Distinguished Faculty Awards 2012-2013

Congratulations to our colleagues who were recognized this year for their outstanding work in the classroom and across the campus. This year’s recipients of the College’s Distinguished Faculty Awards are:

- Ana Oprisan – Physics & Astronomy – Distinguished Teaching Award
- Simon K. Lewis – English – Distinguished Research Award
- Joseph P. Kelly – English – Distinguished Service Award
- Genevieve H. Hay – Teacher Education – Distinguished Advising Award
- Sorinel A. Oprisan – Physics & Astronomy – William V. Moore Distinguished Teacher-Scholar Award
- Language Education, a B.S. in Marketing and a B.A. in Archaeology.

Academic Program Updates

Academic year 2012/13 has been a busy year for the College and we have seen a number of new programs approved and begun. This spring the College will see the first graduates in three programs which began last year – the B.S. in Exercise Science and the B.A. and B.S. in Public Health. Additionally, this year several new programs were fully approved, not just by the College, but also by CHE and SACS – a B.A. in African American Studies, a B.A. in Foreign Language Education, a B.S. in Marketing and a B.A. in Archaeology. The BPS program was required to submit another report to SACS, and has done so. Hopefully the program will be fully approved by fall and we can begin enrolling students in the new program.

Thanks to everyone who worked to bring these new programs to fruition. One of the interesting things about all these programs is that they are based almost entirely on current courses offered in departments and thus do not require significant additional or new resources to support the programs.
Dean Searches

This past year the College of Charleston has conducted searches for four deans – a new Dean of North Campus position as well as a Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, a Dean of the Honors College and a Dean of the Library. Three of these searches were successful.

In July the College welcomed Dr. Godfrey Gibbison as the new Dean of the North Campus. Gibbison came to the College from Georgia Southern University where he was an Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the School of Economic Development in the College of Business Administration. He earned a Ph.D. in economics in 1998 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, an M.S. in Agricultural Economics at Iowa State University in 1995, and a B.Sc. in Economics at the University of the West Indies in 1992. As Dean of the North Campus, Gibbison is responsible for academic program development, particularly the College’s new Bachelor of Professional Studies program which will be offered almost exclusively through the North Campus.

In January of this year the College welcomed Dr. Trisha Folds-Bennett as Dean of the Honors College. Folds-Bennett served as the associate dean and coordinator of the nationally competitive awards program for the Honors College since 2006. Since 2009 she also served as the director of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Program. She worked with Dean John Newell in establishing the William Aiken Fellows Society and was engaged in a leadership role in the development of this program. She received her undergraduate degree from Wake Forest University and her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

Dr. Jerold Hale has been named the new Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and will begin his work in July 2013. Hale comes to the College after spending the past two years as dean of the College of Arts, Science and Letters at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Prior to his work at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, Hale spent 19 years as member of the faculty in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Georgia, including three three-year terms as chair of the Department of Speech Communication. Hale earned both his master's degree and Ph.D. in Communication at Michigan State University.

Unfortunately, the search for a new Dean of the Library was not successful. The search committee, chaired by Dr. Fran Welch, reviewed a number of applications, conducted phone interviews with several candidates, and brought two candidates to campus. An offer was extended, but the candidate decided to remain at his current institution. The search committee will begin a new search late this summer and hopes to have candidates on campus in November or early December. Meanwhile, Dr. John White will continue to serve as Interim Dean of the Library.

IT – The Huron Report and Current IT Projects

Last summer the College hired Huron Education to review IT at the College for the purpose of leading to strategic and operational improvements. Huron conducted a number of interviews with focus groups in July and August and in October the group presented their findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees. A copy of the report as presented to the Board of Trustees is available in the Faculty Senate Office, Randolph Hall, room 108.

The recommendations from Huron included the following:

- Establish a governance structure that is comprised of representatives from across the institution and leverages a standardized process to identify and prioritize initiatives.
- Establish an IT Strategic Plan and a rolling 3-year strategic planning process that leverages the input from the governance framework based on customer feedback.

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IT (continued from previous page)

- Provide immediate staffing and funding to complete critical initiatives including:
  - Accelerate wireless deployment and classroom technology upgrades to meet the needs of the academic community and address these major sources of frustration.
  - Constitute a “Phase 2” for the Battery project to address reporting, functionality, data conversion and skills needed to move the College past the implementation phase and into steady-state support.
- Increase IT infrastructure and technology foundations now as well as additional technologies needed to support distance education when the program is defined.
- Establish a customer advocacy program that instills a customer service mentality throughout IT, creates clear channels of communication and increases confidence in IT across the campus.
- Train or hire key positions and critical skills that are currently missing, including network engineers, report developers, business analysts and project/portfolio managers. The absence of these key positions limits IT’s ability to deliver solutions to the College.
- Establish and enforce College policies and controls for distributed purchasing of technologies security and PC refresh which are increasing the total cost of support by IT.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the Student Technology Fee for future academic years, develop a plan outlining how the funds will be used and determine the best method for gaining student input.

