

Welcome back to the 2013-14 academic year.

1. Minor procedural changes to streamline the business items – Unanimous consent for motions and minutes.
2. Added a section for BOT comments and Q&A for me

President's Report

Chinese Proverb/Curse – May you live in interesting times. Well we do!

Since the last Senate meeting a series of significant and serious changes have occurred at FAU with the departure of six senior administrators

(President; Provost; two Associate Provosts; ED Harbor Branch; VP Community Engagement).

The good news is that we have sufficient depth of talent that all are currently filled positions.

But more importantly this case of “punctuated equilibrium” offers us the opportunity to re-forge our relationship as faculty and Senators with the University administration in terms of a new shared governance model.

I have talked with President Crudele and Provost Perry about the need for more faculty involvement in moving FAU forward. I want us to have more seats at the table, more voice in decisions at the University. Both Dennis and Gary agree.

They recognize that we are the foundation upon which this University is built.

We interact with every student at this University.

We deliver our most important product – education. And we insure the quality of the degrees FAU awards.

BUT This opportunity will only be realized if we take more active roles in collectively addressing some of the major academic issues the university is confronting.

This work will come at a cost in time and effort from all of us.

After years of focusing on growth at any cost we now have the opportunity to focus on stability, quality and retention. I know we are already stretched and we did not receive all the faculty positions that we had hoped for. Further, although there is some money budgeted for increases it is precious little compared to what is needed to address the past years' of no increases and on-going compression/inversion and other salary disparity problems.

So it is not a perfect world and it will require us to become more involved to take advantage of what I see as a significant opportunity. In my opinion, it is our responsibility as the UFS to provide the leadership in bringing forth the effort, commitment and talent to address the challenges facing FAU. It is my plan that the future agendas of the UFS will reflect this responsibility by identifying, tackling and resolving issues to strengthen FAU. It is my hope that you will join with me.

We all know that the real work of the UFS is done at the committee level. We have long standing, hardworking, highly productive committees -- for example the UUPC; UGC and UGPC; Promotion and Tenure to mention only a few and lately the re-activated Academic Planning and Budgeting and Academic Freedom and Due Process Committees. Therefore I encourage every one of us to support the increased involvement and production of each of the UFS Committees either through direct involvement or encouraging our colleagues to get involved. We also need to look at where duplication of effort may exist and opportunities for collaboration should be pursued. Finally we need to make sure that if we rise to the occasion we will have an impact. A true sense of shared governance not just lip service.

I see many challenges ahead for us and we will continue to confront each challenge. But I want us to put a special focus on **three** challenges this year:

1. Student retention and graduation – At the recent BOG meeting in Tampa, the governors focused on the poor ranking of FAU on this “all important” metric. I know many of the problems associated with the way the metric is calculated and reasons why FAU is unique as a commuter school but this metric is what they are

focusing on and their support dictates future revenue/support for us. Further, we owe it to the students. Increased retention and graduation will mean more students will succeed here. I have talked with Rupert Rhodd, Chair of the UFS Admission and Retention Committee. He is willing to convene a meeting of the committee with the Administration and anyone who shares an interest and responsibility for retention and graduation to put together a series of actions that can be taken to address this problem. Please see Rupert if you are willing to participate. We will be discussing this issue throughout the year.

2. State College Opportunity/Threat – this year our student enrollments were static in total but significantly down in terms of transfer students. The State colleges are offering more and more similar undergraduate degrees at lower costs. The 2+2 model is no longer relevant.

Do we need to strategically change in response to the threat? Are there opportunities for us to explore that benefit FAU? I think yes. I think we can and should be developing strategies to help guide FAU at the undergraduate and graduate level. I think the Senate can and should be taking the lead in proposing those strategies. We have faculty members here who are experts in the area of study.

There are also already established groups looking at this issue (Provost office, Registrar, Undergraduate studies). We need to complement and collaborate not re-invent. I will take on the task of identifying what those various groups are doing and return to you at the next meeting with initial recommendations for how the Senate can best help the University meet this challenge. I welcome the assistance of any Senators or faculty who would like to work with me. Please send your name or that of an interested colleague to Jenny by e-mail.

3. E-learning – The BOG has recently increased emphasis on e-learning. University of Florida has been designated as the SUS Virtual University. The BOG has also indicated that they will be certifying vendors to deliver courses. Couple this with a policy allowing for increased transfer credit and I believe we (as faculty and Senators) are facing a serious challenge if we are going to protect the integrity of the degrees we offer.

Further, as students move toward more on-line classes either we will need take advantage of participating in the Virtual University and offering our students more on-line options here or there will be fewer FTEs to drive the State funding formula. Unfortunately FAU is far behind most of the Universities in the SUS.

So there is a double threat here. I threat to the integrity of our degrees and the funds we need to continue to support our programs. We have an inactive, e-learning/distance learning committee and an inactive task force at the University level. Once again I am prepared to come back to you this semester with initial recommendations for how the Senate can best help the University meet this challenge.

I will not ask you to do more than I will ask of myself. I will start these initiatives and hopefully you will take up these challenges with me during the semester.

And so we begin the semester with challenges and hope.

To close with another Chinese proverb:

“In every crisis, there is opportunity.”

Thank you. We will return to these issues in the New Business portion and Q & A of the Agenda.