

Provost-gram

An Update from Rowan University Provost Ali Houshmand

Volume 2, February 2007

*This is the second of what will be a monthly update to the University community on the key activities and events in the Division of Academic Affairs. Future issues will include updates from meetings with the Trustees, Cabinet, Academic Affairs and Deans Councils, as well as summaries of relevant topics including admissions updates, research funding updates, the Campus Master plan and the implications for academic affairs, etc. In essence, the focus will be all things **academic**. Consistent with the Rowan tradition, your comments and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged.*

Remarks from Provost Houshmand

Enrollment Management

Historically, as a reputable regional state supported university, Rowan has had no problem recruiting a sufficient number of qualified undergraduate students. For the current enrollment cycle this trend appears to continue.

However, as the baby boomers reach retirement age and their children pass high-school age, the total number of high school seniors will decline, thereby affecting the pool of candidates that Rowan can recruit from. This trend is particularly significant in the northeast part of the U.S. For example, Pennsylvania is projected to face an 11% decline in the number of high-school seniors by 2012. Since there are a large number of universities/colleges in our region, the competition will become intense to recruit every qualified candidate by these institutions. For Rowan to remain competitive, we must develop a modern and aggressive enrollment management system. We have begun this effort in earnest and will report in more detail the results of our efforts.

Suffice it to say that we will use an intense integrating marketing campaign, reaching out to high-school juniors this summer, in order to inform the potential future recruits what a great university Rowan is.

Departmental Meetings

Since the beginning of the spring semester, I have been meeting with individual department faculty and staff and will continue to do so until I meet with all the departments.

I have found these meetings to be educational and helpful in understanding the issues that individual departments, faculty and staff face in their day-to-day life at Rowan. I have been particularly impressed with the cadre of dedicated and well-qualified faculty in each department.

My message at each meeting has been that as Provost I consider myself first and foremost the chief advocate of academic affairs and as such I see the academic faculty to be my ultimate employers.

Furthermore, my main goal during these meetings has been to create a sense of partnership among the faculty, the staff and the administration in order to tackle the challenges we face and to take advantage of the many opportunities in front of us.



CPCE Update

One of the major initiatives of the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) is to establish partnerships with regional county colleges, whereby residents of the counties can have access to a selected number of Rowan's academic programs without the need of attending courses in our main campus.

On February 20, 2007 Rowan entered into a partnership agreement with Cumberland County College. Rowan will offer, through CPCE, degree completions in different areas of business, education, liberal studies and communications. Under the leadership of Michael Ciocco, the college's Instructional Technology Design Specialist, the CPCE is moving forward with its online initiative: an online course template. Software, hardware, and support tools are in place to initiate course development in late spring.

Admissions Update

The Office of Admissions has been successfully working to accelerate the application decision-making process for fall 2007 in an effort to get offers out to students much earlier. By mid-February, nearly 2400 freshman offers of admission had been made for the fall compared to less than 1500 at this time last year. The quality of the application pool is quite good.

Deans' Council and AAC Updates

The two reporting bodies to the Provost, the Deans' Council and the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) meet each month to discuss and address matters pertaining to the Division of Academic Affairs. These meetings consist of information items, discussion items (where action is often taken and recommendations made), and announcements. In addition, other members of the university community are often invited to make presentations pertaining to an area of importance or interest.

At its meeting on February 13, 2007 the Deans' Council agenda included a presentation by Christine Deehan on commencement and discussion items included an entertainment policy for students as well as a discussion about admissions and enrollment management conducted by Provost Houshmand.

The CPCE's oversight academic committee has been formed and is currently in full operation. Member of this committee are: James Coaxum (Education); Ronald Czocho (Liberal Arts & Sciences), Ralph Dusseau (Engineering), Roberta FitzGerald (Communications), Melanie Stewart (Fine & Performing Arts), Robert Fleming (Business), Dorie Gilchrist (AFT representative), and Frances Johnson, Philip Lewis, Eric Milou and Kauser Jahan as faculty senate representatives. The oversight committee, as an advisory body reporting to the Provost, will provide feedback and guidance on issues related to curriculum, faculty, and academic best practices.

Interviews are underway for the positions of program coordinator and academic advisor. A search committee has also been formed for the position of associate dean.

Even with the dramatic increase in offers, the average SAT of the accepted students is significantly higher than last year. Admissions has also teamed up with the Office of Financial Aid to make academic merit scholarship offers much earlier, sending most scholarship offers with the letter of acceptance. Over 500 merit scholarships have been awarded to date.

At its meeting on February 27, 2007 the AAC agenda included a presentation by Ed Ziegler on "branding" and marketing, a discussion about enrollment management and an admissions update by Al Betts, and a discussion about entrance requirements for internal transfers in the Department of Computer Science conducted by Dean Jay Harper.

There was also discussion about the upcoming admissions retreat to be held on March 9, 2007. This retreat will be for the academic deans and other key individuals involved in the admissions process and will be facilitated by an outside consultant.

More information on the outcome of this retreat will be included in the next issue of the Provost Gram.