The overall findings and recommendations of Huron did not reveal any particular surprises. IT had already identified some of the problem areas/issues – the need to expand wireless coverage across the campus, the need to improve technology in classrooms, the need to improve the network replacement cycle and the need to improve the PC replacement cycle, were projects that IT had already begun to undertake prior to Huron Report. The fact that Huron identified all of these as areas/issues of importance served to reinforce IT’s decision to invest time and resources into these projects.

Over the past several months IT has been working to address several of the recommendations from Huron, and they are continuing to make progress on many of projects. One thing they have done is establish web pages for various upgrade projects so that anyone who is interested in knowing the current progress on a project and/or the projected timeline for a project can access the information. The links to four IT projects are:

  - Classroom Upgrade Project - [http://it.cofc.edu/projects/classroom.php](http://it.cofc.edu/projects/classroom.php)

Each page includes an overview of the particular project including the project goals, an explanation of the benefits to the user, a tentative timeline which identifies the progress that has been made for each project as well as the estimated completion date for specific areas of campus, an explanation of the criteria/approach for the design of each project and a list of constraints that may change the estimated completion date(s) for the project. Anyone who is interested in a particular project should check the links periodically to see the status of the projects.
The College’s 5th Year Interim Report to SACS

The College of Charleston, like all accredited institutions, is required to submit period report to SACS to confirm that we are meeting the many standards established by SACS. On March 22, 2013, the College submitted its Fifth-Year Interim Report to SACS. President Benson presented information to the Faculty Senate at the April 2, 2013 Senate meeting outlining the report submitted and the reasoning behind the College’s self-evaluation of our current efforts at assessment. According to President Benson, there are many areas across the campus in which the College does very well in the support of our students, faculty and staff and in complying with federal and state regulations. We have much to be proud of regarding what we do. However, any accreditation review is also an opportunity to learn where we can improve as an academic institution. One area which was identified for improvement is assessment. Assessment is a campus-wide responsibility and includes continuous improvement efforts conducted by every division of the College.

At the time of our last SACS accreditation review the College was engaged in a three-year planning, execution and reporting cycle for academic program assessment. These assessments were usually conducted in the individual academic department. By the end of our last SACS review in 2007, the three-year cycle was no longer consistent with assessment best practices and so, following consultation with a vice president at SACS, the three-year cycle was shut down in April 2007 by the old Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning and Assessment. The plan was to switch to a new assessment cycle in 2008 or 2009. Unfortunately, due primarily to personnel changes, our new assessment cycle was not implemented until fall 2011. As a result, at the time we completed our Fifth-Year Interim Report, we did not have what SACS calls “mature data” which come from multiple years of centrally directed program assessment. Between 2007-2011 our individual schools and departments continued to complete assessment projects and make use of the assessment data for program improvement, but some schools and departments did much more assessment than others and this decentralized assessment work does not allow for multi-year comparison and review.

President Benson told the Senate that our academic program assessment history and our current assessment cycle were explained in the report we just submitted. President Benson believes that our current approach to program assessment will fully meet SACS expectations for the foreseeable future. However, because we do not yet have mature, multi-year data derived from our new program assessment cycle, and because it took us several years to move to our new institutional cycle, President Benson informed SACS that we are “not compliant” with the SACS standard for academic assessment during the last few years.

The College gave this response of “not compliant” to SACS for two reasons: First, the College had assessment weaknesses identified during our SACS review in 2006-2007, which led to the College being monitored by SACS for two years. While we were removed from monitoring in 2009, it is President Benson’s belief that we should be very conservative in evaluating and presenting current and future assessment information to SACS, given our previous monitoring status. Second, there is a good case to be made that the College has engaged in continuous academic program assessment since 2007. And SACS reviewers might decide that we are in compliance with their program assessment standard. However, we have heard from SACS representatives that it is better to report non-compliance when there is doubt about which choice to make — compliant or noncompliant.

The College will likely receive feedback from SACS in June. At that time it is possible SACS could request additional information or documentation, or they could require additional reports from us. It is also possible SACS will notify us that our reporting cycle is complete and that we are current until our 10-year review takes place in 2016-2017. If SACS reviewers believe that we have been non-compliant in conducting academic program assessment, the College will probably be required to complete a “referral report” about our ongoing work to become compliant. This report, if required, would be due to SACS in September.

(continued on page 6)
Distance Education

The College has been offering online courses during the summer for the past four years and each summer the number of online courses offered and the number of students enrolling in those courses has increased. There is clearly interest among students and faculty to take advantage of opportunities for online courses, and with the development of the new Bachelor of Professional Studies program scheduled to begin in the fall, it is time to begin developing a plan for online and distance education. In the fall semester a Task Force, co-chaired by Lynne Ford, Associate Provost, Curriculum and Academic Administration, and Godfrey Gibbison, Dean of the North Campus, was charged with developing a plan for advancing the College’s participation in the distance and online environment.

