I need to begin this newsletter with an apology for its tardiness. I started composing it in April, but as you can see with a quick perusal, it grew and grew like the genii out of the bottle. Finally, it grew so late that I decided that I should wait until the Board of Trustees passed next year’s budget, which it did on Monday (my report of that meeting follows under “Budget Matters”). This last newsletter of 2008/2009 constitutes more than a quarterly report—it concerns itself with the entire year.

The obvious danger here is that our out-of-state tuition rates rival those of private colleges—so students from Maine to California increasingly will be expecting from CofC what they can get from the likes of Davidson and Emory. (While the posted tuition at those schools is about $15,000 more than our out-of-state rates, most students get tuition abatements at private colleges.) We cannot tread water if we’re to succeed in this kind of competition: we’ll need to continue improving our undergraduate programs.

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Curriculum

Undergraduate:
The Senate passed two new majors this year, both interdisciplinary: women’s studies and international studies. The first will be administered by the Women and Gender Studies program, and the second by a new faculty hire in the School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs. These were passed by the Board of Trustees, and now are awaiting final approval from the Commission on Higher Education.

We also passed new minors in Applied Computing; Computational Thinking; and Leadership, Change and Social Responsibility.

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Budget (Continued)

With the collapse of state support (we suffered three big cuts in state funding last year, and taxpayers now pick up barely more than 13% of our budget), this tuition increase mostly keeps us where we are now. There are a few significant exceptions, which I’ll discuss below, but for the most part we’re preventing slippage this year rather than moving forward.

Steve Osborne (Business Affairs) predicts that the tuition increases will generate seven and half million dollars next year. The lion’s share (over $3M) shores up accounts we had to raid to meet last year’s mid-year budget cuts (the Institutional Reserve, Enrollment Reserve, and the Strategic Planning Reserve). About $2.7M goes to new costs due to new buildings (e.g., the three new buildings will require nearly half a million dollars more in custodial fees and another million in utilities); faculty salary bumps due to tenure, promotion, and post-tenure reviews will cost $160,000; the library gets $100,000 to keep up with inflation; and there are a dozen other such expenses.

As Dr. Benson announced yesterday, there will be no money to fund merit raises this year. I’ve had discussions with many faculty about this issue, and I’m convinced that this is the right decision. The state unemployment rate is over 11%; other public colleges and universities in the state have furloughed faculty. I think the people of South Carolina would be well-justified in complaining if any part of the tuition increase went to faculty raises. Ironically, the low-level of our state funding somewhat insulates us from the worst effects of the anemic state treasury. Other state agencies that get all their revenue from tax dollars have had to lay employees off. The College’s faculty are still employed by the state, and so we are public servants, and so we ought to share the burden of our collective emergency.

The important qualification to the paragraph above is $300,000 dedicated to improving the pay scale of adjuncts. This is an overdue step in the right direction: our contingent faculty are woefully underpaid—lagging far behind comparative standards. Nevertheless, I expect this year to be nothing more than a hesitation in Dr. Benson’s general plan for making our salaries competitive with not only with our “peers” but with the colleges to which we aspire. I urge everyone to read the Compensation Committee’s annual report, which can be found at the Senate website.

None of the faculty lines lost in the last year’s hiring frost have been restored.

Now for the significant exceptions. There are a few important new uses for this money that will improve the College. The Quality Enhancement Program, now in its third year, will get $288,000, which will probably result in some new faculty maybe as early as the coming Spring. Over $800,000 will fund new scholarships, including two full academic scholarships, sixteen out-of-state tuition abatements, and a 25% increase in need-based aid. Six new staff lines (all non-academic: two in IT, one in Institutional Research, one in Media and Communications, one in Government Affairs office, and one in Student Affairs) will cost nearly half a million dollars annually. This $500,000 calculates out to $83,300 per person — except that includes the value of benefits.

Tree Policy

The president has agreed to a new policy regarding any significant alteration of the College’s landscape. Facilities Planning will consult with the Speaker of the Faculty and the President of the SGA early in the planning process; and the President of the College will be informed of all opinions before he or she decides what to do. Any reports that come from the Speaker, SGA President, and VP for Facilities Planning will be made available to the College community.

This policy actually goes further towards ensuring consultation and openness than the draft policy I proposed to the President in the midst of the recent magnolia controversy, and I’d like to thank the executive team for its support, and Phil Dustan and Reid Wiseman, who have been advocates for this kind of consultation. Students Drew Wham and Fritz Stine should be commended also. Tom Trimboli, Exec. VP for Legal Affairs was particularly helpful in establishing this new policy, which is intended to prevent the kind of intramural suspicions we recently experienced.
The Discovery Informatics major has two new cognates: Finance and Accounting.

