# Academic Update
# March 8, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

If you haven't completed the Faculty Attitudes Survey, please do so. The feedback to the administration and Faculty Senate is helpful in identifying areas of concern. The deadline is March 18.

The College of Business (COB) will host an accreditation team from AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) March 13-16. This visit is the culmination of many years of hard work by the faculty and staff of the College of Business and also the University. We congratulate COB and anticipate an excellent outcome to this important milestone in the life of the university.

As you know, we are in a transition on academic facilities. Floyd Hall will be demolished to provide a site for a new nursing building. That leaves the HES Department in need of new space. After months of deliberation on possible sites, the University reached agreement to purchase the Keystone Building downtown. The facility is located just east of the Suntrust Bank building about 4-5 blocks from campus. The HES Department was involved in and supportive of this decision. The cost is being finalized, but with furniture and renovation, it will be about 2 million dollars. However, according to VP Carter we can spread the cost out over 20+ years. The estimated annually is $150,000 including operating costs, maintenance, and debt service. The transition to the new space will be incremental given the presence of current tenants in the building. The funds will come largely from reserves and savings where possible. While a significant investment, the purchase price at $59 per square foot pales in comparison to new construction costs that range from $200-$250 per square foot. Also, there are no campus facilities to house HES. The additional space will allow HES to expand and grow its programs, including plans to eventually move culinary from East Campus to merge with the department. The property also has an 85 space parking lot and ample street parking. The move creates new and exciting opportunities for HES and we wish our colleagues in that department the best on this new academic path.

The Campus Forum for faculty and staff held on February 2 was abbreviated due to weather so several questions did not get addressed. Over the course of the next few academic updates, I will address the ones I can.

1. Question: What is the status of raises for faculty? Answer: President Kitts has stated publicly on several occasions that a raise for the 2016-17 year is a very high priority. If state funding and fall enrollment hold, we should be able to accomplish that goal. Faculty and staff are deserving of a raise and the administration will do all possible toward that end. Keep in mind, however, that the cost of a 3% raise exceeds $1.6 million so we can't give a raise and respond significantly to campus needs in the same year. One option is to alternate the two going forward. The strategic planning and budget study committee meets in a few days to consider almost 2 million dollars in submissions, not including the 3 million that will be needed to fund additional scholarship demands for the coming year. Those two demands, coupled with the 1.6 million cost of a 3% raise, provide an idea of the fiscal challenges we face.
2. Question: Why not move to merit-bases raises? What is the argument against merit-based raises? Answer: There isn't any argument if funding is sufficient, but heretofore, the raises have been cost of living. It is problematic, in my view, to reduce a COLA raise (which usually simply offsets fringe benefit increases) for some employees to award merit pay to other employees, especially in light of the difficulties associated with measuring merit that have yet to be resolved.

3. Question: Why does the College of Business get to keep a portion of its revenue and not the other colleges? Answer: For those that are not aware, the College of Business retains a portion of tuition revenue from its MBA online and Asia programs. That arrangement has been in place for many years. The College of Nursing also keeps a portion of its revenue for its online programs. Again, that arrangement has been in place for many years. Both of those arrangements evolved at a time when there was significant start up and technology expense associated with online programs. The revenue stream allows both of those Colleges to initiate activities and accomplish important goals, including marketing and technology expenses. The challenge for UNA is to find a similar revenue source for the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education and Human Sciences. All four Colleges need and deserve a dedicated revenue stream to fund program growth and new academic opportunities. Discussions are underway with the deans, provost, president, and vice president for finance to address that inequity with a new funding paradigm but it will take some time to implement it. It is worth noting that the College of Business gives back a significant portion of its portion of revenue to the university budget on an annual basis.

**Council of Academic Deans (COAD) meeting on March 7**

1. Matthew Little met with the COAD to discuss FYE and the university success center.
2. Scott Infanger met with the COAD to discuss financial issues related to study abroad.
3. Tammy Jacques met with COAD to discuss the academic and student affairs award gala in April.
4. The COAD reviewed scheduling issues for the classrooms in the Commons.
5. The COAD reviewed two policies approved by the Faculty Senate-sick leave and office hours. Suggestions will be forwarded to SGEC.
6. The COAD discussed the summer work schedule.
7. The COAD received a report from a committee looking at issues related to the student purge at the beginning of each semester.
8. The COAD discussed issues with the UNA phone system. The current vendor will no longer support VoIP technology.
9. Dean LeFort provided an update on a consultant report that examined policies and procedures in various areas for the College of Education and Human Sciences.
10. The COAD discussed financial issues related to certification of Quality Matters (QM) courses.