

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY

1. Intro – Welcome Back

2. The Year Ahead

➤ Faculty Governance

➤ Inauguration

➤ Elections

3. Administrative Searches

4. Strategic Plan

5. Faculty Survey

6. VP Human Resources

7. Legislative Agenda

8. Faculty Challenge

9. Conclusion

WELCOME BACK

Good afternoon everyone. Welcome back to those of you who have been away. Those of us who have been here all summer IN COOL North Florida are glad you're back! The Fall term is underway and it looks as if we will have the most outstanding freshman undergraduate class in the University's history. Its size is the same as last year but the talent of this group of students offers promise – and a challenge – to the faculty.

We are estimating the size – and the overall quality – of our graduate and professional students will be increased slightly this year. This is the result of much hard work in recruiting and resource allocations by many departments, colleges and programs. Congratulations to all who made it happen. This offers intellectual excitement for the campus and promises to help us become an even better university.

FACULTY COHORT

➤ 230 New Faculty

We have an estimated 230 new faculty. They come from all over and will provide new resources as well as intellectual diversity to the University. This infusion of new blood is important for us.

THE YEAR AHEAD

In addition to the normal, and most important, emphasis on teaching and scholarship there are a number of other important activities for the year ahead.

This is a significant year for faculty governance. We need to operationalize our structure and get the business of the faculty moving forward. The councils will be formed, dialogue between the administration and faculty needs to take place in a number of areas.

The faculty survey results, which I will discuss later, will be a focus for the appropriate Senate committees. Since much of the dialogue of faculty governance has not occurred before, there is much that needs to be addressed. Some is procedural – how do councils function?

How does the administration get – and give – input? How do college

governance units interact and interdigitate with the Senate? How do we obtain needed participation from various components of the University staff? This is all good stuff. It will be time-consuming and, sometimes, confusing. But, it will be fun!

September 9 & 10 is the University celebration of inaugurating a new president. I've been here 8 months and we need to get this done! Hopefully, it will be tasteful and in harmony with the mission and goals we hold dear. To say I enter this process enthusiastically would be a stretch. However, I am rather pleased with the plans and hope you will be able to participate in some way. I appreciate efforts by the colleges and other academic units. This is an opportunity to celebrate our academic accomplishments and both faculty and students are working to make the event a success.

This fall is also important because it is an election year. There are important issues at the local, state and national level. We anticipate considerable exposure to national candidates and I am hopeful the campus will engage in this important dialogue. The students are announcing a voter education initiative entitled “Chomp the Vote” which we can support and, perhaps, emulate in some way.

ADMINISTRATION SEARCHES

1. Patricia Telles-Irvin
2. Sr. Vice President IFAS
3. Vice President University Relations

4. Sr. Vice President-Provost

I am announcing the beginning of the search for the Provost. The committee will be posted on www.aa.ufl.edu. Doug Barrett will chair the committee. The goal is to complete the search this semester. This will be Provost Colburn's last semester and I have appreciated his commitment and his help during the transition.

** Pleased to note there is stability in governance boards – BOG, BOT. Both entities are setting into their prescribed roles in ways that should be reassuring to the faculty.

STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the important tasks we must accomplish this year is to take a close look at the University Strategic Plan. This plan was completed a year and a half ago. It needs to be reopened and retooled – if necessary.

I have asked the college deans and various program directors to engage the faculty this fall in discussions about the current plan. We cannot and should not throw out what has been done. We should – and must – redo and reprioritize the plan where indicated. I need your help and so do the deans. I am asking each academic unit to report to me by the end of this year – that’s December – this calendar year.

Please help!

FACULTY SURVEY

By now most of you have heard, and perhaps seen, results of the Faculty Survey that was conducted in the spring. I want to thank Angel Kwolek-Folland and the Senate's Task Force on Quality of Life Issues for Faculty for their assistance in constructing the survey instrument. I am quite pleased that so many of the faculty took the time to participate. I am still sorting out what to make of the results. Many of you have given me input and I encourage others to do the same. Hopefully, these data will serve as a starting point for some of the faculty Senate Councils. We need to look at what's being said as we move forward. There are some obvious conclusions and there are also some areas that need further study.

