Strategic Planning

On Monday, March 10, 2008, Simon Lewis posted an e-mail detailing the next stage of the strategic planning process—a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats. Each academic department should be conducting its own SWOT analysis in the next few weeks, based on the analyses of individual faculty members. I encourage all faculty to take advantage of this opportunity to influence the strategic plan that will govern the College’s future.

MLK Challenge

I’d like to thank the faculty who assisted teams of student-volunteers during this year’s MLK Challenge: Jocelyn Evans, Bill Lindstrom, Julie Mobley, Bill Olejniczak, Dinsh Sarvate, Viviane Bekrou, Deb Bidwell, Burton Callicot, Irina Gigova, and Vincent Spicer.

By-Laws

The By-Laws Committee, in conjunction with Academic Affairs and in consultation with the Speaker, is reshaping the Faculty/Administration Manual. Eventually, this will involve suggested substantive changes that will be brought to the Senate. But right now, we’re re-organizing the whole document to make it user-friendly, or at least closer to user-friendly than it is right now. These are not substantive changes, and the Senate will be fully informed as the process continues. Brian McGee, chair of the By Laws Committee, reported on this effort at the March Senate meeting. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please send them to Brian McGee or Associate Provost Beverly Diamond.

Academic Forum News

The Academic Forum is convened by the Speaker and the Provost and consists of deans, department chairs, and chairs of certain College and Faculty committees. It met on 13 March.

Jeri Cabot, Dean of Students, and Mike Vinson, Director of Counseling, discussed policies regarding students of concern.

Robert Cape, CIO, announced a plan to replace all old networked computers. Security is the main motivation for the drive. If you are using a computer that is six or seven years old, or an old computer that you think might be a security risk, let your department chair know. You’ll probably get a new replacement.

I announced the Senate’s recommendation about merit raises (see p. 3), which prompted a discussion of the diminished role of service in the top merit category, which might disadvantage instructors.
Sustainability Committee

We had our first meeting on October 27, 2007. President Benson was in attendance.

Achievements thus far:
- Baseline of current efforts is established [http://www.cofc.edu/sustainable/currentefforts.html](http://www.cofc.edu/sustainable/currentefforts.html)
- Launch of a committee website – [www.cofc.edu/sustainable](http://www.cofc.edu/sustainable)
- With encouragement from the Sustainability Committee, President Benson signs the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment [http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/](http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/)
- Targeted task forces formed: Waste Stream, Energy, Policy, and Education
- Establishment of a “Green Initiatives” Fund

Goals:
- Zero waste
- Zero green-house gas emissions associated with The College of Charleston

Immediate Goals
- Improve recycling program
- Improve building “envelopes” to reduce heating and cooling costs
- Replace traditional cleaning products with non-toxic, environmentally friendly products
- Establish general environmental policy and procurement policies that reflect our commitment to decreased carbon emissions
- Market “Sustainability” to the campus
- Research potential alternative energy sources

---Burton Callicot

Tenure and Promotion

The Committee has been working with the Senate for two years to revise some of the language in the FAM and to modify the tenure and promotion process when necessary. Some of the approved changes to the process are listed below:

- Summary Ratings for Student Evaluations for all courses in the Department will be included with the candidate’s student evaluations in the executive binder.
- The minimum sample size for graduate surveys was increased from 25 to 40; a demographic form distributed by Academic Affairs will be included with a department’s own form; recent graduate surveys are now optional for 3rd year review.
- Extra-departmental colleague letters are optional for third year review and may be requested by the department evaluation panel or the candidate; untenured faculty are not required to write colleague letters; the chair is not required to write a separate colleague letter. (Please note: any member of the department may submit a colleague letter.)
- The protocol for conducting an independent external review of research has been added to the FAM. These reviews are optional, but the protocol, formerly included in the annual memo, is now in the FAM.
- Chairs confirm tenure list: changed from September 15 to August 15
- Candidates submit packet: changed from Oct. 15 to Sept. 15
- Panel Chairs assure that all evaluation data have been collected and panels convene: changed from Oct. 27 to Oct. 1
- Panels give recommendation to Deans by Nov. 1
- A copy of the departmental panel letter will be provided to candidates starting Fall 2008. The candidate will sign the copy included in the packet.

---Pam Riggs-Gelasco, chair

President’s Advisory Committee

The Faculty Advisory Committee to the president, with eleven members drawn from each of the College’s Schools, held several productive meetings with President Benson, advising him on campus policies and bringing faculty concerns to his attention. The committee met three times with the president in fall 2007 and has met with him twice so far in spring 2008. Our discussions have covered a variety of issues, including faculty compensation and the merit pay plan, the ongoing campus strategic planning process, the possibility of increasing support for faculty research and development activities, opportunities to upgrade campus technology, and potential improvements in adjunct faculty pay and working conditions. The committee also had the opportunity to take part in a strategic planning focus group with Dr. Benson, sharing ideas for improving the College and discussing our vision of the institution’s mission. The Faculty Advisory Committee has scheduled its final meeting of the year with the president on April 2, 2008, and welcomes members of the faculty to suggest items for the agenda.