In addition, we had scores of new courses, changes to programs, etc. come through the Senate. I would like to congratulate Bob Perkins, chair of the committee, for a job well done. We processed these proposals more efficiently and effectively than we did last year, and Bob deserves the credit for the smooth operation.

General Education

Last year, the Senate created a new General Education Committee that would facilitate a gradual reform of our curriculum. The Faculty approved the committee in Fall 2008, the committee formed later that semester, and began the difficult work of establishing procedures and protocols for Gen Ed reform.

Chris Starr, chair of the committee, brought two proposals to the Senate at the April meeting. The new History proposal was, essentially, the same one hammered out by the Senate last year. The English proposal was quite different: it replaces ENGL 101 and 102 with a 4-hour ENGL 110. Both proposals passed the Senate after a thorough discussion.

These changes signify a fundamental shift in our Gen Ed curriculum. The old curriculum followed “distribution” model, in which gen ed requirements were governed by particular departments or schools. Now, the English Department and History Department no longer “own” any requirements. Any department can submit to the Gen Ed committee and the Senate new courses or existing courses that meet the goals of these requirements. For example, the Senate decided two Jewish Studies courses satisfy the goal of teaching students Knowledge of Human History. These courses will now “count” for that requirement. Likewise, any department could submit courses that meet the goals “Gathering and using information” and “Effective writing and critical reading,” and the Senate could determine that these would then be alternatives to ENGL 110.

I encourage other departments and schools to revisit their general education commitments. If any changes are appropriate, I encourage you to develop proposals (in consultation with the Gen Ed committee), and submit them in the coming year. Right now, we have a hybrid curriculum. Part of it is still determined by a “distribution” model, and part now conforms to a “goals-driven” model. Contact Claire Curtis (Political Science) who will be the new chair of the General Education committee as of 16 August. Also, it is important to keep in mind the need to get started early on all curriculum changes.

Graduate:

The graduate program consolidated the M.Ed. degrees in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education into a new M.Ed. in Teaching, Learning, and Advocacy; added a certificate program in Special Ed; created a new MAT (in coordination with The Citadel) in Teaching in the Middle Grades; and added a certificate program in Service-Oriented Computing.

FLA and WRC

In the Fall of 2006, at the behest of students, Scott Peeples proposed that the Senate form an ad hoc committee to compose a Vendor Code of Conduct as a way to make sure that College of Charleston branded materials were not manufactured in sweat shops. A year later this committee, which included faculty and representatives from Business Affairs, brought to the Senate a resolution asking the College to join the Fair Labor Association and the Workers’ Rights Consortium. The Senate passed the resolution and an accompanying Vendor Code of Conduct. I brought the proposal to Business Affairs, and, after some further negotiation, the College has joined both the WRC and the FLA, adding our name to such other institutions as USC, UNC Chapel Hill, UVA, etc. This will be a partnership between the administration and faculty: the College’s rep to these organizations will be the Speaker of the Faculty; and Business Affairs has committed to doing its part to assure compliance—in so much as South Carolina laws allow. Our thanks go to Scott Peeples (English) and Jan Brewton (Business Affairs) for doing the bulk of the work on this initiative.
Distance Education

Distance Education is a catch-all term for courses in which more than 50% of the instruction occurs when the professor and student are in different places. A few of the College’s courses are now offered as distance ed—for example, some ESOL certification courses in the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance.

The Office of Summer Sessions is particularly interested in Distance Ed as a way of reviving enrollments. We’re experimenting with six sections of Distance Ed in this year’s summer offerings. The Strategic Plan will almost certainly look to Distance Ed—for example, in adult education—as a way to expand our offerings and generate revenue.

Consequently, we’ve ramped up our oversight of Distance Ed. A special committee formed by Academic Affairs has been working on Guidelines for Distance Ed at the College. On the committee are Debby Jeter (chair of Educational Technology), Bob Perkins (chair of Curriculum), Merissa Ferrara (member of Academic Planning), Marie Manning (Teacher Education and one of the Distance Ed instructors this summer), Kem Fronabarger (Geology), and Jannette Finch (Librarian, North Campus). The administration is represented by Pam Niesslein (Accountability, Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment), Sylvia Gamboa (past Dean of Summer Sessions), Sue Sommer-Kresse (Strategic Planning), Susan Beattie (IT), Myra Whittemore (AAPA), and myself.

