LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE ...

Simon Lewis, Speaker of the Faculty

Last year was not the kind of year we want to repeat, but we seem to have come through it surprisingly well. We managed the virus itself quite effectively, despite a spike in cases at the beginning of the Spring semester. We maintained instruction at our usual levels of excellence and even staged multiple Commencement ceremonies (in one of the coolest May weeks in memory). And faculty were amazingly inventive in staging extra-curricular programming.

Measuring success by what did not happen is difficult, but in a year in which more than 600,000 Americans died (more than 9,000 just in South Carolina) and when numerous colleges and universities had to resort to furloughs to deal with the financial pain, the fact that we were able to come through relatively unscathed is source (for me at least) of great relief.

The exigences of the pandemic underscored the degree to which the functioning of the College is a team effort. More than ever before, I think we were aware that we as faculty owed gratitude to every division and agency on campus: to Health Services for testing and quarantining, to janitorial services and facilities management generally for maintaining a clean, safe environment, to UPD for enforcing mask-wearing, to IT (and TLT and our online ed experts) for equipping and creating teaching spaces, to all our student support and communication services, to the Registrar’s Office for generous new grading options, and, overall, to Dr. Hsu’s calm leadership.

2021–22 Meetings

August 31
October 5
November 2
December 7
January 11
February 2
March 1
April 5
April 12 (if needed)
The Story of More

The 2021-22 College Reads! book has been delivered and should be available via your department or program. The book is a terrific choice for freshmen, breezily written but jam-packed with information that is bound to provoke critical thinking and discussion. The subject matter, reflected in the book’s subtitle “How We Got to Climate Change and Where We Go from Here,” is perfectly aligned both with our QEP and with our Strategic Plan’s commitment to “developing ethically centered, intellectually versatile and globally fluent citizens who create innovative solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.”

... and forward with eager expectation

Simon Lewis, Speaker

The pandemic enforced something of a hiatus on the Strategic Plan (https://cofc.edu/strategicplan/strategic-plan-framework-050620-v3.pdf), but this year should see us moving full steam ahead toward implementation. By now, I think everyone is pretty familiar with the three key pillars of the plan -- student experience and success; academic distinction; employee experience and success -- and the three cross-cutting themes -- innovation and sustainability; diversity, equity, and inclusion. Partnerships. Initiatives already under way in relation to the plan include the establishment of a new Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and campus-wide discussions regarding experiential learning kicked off at the end of the spring semester. The faculty-led proposal to add a two-course Race, Equity, and Inclusion requirement to graduation requirements will be presented to the Senate in the fall.

Last year saw the institution of a new series of “Critical Conversations” (see inclusion.cofc.edu) and the establishment of a new standing Committee on Commemoration and Landscapes dedicated to telling a more complete and more inclusive story of our institution’s past. This summer saw significant upgrades to our technological infrastructure, including DegreeWorks and CurriculumMap. The former now allows all faculty to have access to all students’ degree audits -- which in turn requires us to familiarize ourselves with FERPA rules and the College’s privacy policies (if you haven’t taken care of that yet, please do so as soon as possible). We had welcome news in early June when the SC legislature voted for a 2.5% across the board pay raise for state employees, a raise that the College is going to increase to 3%. About the same time, the legislature also threw us a curve-ball by requiring us to meet the Founding Documents Requirement by having students take a 3-credit hour course. Our response to this change in the law will necessitate further careful review. One other really big change on the horizon is the shift to a so-called Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget process. To learn more about this process, please visit the RCM web-site set up by CFO John Loonan.

Let Us Know: Upcoming Events

People seem to have appreciated my circulating of weekly lists of events last year. Communication ought to be easier now that we’re expecting to be back on campus, but for the time being I intend to keep posting the lists. In order for those to be as complete and useful as possible, please send me information about events, committee meeting agendas, etc. by 8am on the Friday of the week prior to the item. Please limit the information to title, speaker’s name(s) and affiliations, sponsoring department/program, date, time, venue, Zoom info, registration. I generally don’t share fliers, but if you have a short url linking to a flier, that’s OK.