



# Academic Affairs Newsletter

by Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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## Something New

This is the first issue of a newsletter from the Office of Academic Affairs. I will send it every few weeks. The purpose is to keep the faculty and academic community informed about campus activities, deadlines, newsworthy actions by the administration and/or shared governance, and faculty/departmental accomplishments that deserve special attention. It belongs to all of us so feel free to contact me or Renee Vandiver about something you would like included. Thanks for your support.

## Faculty Handbook

The Faculty Handbook serves as the source for faculty members to obtain information about policies and procedures related to their professional life. As we approached our SACS review (scheduled for spring 2012) it became apparent that several elements of the Handbook needed to be updated to reflect current practice and policy. This effort has taken on a larger role as the Faculty Senate attempts to ensure that the Handbook is current, reflecting all changes in policy and procedure that have been approved by the Faculty, the administration, and/or the Board. Moreover, it is also seen as an opportunity to update the language of the Handbook and remove some campus-wide policies that are relevant to all employees and included in other documents. In short, an overhaul of the Handbook is being undertaken. Numerous individuals are involved and deserve thanks. For example, English faculty members Anissa Graham and Alaina Patterson, and Renee Vandiver in our office, have worked for the last six months doing editorial work. Math/CIS faculty member Pat Roden has conducted a thorough search of archival records of the Faculty Senate to ensure that all approvals are included. Numerous SACS Committees have analyzed policies and offered suggestions for changes that will strengthen the Handbook as an archival document for the SACS review. The Faculty Senate has reviewed new policies on a regular basis and has done so as quickly as possible to acknowledge the SACS timeline. Per the directive of the Senate, a draft of the revised Handbook has now been submitted to the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. They will conduct a review and report back to the Senate. Hopefully, by the end of the academic year we will have a Faculty Handbook that is precise, current, and easy to follow. Thanks to all for their help toward that end.

## Information Technology

An operational change is being initiated by the Department of Computer and Telecommunications Services (CTS). Restrictions on administrative rights for employee computers are in the process of being removed by CTS staff. This change will minimize the need for faculty and staff to seek removal of built-in constraints implemented by existing, but dated, policies or by the CTS staff. However, with this change comes additional responsibility. Misconduct, such as disabling administrative software or downloading software that proves to be contaminated, can be destructive to the campus network and adversely impact all of us. Unless you are exceedingly confident in your technological knowledge, I encourage you to continue to take advantage of CTS support services. We are being afforded an important trust; let's not abuse it. The transition to the removal of administrative rights will also expedite implementation of Active Directory, a central logon interface that is badly needed to support software acquisitions and allow new benefits, such as access to global address lists.

## Graduate Council Meeting

The academic departments at UNA do a great job as caretakers of their curricula. For example, at the Graduate Council meeting on November 29, several programs submitted substantial curriculum changes in response to concerns reflected by accreditation agencies, new state guidelines, five-year reviews, and/or feedback from faculty and students. This kind of ongoing monitoring of curriculum quality and relevance keeps us current with student needs and responsive to external stakeholders. Thanks!