The cornerstone of any Distance Ed program, as mandated by our accrediting agency (SACS), is faculty governance. The faculty, of course, governs our curriculum, and distance ed is part of that curriculum. Two years ago, the Senate endorsed a continuation of Distance Ed in certain circumstances at the College (see the minutes of 27 February 2007 meeting for details).

The first version of the Guidelines will be published very soon and made available on the College website. In the coming year, in partnership with Academic Affairs, the Academic Planning, Educational Technology, Curriculum, Assessment, other interested committees, and the Senate itself will take on the task of further planning implementing Distance Ed.

Student Evaluations

Last Fall, we organized an ad hoc committee to study evaluating and developing teaching at the College. From my perspective, the committee was formed to deal with the difficulty in documenting excellent teaching, which became more important when we moved to a merit-raise system a year ago. But the committee was charged by the provost with looking not only at evaluating teachers but also at ways of developing and supporting good teachers.

The committee has recommended to the Provost that we adopt a new student evaluation form. (For the full text of this recommendation, including the new evaluation form, go to the website listed below.) If the recommendation meets with the Provost’s approval, the ad hoc committee will bring it to the Senate at the first Senate meeting in the Fall.

Fall Enrollments

Don Burkard, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Planning, reports that we’re pretty close to targets for the Fall. While the proportions between in-state and out-of-state might actually shift a little towards in-state, that’s not surprising given the state of the economy. All in all, he doesn’t expect many problems, maybe just a little more pressure on freshman class enrollments. A detailed summary of projected enrollments for fall 2009 can be view on the Enrollment Planning Webpage:


Faculty Club

Plans are in the works to revitalize the Faculty Club, based on the responses that many faculty sent in through the survey that was put out last fall. Among these changes are the availability of evening drinks, the start of faculty mixers, and hopefully the launch of other social events. So please keep an eye out for the new membership drive in the fall.
Diversity Office

As many of you know, the Office for Institutional Diversity essentially closed down with the resignation of Carolyn Morales earlier this semester. Morales reported to the Provost as a unit under Academic Affairs. The reconstituted office will be housed under Legal Affairs, which is headed by Tom Trimboli, our Senior Vice President for Legal Affairs. Trimboli is dedicated to diversity, and I expect he’ll be hiring an energetic and effective new staff committed to those goals. Legal Affairs is in the process of hiring a new director and a program coordinator. Heath Hoffman (Sociology and Anthropology) is the faculty rep on the search committee. Tom Trimboli tells me that we’ve collected over 200 applicants for the directorship.

Many of you probably also are aware that I’ve been working with many faculty to improve the campus atmosphere for our GLBTQ community. These efforts were set back a bit with the resignation of Morales, but we had the help of a work study student, Isaiah Nelson, who researched such resources at other universities, and now we’re close to launching a resources web-page for GLBTQ students, faculty, and staff. This page will serve as a model for other affinity groups as appropriate. Heather Alexander, the manager of the Senate Office, is learning how to design and publish webpages this summer, and this resource page will be her first project. Look for the launch of this page by the Fall.

Sustainability

The Sustainability Committee, chaired by Burton Callicott (Library), began the year with high hopes for some significant changes on campus. The end results are somewhat disappointing, no doubt hampered by the blows to the state-funded portion of our budget. A proposal for a full-time sustainability officer, who would help the College reduce its use of energy, increase its recycling, etc., has been tabled, at least for a year. Facilities Planning was to return the Cistern to functionality, a high-profile project that would catch rain runoff that could be used to water landscaping. That plan has not been realized. The College planned to develop a “Sustainability Corridor,” a portion of campus buildings that would serve the community as a model of energy-efficiency; very little has been done to accomplish that. We’re about a year behind in our obligations to the President’s Climate Commitment, an initiative intended to eventually eliminate our campus’s damage to the climate. The first step is to take a comprehensive inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, which we have not yet accomplished.

The one bright spot is the new recycling bins distributed throughout classroom buildings, paid for by a DHEC grant and implemented by Amy Diaz-Barriga, our Architect Design Engineer. These bins are sorely needed. As Callicott reports, the College recycles only 7.8% of its waste, while paying nearly half a million dollars each year to dispose of the rest. Efficient college campuses recycle over 40%, and some reach rates as high as 75%. This summer, Callicott and I are working with department chairs to identify people who will help with recycling in all faculty office buildings—a grass roots approach that should reduce our wastefulness. The support and enthusiasm from department chairs has been phenomenal, and we hope that by the fall semester we’ll have a responsive network of foot-soldiers, so to speak.