----Jason Coy (History), Chair
General Education Update

The Senate has finished its seriatim discussion of the General Education proposal, and is in the midst of considering the entire proposal as a whole. The present state of the proposal, as amended at our last meeting (26 February), can be downloaded from our website. Much of the Senate’s recent time has been devoted to amendments that attempt to trim hours from the proposal. For more details on the Senate actions on these amendments, please consult the “Highlights” of the meetings, which is available at the General Education meetings page on the Senate’s website.

At the last Gen Ed meeting, I announced my determination that the debate be settled by this year’s Senate. If need be, I’ll suspend the Senate’s April business, including curriculum proposals, until we vote on the General Education proposal.

On-line Evaluations

The Faculty Educational Technology Committee reported on the use of on-line course evaluations at the March Senate meeting. This report is preliminary to a motion to be introduced at the April meeting that will ask the Senate to endorse a plan that would allow faculty to choose to conduct their end-of-semester evaluations on-line rather than on paper. It is available as support materials under the 11 March meeting at the Senate website.

Compensation

At the February Senate meeting, Richard Nunan (at-large) and Thomas Heeney (Communication) introduced two motions, the first endorsing the Compensation committee’s report (which was delivered at the January meeting), and the second being this:

For any faculty member judged to meet the merit threshold as defined in Recommendation 3 of the Faculty Compensation Committee’s January 08 “Recommendations on Merit/Market Salary Increase Process,” the College of Charleston Faculty Senate recommends a minimum salary increase of 80% of the mandated average annual raise percentage authorized by the General Assembly for State employees for the coming year. Larger salary increases will be contingent on funds available, on level of meritorious performance, and on market factors, as judged appropriate.

advising the administration to guarantee that all faculty judged to be meritorious each year receive at least 80% of the raise mandated by the legislature for state employees.

This motion was tabled to give everyone a chance to hear what President Benson would say at his town hall meeting (20 February). At that meeting, Dr. Benson announced that he was 95% sure that, over the long-run, his plan for merit raises would work— that is, it would significantly improve faculty salaries at the College. He listened to concerns voiced by many that the new system could threaten the morale and collegiality of faculty. He responded that if, in a few years’ time, it was clear that it was not working, he would “scrap” it. In the meantime, he asked faculty to put their trust in him and this initiative.

Nunan and Heeney’s second motion came off the table as unfinished business at the March Senate meeting. After much debate, it passed.

The SC House’s Ways and Means Committee budget calls for a 1% cost-of-living increase this year. According to the SC State Employees Association, the Consumer Price Index rose 4.1% as of December 31. Meanwhile, according to the Post and Courier, higher education in SC will take a $10M hit next year. The College’s portion of that budget cut is not yet available.

Inside Higher Ed reports that faculty salaries across the country are up an average of 4% this year.

...committee reports cont’d

Post-tenure Review Comm.

PTR has completed almost all of its tasks this semester, and I appreciate all the hard work that the members of the committee (Marion Doig, Diane Johnson, Lynne Ford & Charles Kaiser, and Ed Hart (who served as alternate on two cases) have done.

--Denis Keyes, Chair
profile... at large

Trish Ward, At-Large Senator

Patricia Ward is the new chair of the English department; until December 31, 2008, she directed the MA program in English. She is a Medievalist, and she teaches Old and Middle English language and literature, Arthurian literature, early Irish literature, and the history of the English language. Her most recent publication is the forthcoming "Incarnational Moment in the Old English Christ I" (in the collection, The Exeter Christ Revisited, Bruce Gilchrist and Carolyn Esser, eds., Exeter University Press).

Meet the Board

Marie Land is the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and heads up the Student Affairs committee. A graduate of Virginia Commonwealth, Ms. Land has two children who earned degrees at C of C. On the Board, she represents the Sixth Congressional District, and she lives in Manning. She has served on the Spoleto board of directors is an occupational therapist, retired.

State of the College Address

Dr. Benson will deliver a State of the College address in Physicians Auditorium at 11 am on Friday, April 11th. Faculty and staff are invited to attend. The Spring Faculty meeting is the following Monday, at 5pm, in Physicians. Rather than repeat much of the speech at that meeting, Dr. Benson will devote all his time to answering questions from the faculty. If you cannot attend the State of the College address, you will be able to access it by the afternoon of the 11th on the web.