

## **Academic Update February 1, 2016**

Dear Colleagues,

The rest of the semester will be very busy. A glance at the posters going up around campus gives us a glimpse of the number of events planned for the spring. The semester culminates on May 14 with Commencement. Dr. Donald Harrison will be our speaker. Many of you will catch your breath and then begin May classes, including study abroad, and then summer school. I am reminded of the story about the fellow in McDonald's who asked a college faculty member how many hours a week he taught. He responded "twelve." The gentleman said: "I wish I could get a job like that." Thank you in advance for the countless hours you will invest on behalf of our students in these next few months. Twelve just gets you started.

President Kitts and I are in the latter stages of meeting with each academic department on campus. These meetings have proved very valuable in sharing information about the university and learning more about the needs of the respective departments. The two public forums scheduled for February 2 and February 9 will also be helpful in bringing campus issues before the administration.

### **Council of Academic Deans (COAD) meeting on January 25**

1. Amber Fite-Morgan, the university attorney, met with COAD to discuss her new duties as chief diversity officer for the campus. She provided information on her background with diversity issues. Departments are encouraged to invite her to a meeting to discuss how her office can be supportive of their diversity efforts.
2. The COAD had a lengthy discussion about compensation and travel expenses for study abroad courses. There has been confusion about how these are handled from college to college so the attempt was to create comparability in the way in which they are handled across campus. The deans now have a knowledge of how to proceed. To the extent possible we need to find ways to not add the cost of the travel expense for the faculty leaders to the cost of the trip for the students. The deans will work toward that eventual goal.
3. The COAD offered a proposed change in language to how the repeat/recompute policy for incoming students is interpreted. It is being reviewed by admissions.
4. Dean Melvin Davis gave an update on Quality Matters (QM). QM targets quality assurance for online courses. Training programs will be offered to provide assistance to faculty who teach online and wish to adopt the QM approach. The best practices manual for SACS states: Electronically offered programs and course meet institution-wide standards-both to provide consistent quality and to provide a coherent framework for students. QM is an excellent way to demonstrate compliance.
5. Dean Carnes gave an update on the upcoming AACSB visit in support of accreditation for the College of Business. He also reported that MBA enrollment is showing an increase for the spring.
6. Dean LeFort gave a report on the RAISE ACT, a series of policies for P-12 teachers being advocated by certain members of the Alabama Legislature.
7. Dr. Zhang provided an update on the success of Keystone, an organization that provides leads for international student enrollment. We are currently in a pilot study with that group.

8. Dr Joy Borah reported that UNA will host a college and career readiness event on April 22. We expect from 600-800 high schools students to attend. The event is being sponsored collaboratively by UNA, Northwest Shoals CC, and the Shoals Chamber of Commerce.