The Task Force, which included 18 faculty, staff and administrators, spent the fall researching what types of programs have been developed at other institutions to help identify what might best meet the needs of the College and, at the same time, be consistent with our institutional mission and values. In December the Task Force presented their recommendations to the Faculty Senate and submitted their report to the Provost and the President. In January the report was presented to the Board of Trustees where it was enthusiastically received.

The recommendation of the Task Force is that the College move forward “deliberately and with energy to expand online education at the College once the necessary infrastructure and resources are in place.”

There were a number of reasons identified for why the College of Charleston should move forward to expand online and distance education at the College, including:

- Experience with the online learning environment is essential to preparing our students to be lifelong learners, regardless of their major, and to effectively engage in the modern workforce, regardless of occupation.
- Expansion of online education will improve the quality of and enhance what we value in traditional face-to-face teaching and learning.
- Online learning promotes the core value of a highly personalized education because it requires students to be highly engaged with the material and with the instructor through regular communication and feedback.
- Online courses and programs offer faculty opportunities to develop new pedagogies and skills, to revisit and revise courses, and provide increased flexibility in when and where they teach.
- Greater access to courses and programs online extends the impact of the College’s high-quality education and affords the College the opportunity to reach non-traditional, non-residential, and likely a more diverse student population.

In addition to identifying reasons the College should move forward deliberately and with energy to develop online and distance education opportunities, the Task Force also identified a number of issues that must be in place before we can expand online education. These include the development of an appropriate infrastructure to support online education, quality assurance and local (departmental) control of courses, compliance policies, an ownership policy regarding course content and materials, support for faculty development, student support services and online orientation, methods of assessing the quality of online education and the development of appropriate and adequate library services. The Task Force recommended a phased growth and development plan consisting of two stages:

Stage One is a building phase in which the IT infrastructure, policies and administrative and student/faculty support structures are brought up to “best practice” standards. The Task Force recommends that the College employ Huron to review and address the exact nature of our infrastructure needs and the costs associated with bringing the College up to “best practice” standards.

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By September we will have more mature data based not only on the assessment work done in 2011-2012, but also the data from this academic year as well, and President Benson is confident that we will be able to demonstrate both our compliance with the SACS standard for academic program assessment, but also our continued development of a “robust culture of assessment at the College”.

(This is a summary of the report President Benson provided to the Faculty Senate on April 2, 2013. A more complete copy of his remarks is available on the Faculty Senate web page (http://facultysenate.cofc.edu/archives/2012-2013/april-2013/senate-minutes-april-2013).)

The Task Force also recommended that distance education and online courses be designed based on departmental and program needs and interest, not any umbrella, institutional directive. The Task Force pointed out that some courses and curriculum lend themselves to online instruction better than others, so the development of courses and offerings should be based on departmental interest and needs. They recommended that any fall/spring online course offerings would be taught as part of faculty load, and that enrollment in online courses be held to 20 students the first time a course is taught online. Online courses should never exceed traditional enrollments unless the course constitutes a larger share of faculty teaching load.

The college plans to begin offering online courses in the fall and spring semesters beginning next year. Faculty who are interested in teaching an online course, whether during the summer or regular academic year, will need to meet the requirements and expectations set forth by Academic Affairs to help ensure that the courses being offered are providing a high quality learning experience for our students. The Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLT) staff will be offering faculty training sessions every fall and spring beginning in fall 2013. Faculty who have not already participated in a training course will be expected to do so at least one semester prior to the semester they plan to offer an online course. Information about and applications for the training sessions can be found on the TLT web page (http://blogs.cofc.edu/tlt/learning/distance-education/).

1 Members of the Task Force were: Lanie Affonso, Computer Science; David Desplaces, Management and Entrepreneurship; Beverly Diamond, Academic Affairs; Jo Ann Ewalt, MPA/Political Science; Jannett Finch, Lowcountry Graduate Center/North Campus; Lynne Ford, Academic Affairs; Godfrey Gibbon, Lowcountry Graduate Center/North Campus; Beth Goodier, Communication; Zach Hartje, TLT; Deborah Jeter, Mathematics; Joe Kelly, English; Monica Lavin, TLT; Amy McCandless, Graduate School; Renee McCauley, Computer Science; Rene Mueller, Marketing and Supply Chain Management; Bob Perkins, Teacher Education; Michael Phillips, Library/Summer School; and Robin Zemp, Music.

2 Much of the material in this article is taken from the Task Force presentation to the Faculty Senate on Dec. 4, 2012 and their presentation to the Board of Trustees on Jan. 17, 2013.

Distance Education (continued from previous page)

Stage Two is the phase which will include the development of selected online graduate programs and a more robust and strategic development of online courses at the undergraduate level. The Task Force recommended that there be three new positions developed to support distance and online education including a faculty DE director, a TLT curriculum design specialist and a TLT academic administrator responsible for working with OAKS, Kaltura Video, Echo 360, etc.