNF is as well-positioned as it can be to deal with the present fiscal challenges.

In the meanwhile, we are making progress on the [strategic planning process](#) that had its inception in the creation of the new university vision and mission statements. We are now at the stage of developing benchmarks, or performance indicators, to measure our progress on the strategic goals that the institution must pursue if it is to rise to a level of national quality. The performance indicators derive from a combination of sources: UNF's own past performance; the performance of a reference group of aspirant institutions that has been identified for this purpose; comparative data from surveys such as NSSE; the Carnegie classification system; and national rankings.

It might seem somewhat incongruous that we are moving forward with strategic planning at the same time that we are operating without some of the critical resources we will need to realize the ambitions of the plan. I would argue otherwise. I think it is vitally important for us to map out our ideal future so that all our decisions—whether they pertain to a potential reduction of the university's scope and size or to its enhancement—must be made with our ultimate goals in mind. While we might be in a period of temporary abatement it is important that during this time of austerity we make as few compromises as possible with regard to the fundamental integrity and quality of the institution; and when we resume the trajectory of growth and improvement that we were on prior to the collapse of the economy, given the many needs that exist across the university our success will be determined by how systematic and focused we are in the strategic use of incremental resources. The strategic planning process is thus critical to the future of the institution under either set of circumstances.

Even from the current vantage point I think the future of UNF continues to look bright. Indisputably, there are many ways in which things could of course be better, and ways in which they must get better. Nevertheless, the institution is sound. The quality of the faculty is high, the profile of incoming students continues to get stronger, the range of programs we offer is appropriate to the region that we serve, the campus has been made both denser and more beautiful, and there is ever greater appreciation for the mission and achievement of the university both locally and across the State.

On that positive note I would like to wish everyone an enjoyable, productive, and restful summer.

*Mark E. Workman Provost and VPAA*

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## Faculty Development

The Office of Faculty Enhancement will present discussions focusing on building your promotion and tenure dossier:

How to demonstrate excellence in teaching effectiveness in your P&T dossier: Friday, 5/22 10-12 OFE Library

How to demonstrate excellence in scholarship in your P&T dossier: Friday, 5/29 10-12 OFE Library

For more information: [OFE Events](#)

The Center for Instruction and Research Technology provides workshops and brown bags on a variety of topics including data security, Blackboard, and copyright issues. Upcoming events can be viewed on the CIRT website. [CIRT](#)

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## Announcements

Dr. Judy Miller, the new Executive Director of Assessment, will begin her position in July, 2009. With Judy's hire, we are renaming the Office of Institutional Research to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Faculty Association recently announced the 2009 Faculty Awards. Awardees included:

Distinguished Professor - Dr. Jeffrey Steagall  
Distinguished Professor runner-up - Dr. Chip Klostermeyer  
Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching:  
Mark Ari (English)  
Mina Balamoune-Lutz (Econ and Geography)  
Melissa Bush (Chemistry and Physics)  
Andres Gallo (Econ and Geography)  
Chris Leone (Psychology)  
Jeffrey Michelman (Accounting and Finance)  
Judy Ochrietor (Biology)  
Barbara Olinzock (Nursing)  
Jennifer Wesely (Criminology and Criminal Justice)  
Outstanding Graduate Teaching:  
Tes Tuason (Psychology)  
Outstanding Faculty Scholarship:  
Mina Balamoune-Lutz (Econ and Geography)  
Carolyn Stone (Leadership, Counseling, and Instructional Technology)  
Outstanding Faculty Service:  
Sharon Cobb (Econ and Geography)  
Diane Tanner (Accounting and Finance)



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