

Academic Update September 24, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

The positive enrollment report for the fall semester reflects hard work by the entire campus. Thanks to all of you for your efforts. The battle continues, however, as we work to retain our new and returning students and help them persist to graduation. If you have students in your classes who appear to be having difficulty, please refer them to one of the support services on campus. If you are not sure, refer them to the University Success Center in the Commons. We can't be certain we will be successful with all at-risk students, but we must try to help them. Our students juggle work, family, financial stress, and numerous other obligations that can interfere with academic success. When that occurs, intervention is essential. This is not a suggestion for a reduction in academic rigor. We can continue to be tough, but cognizant of the challenges our students face.

Council of Academic Deans (COAD) meeting on September 14

1. We completed our discussion of academic administrators with faculty tenure. After consultation with our staff attorney for a legal opinion, we agreed to provide a follow up employment letter to all academic administrators who hold tenure. The letter clarifies their right to continuing employment at UNA should they separate from administration but it may or may not be in a faculty line depending on availability. There is no legal obligation on the part of the university to create a faculty line to accommodate an administrator with faculty tenure who wishes to return to the classroom. This is not a change in policy just a clarification of the process.
2. The college deans continued their review of tenure and promotion language in the Faculty Handbook. The following items are being discussed: coupling tenure and promotion to associate professor into one review process using the promotion timeline currently in place; eliminating the ambiguous review scale currently in place in favor of an up or down vote; providing feedback to candidates at the conclusion of each review instead of afterwards; reducing the timeline for submission from eight years to six years; and moving the submission process to be completely electronic, including supplemental materials. Once the review of proposed changes is completed by the deans, it will be presented to the faculty.
3. Jerri Bullard met with COAD and provided a post mortem on summer 2015 and discussed plans for a successful 2016. She has plans to meet with each department chair toward that end.
4. Stephen Putman met with COAD and alerted us that AdTran is getting out of the phone business so the campus faces replacement of our current VoIP phone system.

September 24 Meeting with Director of QEP

I met with Lisa Keys Mathews to discuss progress on the QEP. There are many exciting initiatives in place in support of that effort. A committee is being convened to examine the structure and mission of a Center for Teaching and Scholarship. This professional development unit is a benchmark for our QEP. We also have a speaker from Elon University on campus October 13 to work with faculty and students on best practices in undergraduate research. Dr Mathews will present an overview of our QEP at the SACSCOC annual meeting in December.

Perhaps most exciting is the new collaborative research and learning space being finalized in Collier Library. This space will create new opportunities for faculty to students to collaborate on learning and research projects. Please contact Lisa to get a tour of this exciting addition to the UNA campus.