**From:** Dan Howard
**Sent:** Thursday, February 03, 2011 5:21 PM
**To:** Beverly Boals Gilbert
**Cc:** Glen Jones; LYNITA M COOKSEY; THOMAS A. MOORE; Tugrul Polat; Nicholas R. Taggart; SUSAN HANRAHAN; DONNA MCMILLIN; Ed Kremers; Rick Stripling
**Subject:** Faculty Senate Questions and Responses; February 3, 2011

Dear Beverly: Thank you so very much for bringing these matters to my attention so that I can provide you and our colleagues on the Faculty Senate with my best faith effort at providing valid and reliable information to overcome some apparent misunderstandings. Please find below my responses to the questions/statements that have been brought to my attention. For convenience and clarity, I have repeated the questions/statements that were brought to my attention. Please feel encouraged to share this information with whomever you deem appropriate.

1. **We have two departments who have not qualified for accreditation and more to come because the “leaders” have cut funding and others feel they may be next to lose long-standing accreditation.**

***Response:*** I am unaware of any “cuts to funding” to support accreditation and I most certainly did not recommend or approve of any. Similarly, I am unaware of any accreditation that ASU has earned that is in jeopardy of being lost. It is my understanding that KAIT mistakenly stated that ASU lost its accreditation by CSWE and a representative of ASU (i.e., Tom Moore) responded to KAIT providing them with factual information about this accreditation.  ASU holds accreditation by CSWE for its BSW and this accreditation recently was affirmed. ASU is seeking CSWE accreditation for the MSW and this process is unfolding.

I would like to be informed immediately as to any area in which accreditation is in danger of being revoked or otherwise lost. Please be advised that since my initial interview for the position of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research, I have been on the public record as stating that I am a strong and unwavering advocate for regional and specialized accreditation and have encouraged (not discouraged) the flow of resources into creating conditions necessary for ASU to maintain regional accreditation though HLC and add to specialized accreditation. For example, in my goals and objectives for this year that I submitted to President Potts, I made the following statement in one section:

*Improving academic program quality is an important goal for all academic institutions of higher education and is a fundamental requirement  for obtaining and retaining regional (i.e., institution-wide) accreditation by bodies such as The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities (HLC) as well as for specialized accreditation bodies such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In the United States, accreditation of academic institutions and programs occurs through a peer review process by a recognized professional organization operating under the authorization of The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). In addition to the need for continuous quality improvement of academic programs to fulfill accrediting requirements, institutions of higher education have a fundamental need to do this as a measure of accountability for their students, governance boards, and (in the case of public institutions of higher education) government officials and taxpayers. Moreover, the process of preparing for initial accreditation or reaffirmation of existing accreditation almost universally causes individuals engaged in this process to grow and develop professionally and academic programs/institutions to improve substantially.*

Among other things, I have advocated for the College of Engineering to seek separate ABET accreditation for the new discrete engineering programs in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Civil Engineering and have caused resources to move into this area to help it achieve ABET accreditation; for the department of Computer Science to regain ABET accreditation (that had lapsed before my arrival in January 2008); to seek accreditation for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program offered though The International Center for English (TICE) through CEA; to seek specialized accreditation  for the B.S. in Nutrition Science with a major in dietetics through CADE; to seek COSMA accreditation for the master’s degree in  Sports Management; and to seek NAST accreditation for the baccalaureate program in Theatre. I have encouraged all areas that have financial needs to support accreditation to bring these needs forward through the budgeting process.  Typically, such needs are addressed (to the greatest extent possible) immediately after legal obligations and safety and security obligations.

ASU is gearing up actively to prepare for the self-study associated with reaffirmation of HLC accreditation and funds have been earmarked to support this effort. For example, ASU purchased Trac-Dat software to facilitate assessment and added a position in assessment to provide a greater institutional focus in assessment. Additionally, ASU will be retaining an architectural firm with special expertise in campus facilities master planning to help ASU develop a new and comprehensive campus facilities master plan that includes, among other things, a landscaping plan. Not only will this master plan provide a heuristic for future campus development, but it will provide a basis to help with raising philanthropic support for construction-related named gift opportunities. An array of other campus plans are under development in association with this accreditation including, but not limited to, the Strategic Plan, Enrollment Management Plan, Safety and Security Plan, Emergency Preparedness Plan, and the Information Technology Plan.

**2. Question about low standards for ESL program and not even following NCAA rules required for foreign athletes?**

***Response*:** The university is committed to meeting the letter and spirit of NCAA rules and regulations in all relevant areas including ASU’s English as a Second Language (ESL) program that is offered through The International Center for English (TICE), under the leadership of Nick Taggart. I am absolutely unaware of any NCAA non-compliance matters at this time institutionally (including any related to ESL and international athletes). Moreover, the ESL program does not, by any measure, have low standards.