I am struck by the disconnect between the faculty and past central administrations. We in the administration have work to do. There are areas where misunderstanding – of lack of understanding – exists. Benefits is one of those areas.

The responses of each college have been returned to the dean of the college. They will be sharing that information. Likewise comments have been distributed to the colleges. I hope this will be of some use to these academic units.

I consider these data to be baseline information and food for thought. We are committed to repeating the survey annually for several years. Lets see what happens.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMAN RESOURCES

As part of my review of administrative practices at UF, I have looked closely at issues involving people – our human resources. As you may know, faculty issues are handled by the Office of the Provost and staff issues are managed in the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. I am concerned that we have too many unsolved problems in human resources. I note that faculty benefits is the area in the Faculty Survey that generated the most comments and questions. There appears to be significant dissatisfaction here and I have struggled with how to respond.

Another significant personnel glitch is the process at UF for handling complaints about discrimination. The EEOC Office needs to be able to serve as the initial receiver of such complaints both for faculty and

staff and it should conduct an independent investigation. The office needs more authority. Currently, the unit in which the complaint is filed conducts the initial inquiry.

Therefore, because of the magnitude of the faculty and staff issues and my conclusion we are not currently set up to optimally address them.

I am announcing today that I will ask the BOT to create a new administrative position – Vice President of Human Resources. It will report to me. It will handle both faculty and staff issues. It will contain the Office of Equal Opportunity which will independently investigate complaints of discrimination. This is an additional expense, but we will consolidate existing resources and, hopefully, help make UF a better place to work. We can only achieve our goals if our faculty and staff are provided a working environment that enables them to be productive and feel rewarded.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

This year **will** be important for the University in Tallahassee. We need legislative support for faculty compensation. There is also a compelling need for staff compensation. This year's \$1,000 payment is a one-time benefit. There was a significant state contribution to staff health insurance such that there were no premium increases. However, we must concentrate on obtaining **real** increases for faculty and staff.

Devolution is another central issue for UF. We are no longer a state agency but there exists considerable confusion about how we can operate in this new environment. This affects all the state universities and is something we will be working on.

Related to managing our own affairs is the historic shift in operating systems that occurred this summer as UF changed every operating system to Peoplesoft. This is a staggering undertaking and this transition is going to take months. It has been my fate to be involved in Peoplesoft conversions at three universities. We will make it through this but it is going to take time. This is particularly difficult on our staff – the ones who transact the business of the University. The key is communication and patience.

FACULTY CHALLENGE

Finally, today I want to announce a major new initiative for the University.

This summer the BOT held a retreat to explore the issues facing UF as we strive to achieve the goal of becoming one of the top 10 public universities. We looked carefully at our current levels of excellence compared to our peers and saw some positive signs. Our undergraduate student body is as good as anybody. Our Faculty research effort is strong and improving every year. Our facilities and plans for improvement are on track.

However, there is one area where we fall significantly behind our peers. That is in the category of Faculty support. We are behind in salaries and benefits. We have inadequate support for research,

sabbaticals and graduate student support. We don't have enough faculty for our workloads.

This is a big, multifaceted problem but the solution is simple. More resources. We need to help our faculty by getting them the resources needed to lift off to the top tier of higher education institutions.

Therefore, with support from the Board of Trustees, I am announcing today The Faculty Challenge.

This multiyear initiative will focus on obtaining \$150 million in private funds for the faculty. It will be the central theme of our fundraising effort until it gets done. We need everyone's help.

Hopefully, you will see this come to fruition in the next few years when we launch a capital campaign. But, we start right now – today on this piece.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me express how happy Chris and I are to be at Florida. It was the right move for us and we love it here. Our enthusiasm is kindled by the wonderful people we have met – faculty, students, staff, alumni, citizens of Gainesville, Florida.

UF is truly the Flagship for Discovery

- The place for self discovery.
- The place for discovering this wonderful, complicated world.
- The place for discovering new expressions of art and culture.
- The place for discovering solutions to society and mankind's unanswered questions.

I'm looking forward to sailing with you.