Provost Search

The search for a new provost is proceeding on schedule. Working with the firm, Witt/Kieffer, we’ve placed ads nationally, and we’re gathering a healthy supply of candidates. The application deadline is mid-June; the committee will conduct preliminary interviews this summer, reducing the candidates to a manageable few who will visit campus in September. Faculty will have the opportunity to interview the candidates then. The expectation right now is that the new provost will begin work during the spring semester of 2010.

You can find more details, including the position profile and the committee’s membership at this website: http://www.cofc.edu/provostsearch/

Modification of Duties

The Welfare Committee has been working for over a year with Academic Affairs, and they have agreed on a draft revision of the current policy. If it is approved by the president, it will be announced immediately and available on the Academic Affairs web site.

Committee Reports

Annual committee reports can be found on the faculty senate webpage:

http://www.cofc.edu/~senate/reports.html
Optional Retirement Plans

As I’ve reported in this space before, the College makes a mere 5% contribution to the retirement funds of faculty who have chosen Optional Retirement Plans over the SC state pension plan. This is not the College’s fault: that rate, which is the lowest in the Southeast, is mandated by state law. For each employee in an ORP, the College is required to make a nearly equal contribution (over 4%) to the pension plan—which is also required by law.

I met with Shirley Hinson (Government Affairs), Steve Osborne (Business Affairs), and Peggy Boykin (Director of the South Carolina Retirement Systems) to try to find a way for the College to be more competitive with this benefit. That meeting was not encouraging: everyone’s hands are tied by state law, and the only possible (though not entirely satisfactory) solution would require the intervention of the Foundation.

Just last week, Michelle VanParys (Studio Art) alerted me to a similar predicament in Kentucky. (Until last year, Kentucky was second only to South Carolina with the worst retirement benefit package in the Southeast.) Under threat of a class-action lawsuit, the state re-vised its law, upping the annual retirement contributions to ORPs and also giving all ORP participants a chance to switch to the Kentucky pension plan.

Of course a lawsuit would be an unfortunate route to have to follow, but it seems some lever will be needed to dislodge the state law. I don’t expect any solution to this problem in the near term. It’s the kind of issue that will require the diligence of a succession of faculty leaders. But it’s better to start the fight now than later.

Congratulations to This Year’s Award Winners

At this year’s “Celebration of the Faculty” event on April 21st, seven faculty members were honored for their work here at the college as well as in the academic community. While I am listing their names and awards below, I encourage you to visit the Academic Affairs website at http://www.cofc.edu/AcademicAffairs/awards/2009Announce.pdf to read the complete details of both the awards and their achievements.

Distinguished Teaching Award --- Deborah Jeter

Distinguished Advising Award --- Diane Cudahy

Distinguished Research Award --- Scott Peeples

Distinguished Advising Award --- Elizabeth Jurisich

Distinguished Service Award --- C. Michael Phillips

Distinguished Advising Award --- Duncan Munro

Distinguished Teacher/Scholar Award --- Susan E. Farrell
Meet the Board

This year, we welcome two new board members this year, Gregory Padgett and Dan Ravenel.

**Gregory D. Padgett**

Mr. Padgett was appointed August 11, 2008 to serve as the Governor’s appointee.

Mr. Padgett is the Chief Financial Officer of Fennell Holdings, Inc., an investment holding company encompassing the hospitality, waste services, real estate, aviation and finance industries. He received his BS degree from the College of Charleston and has been licensed as a certified public accountant for 26 years.

**Dan Ravenel**

Mr. Ravenel is the former vice chair of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and chairs the Higher Education Study Committee. Earlier this year, that committee presented the Governor and Legislature a strategic plan for higher education in the state.

Ravenel has had a long affection for the College of Charleston where he was president of the student body. Beginning in the 1990’s he served 10 years on the College of Charleston Foundation Board and as its chair. He has been on several other committees and boards including the Friends of the Library and the Cougar Club. He is currently a member of the C of C Alumni Association Board.

This year we also say goodbye to our outstanding out-going chair, Bobby Marlowe. Mr. Marlowe has been involved with the College for many years, and during his position as chair, he helped to lead projects such as the Carolina First Arena, the CATO center, and our new science center.

Taking his place is Marie M. Land, who has served on the Board since 1988. Ms. Land is the first woman chair of the Board in the College’s long history. Assisting her in the position of Vice Chairman is Lee Mikel, who has been a member since 2004.

Information about Dan Ravenel is from Media Relations at the College. Biography information about Gregory Padgett and others is from the Board of Trustees website, where you can find complete information and pictures at [http://www.cofc.edu/trustee/index.html](http://www.cofc.edu/trustee/index.html).