The ESL program consists of a foundations program (commonly referred to as a zero beginner) followed by 5 competency levels of increasing difficulty. The ESL program is a candidate for Accreditation by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) and has applied to become a candidate for the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education Training (ACCET). The CEA self-study is nearing completion and will be submitted soon after vetting by a top-rate consultant specializing in accreditation and recognized positively for this expertise by CEA. In order to qualify to move from the ESL program, international students must meet one of three criteria. The first is to be a citizen from a country in which English is the official language as determined by the U.S. Government (e.g. Australia, Canada, South Africa, or England). The second is to obtain a designated score on an internationally recognized test (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, or the Pearson Test of English competency). For example, a paper-based TOEFL of 500 provides a score necessary to demonstrate English competency leading into a baccalaureate program while an IELTS score of 6 is necessary to demonstrate English competency leading into a graduate program. Alternatively, students may demonstrate English competency by completing level V of the ESL program; specifically, students entering a baccalaureate program must obtain a grade of B or higher in Level V and students entering a graduate program must obtain an A in Level V. Given the stringency of NCAA regulations and for other good and appropriate reasons, as international students demonstrate minimum English competency by demonstrating an appropriate score or obtaining the requisite grade in Level V of the ESL, they are obligated to take a Bridge Course that, among other things, provides them with additional exposure to gaining English competency. TICE offers free tutoring for any international student who is having difficulty in any aspect of English and has a well-established process encouraging faculty referrals of students needing assistance with English.

Data supplied by Dr. Kathryn Jones from the Office of Institutional Research shows that the average GPA of international students at the undergraduate level vs. American students is consistently higher. Please see the sample table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fall** | **Fall** | **Fall** |
|  | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** |
| American | 2.98 | 2.97 | 2.98 |
| International | 3.12 | 3.17 | 3.11 |

Clearly, the above data suggest that the ESL program is helping international students to meet English competency requirements for success at the undergraduate level of study. If anyone has any questions about the rigor or the quality of the ESL Program I encourage them to speak with Nick Taggart, Tugrul Polat, or me and I ensure you that any deficiencies that may exist for which we are currently unaware will be addressed with a high sense of priority.

1. **7% increase in the athletic budget.**

***Response:***Regrettably, Financial Affairs has not been able to determine where the 7% increase in the Athletic Budget referenced above may have been derived. However, in looking at a comparison between the 2009-2010 versus the 2010-2011 operating budget books (which are available on the ASU website) the budgeted expenditures for athletics increased 3% overall. This was attributed to mandatory scholarship increases associated with the 4% increase in tuition and associated increases in room and board (athletic scholarships are based on costs of attendance that includes tuition, fees, room and board, and books); the full implementation of the classified pay plan; and a 2% across the board cost of living increase for non-classified employees. All other increases in budgeted athletic funds were not material. If anyone has any related questions, I suggest that they be directed to Donna McMillin, assistant vice chancellor for budget planning and development.

1. **HEH shares tuition with some other schools, 70% to the schools and 30% to HEH while we, ASU, only get 24%.**

***Response:***Initially, the ASU System entered into a Services Agreement (contract) with Higher Education Holdings, LLC (HEH) on April 8. 2008, that has been modified and superseded on a number of occasions. This Agreement is now between the ASU System and Academic Partnerships, LLC (AP) and the distribution of revenue is 70% to AP and 30% to ASU for the ASU-Jonesboro campus. The associated program at ASU-Jonesboro is operated as a self-funded and self-sustaining program (in a similar fashion as the Nurse Anesthetist program and the ESL program). In this case, most of the revenue is directed to faculty salaries (for the development and delivery of master’s level courses in the College of Education associated with 5 master’s degree programs and 6 programs of study); funds to cover operating costs in the Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum, and Special Education (ELCSE) that houses these degree programs and programs of study; funds to support associated operational costs of the College of Education Dean’s Office; and academic support personnel outside of the College of Education (admissions, registrar’s office, financial aid, student accounts, and information technology) for compensation, workstations, supplies and materials, professional development, and related costs. This program must generate some reserve funds (to cover an unanticipated drop in enrollment and/or to underwrite new academic programs that may be launched). In addition, some associated revenue will be  used to offset the cost of refurbishing the former Jazzman’s Café on Johnson Avenue to create an appropriate workspace for the above-mentioned support staff. At some point if and when the State begins to fund the formula for institutions of higher education, ASUJ will benefit to the extent that participants in the program who are residents of Arkansas will be included in one of the formula elements (currently, approximately 40% of the participants in this distance learning program are Arkansans).

1. **Three weeks of training required for the professionals in the article.**<http://www.baxterbulletin.com/article/20110129/NEWS01/101290321/Arkansas-State-University-Mountain-Home-bridge-jobs-health-care?odyssey=nav%7Chead>

***Response:***ASU-Jonesboro has absolutely nothing to do with the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program offered at ASU-Mountain Home. According to Dr. Pat Bailey, provost at ASUMH, the curriculum for this program is designed by the State Board of Nursing and is delivered on the ASUMH campus. It is offered by a number of community and technical colleges in the state, but not a four-year institution of higher education. The program takes 3-4 weeks of five days per week of intensive study and for which seven undergraduate credit hours are awarded. In order to achieve certification, students who complete successfully this program may sit for the CNA licensing exam. Many times CNA license holders work in nursing homes. Dr. Hanrahan informed me that ASUJ requires all students who seek admission to the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (AASN), offered by ASUJ at ASUMH, ASUB, and ASUN to hold the CNA as an admission requirement as this program teaches fundamental nursing skills. If anyone needs additional information about the CNA program, I recommend that they follow up with Dr. Pat Bailey at ASUMH.

Beverly: Thank you for bringing these matters to my attention. I hope that the responses I supplied provide the necessary background and objective information to address these issues fully. Please let me know of any associated follow-up that may be warranted. I appreciate deeply your leadership of the Faculty Senate and of the faculty who give of their time to serve as senators.

Warmest regards,

Dan