

## **Academic Update January 11, 2016**

Dear Colleagues,

As we start the spring semester and a new year, I wish each of you the best in 2016. Thank you for all you do on behalf of UNA, our students, and your academic programs.

When I arrived at UNA in 2009 as provost, I was amazed at the collegiality that existed among faculty and administration. Regardless of the issue, we found common ground and, equally important, did so with civility. That level of collegiality is rare and has been a major factor in the high level of job satisfaction we enjoy. In recent months several proposals were discussed and/or submitted by COAD that met with concern and disagreement by the faculty. I won't belabor those individual proposals but I am told by faculty colleagues they sent an underlying message that faculty had to be told what to do to be professional in their work life-that they couldn't be trusted to do what was best for our students without being prodded to do so by the administration. As chief academic officer I accept responsibility for those proposals and the negative messages therein. That was not the intent. I know of no institution where faculty do more for their students. Going forward I will do my best to be mindful of that fact and affirm the good work of each of you.

I recently read two articles, one from the University of Georgia and one from Texas Southern University, which cited the value of undergraduate research programs. One of the data points mentioned was that students who participate in such programs have much higher graduation rates. The articles cited other benefits as well. I am pleased UNA has embraced undergraduate research as part of its academic mission through the QEP and even more pleased with the response of the faculty in support of the effort. For those who haven't integrated an undergraduate research component into their teaching, I encourage you to do so. Everyone involved benefits.

I want to encourage departments to be mindful of the power of study abroad. Our students are often transformed through such efforts. Dr. Scott Infanger is serving as director of faculty-led study abroad. In that role he can assist faculty with the logistics and issues associated with developing and/or teaching a study abroad course. Please contact him if interested and thanks to all for their support of this crucial part of our academic mission.

### **Council of Academic Deans (COAD) meeting on January 11, 2016**

1. IT Director Stephen Putman met with COAD to discuss IT issues on campus.
2. COAD continues to work with the Admissions staff to clarify the repeat-recompute policy for transfer students and how it effects transfer GPA.
3. The University is working on a photo directory and COAD had a discussion about steps to improve participation rates in the effort.
4. The COAD approved an Institute for Innovation and Economic Development in the College of Business. The proposal now advances to the next level of review.
5. The COAD discussed department chair quartiles and how they are determined. Per earlier meetings, there need to be some revisions but consensus on what those changes should be remains to be determined.
6. COAD members gave updates on various activities within respective colleges and units.