

Provost's Remarks/Fall Faculty Forum 2014

Welcome to Fall Faculty Forum.

I think it's safe to say it has been quite a year...with lots of changes...college reorganization...Banner cutover...SACSCOC compliance report...BOG metrics... ice storms during exam week and five hundred year floods. As a result, some of you may be feeling a little out of control. If so, I advise you to remember the words of the famous racecar driver Mario Andretti: "If everything seems under control...you're just not going fast enough."

In the past at Fall Faculty Forums, we have invited an important speaker to talk about a matter of some importance, but I wanted to change things up this year. This year, you get me, talking about something of great importance – the Academic Vision of the University of West Florida.

Our Mission & Vision

Steven Covey is often quoted as having advised: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." In academic affairs the main thing – always – is quality education.

"The academic mission of University of West Florida (UWF) faculty and staff is to prepare students for successful careers, to enhance their personal lives, and to foster professional development through baccalaureate, master's, specialist, and doctoral programs that engage students in rigorous, personalized, high-impact learning experiences. UWF faculty and staff advance educational, cultural, and economic development through high-quality academic programs, research and creative scholarship, and innovative and relevant community partnerships and service."

We fulfill our mission by relentlessly pursuing our academic vision.

"It is the academic vision of UWF that the University be widely recognized as the premier intellectual and cultural center of the region. UWF graduates will be known for their achievements as leaders,

scholars, and civic contributors. Increasingly, UWF faculty and staff will be acknowledged for their achievements as teacher-scholars and leaders who offer distinctive, high-quality academic programs that prepare students for personal and professional success in a global society. UWF faculty and staff also will be acclaimed for producing and conveying new knowledge and serving the greater community through applied research and innovative partnerships.”

Let’s talk about this a bit. Note the references in the vision statement to three essential elements: quality, visibility and community. If you’re looking for guiding principles as you make decisions in your programs this year -- these are they.

So how do we recognize quality, visibility and community when they occur? How do we measure and weigh for resource allocation and decision-making?

Quality measures:

- Professional accreditations.
- Faculty and students awards and recognitions.
- External funding (public and private).
- Faculty scholarship.
- Impact on our students. What happens to your graduates when they leave us? Are they employed or in graduate school? (Note this is also a BOG metric).

Visibility measures:

- Recognitions by professional groups.
- Media coverage.

Community engagement measures:

- Formal relationships with demonstrable impact on the community.
- Community participation in campus events.

Past Year Accomplishments

Over the past year, we pursued the vision in a variety of ways. We reorganized the academic division, concluding with a College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, a College of Science, Engineering and Health, a College of Education and Professional Studies, and a College of Business. My sincere appreciation goes to Dean Bob Dugan who facilitated the process with tireless effort and seemingly endless patience. Through this reorganization we hope to

- Energize academic affairs
- Increase operational efficiency
- Increase external impact
- Reinforce natural alliances
- Increase visibility

We established University College, a unit dedicated to our students' academic success. I think this is a game changer for us. The UC is comprised of three primary areas: academic programs (Honors & general studies), advising (oversight over university-wide effectiveness) & professional readiness (centerpiece and home of our Quality Enhancement Plan project).

We increased our focus on High Impact Practices. We are already providing students with transformative experiences and expect to do more in the future. We have dedicated one of our break out sessions today to presentations on some great examples of HIPs here.

We know our staff carry a heavy load, and were delighted to launch a year-long professional development program for selected staff members called LEAD: The Staff Version. We will continue the program this year under the able leadership of Athena DuPre and Irene Patti.

Around mid-year, the Board of Governors announced Performance Based Funding based on ten specific metrics – and the wheels came off

the wagon. We scored the lowest in the state on the PBF metrics -- not because we are a bad university -- they just weren't measuring what we're good at doing. Nevertheless, this is our new reality and we will live or die by them for the foreseeable future. We have developed an Improvement Plan, approved in June by the BOG, to address our areas of need. Upon completion of the plan, we expect our budget to be restored by the \$3.8 million we lost. I believe this will be our last opportunity "do-over." We will focus on those areas identified as strategically important to the BOG while continuing the outstanding work we do in all areas of Academic Affairs.

We saw new programming come (or coming) online:

- A Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in partnership with USF.
- A Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in partnership with UF.
- Mechanical Engineering is scheduled for probable start up in Fall 2016.
- Logistics will be requested for start up Fall 2015. The program now exists as a specialization.

Major Projects for 2014-15

(Buckle up and take your vitamins!)

- A Vision for Scholarship at UWF: A task force to set expectations for quality, scope and impact of scholarship at UWF. -- Wade Jeffrey & Bill Huth will lead the effort.
- SACSCOC Reaffirmation. The compliance report will go out September 10. An onsite review team will be on campus in March. Dottie Minear and her team in ASPIRE will maintain oversight.
- The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as required by SACSCOC will be developed for review by the onsite team. Greg Lanier, Dean of University College, will coordinate the project.
- General Education Revamp, under the leadership of Greg Lanier, will enable us to comply with FS 1007.25, increase our retention rate, align learning outcomes with the goals of professional

readiness, and establish a more flexible paradigm to assist students in completing their degrees without excess hours.

- Attendance and Progress to Degree Policies – part of improvement plan – are due for approval by December. (George Ellenberg)
- Update Promotion and Tenure policies. (George Ellenberg)
- Reduce number of specializations. (George Ellenberg & Jay Clune). The formation of new colleges presents a good opportunity for Deans to review the scope of offerings within their respective colleges. When compared to similar SUS institutions, UWF has many more specializations within degree programs. With increased scrutiny at the state level of Academic Learning Compacts, assessment activities, time to degree, and retention, for example, it is important to make certain that degree programs are focusing efforts in the best ways possible to provide strong degree programs for students at the undergraduate level.
- Curriculum Change Request process revision. (George Ellenberg & Jim Arruda).

Reflections on The Chambered Nautilus

The chambered nautilus is the official emblem of our university, adopted in 1965. It was inspired by the poem by Oliver Wendall Holmes.

This may seem an odd image for an institution of higher education, but I did a little research on the chambered nautilus and found some apt comparisons to our world:

- Like academics...the life and habits of the nautilus are still largely a mystery, since it spends most of its time in deep water.
- Like academics...the shell of the nautilus is comprised of many individual chambers (or departments). Each chamber is individually sealed and contains a certain amount of gas.
- Like academics...the nautilus can regulate its density by injecting or removing fluid (resources) into these chambers.
- Like academics...the nautilus has many tentacles.

When a young nautilus first hatches from its egg, it is very small. As it gets larger, it will add new chambers to its shell. Each new chamber will be a little larger than the last, allowing the opening of the shell to continually grow larger. In other words, like academics, it builds on its strengths.

The final verse of the poem is most often quoted. I'll close with it.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Thank you for your time and for all you do for our university. Have a great year!