

Provost-gram

An Update from Rowan University Provost Ali Houshmand

Volume 5, October 2007

*This is the fifth 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.*

Comments from the Provost

I have completed my first year as Provost and I am encouraged about where we are as a University and excited about where we are going. Yes, we have many challenges and obstacles to overcome and some of these will be more difficult than others to navigate. But our future looks bright and we have the ability to become the kind of University that we want to become, while maintaining our core values, focus on high quality undergraduate education, and sense of shared purpose that have always made Rowan a special place. The foundation is already here, and that is due to the work and efforts of the faculty and staff and the students who make Rowan the excellent University that it is. This year I will be working with my administrative colleagues and with the campus leadership to lay out what I see are our challenges and opportunities. I have already begun that process, and you will hear more about this in the coming weeks and months.

One thing that is crystal clear to me as I begin my second year as Provost is the importance of shared governance and the place it holds at Rowan. In truth, this has been a learning experience for me. As Provost, it is my duty to do what I believe is in the best interests of the University and the initiatives I have undertaken this past year have all been to that end.

I realize that my eagerness to move this University

The Budget

While the State budget and its impact on this University is still a problem for us, the very good news is that we are in much better financial shape than we were this time last year due to an unexpected increase in enrolled students (please see the Admissions Update included in this Provost Gram). While exceeding our enrollment numbers presents some problems for us in the form of tripling in the residence halls, etc., it is a very good sign that this University is in high demand and attracting quality students.

forward needs to be tempered with the use of procedures that ensure that all appropriate individuals and groups, particularly the campus leadership, are fully informed and consulted on these matters. This is important not only so that they can understand the initiatives but more importantly to help shape, develop, and support them. We are all in this venture together.

In that regard, I pledge to continue and enhance my close working relationship with the Senate and the Union in the coming year so that we can mutually and cooperatively move the University's agenda forward. I have begun this process this year by forming three task forces with the Senate to deal with three very important issues at this University: enrollment management, the undeclared student and the statewide transfer agreement. More information will be disseminated about these task forces in the future, but I am confident that these groups will produce important recommendations on these critical issues. In addition, to further increase communication, I have asked the Director of the Faculty Center to arrange monthly lunches with groups of 12-15 faculty, librarians and/or professional staff and me. These lunches will provide an opportunity for members of the campus community to ask me whatever they wish and to improve the transfer of information.

Regarding the academic budget, we have begun the process to empower the colleges and departments to manage their own budgets without as much central control over allocations and expenditures. As I have stated all along, I believe that academic and budgetary decisions are best made at the levels where the results of these decisions are realized. This will give the departments and colleges greater flexibility in their decision-making and more control over their own destinies, thus adding to the vibrancy of the academic enterprise.

I look forward to a prosperous and productive year.



New Task Forces Created

The Provost's office is working with the leadership of the University Senate to charge a series of task forces designed to deal with critical issues impacting the campus. The task forces include:

Undeclared Students

The task force has been charged to explore ways to find an academic home for all the undeclared students so that we can:

- Improve our ability to anticipate the needs (course offerings, seats in eventual majors, tutoring, basic skills assistance, etc.) of our undeclared students.
- Insure that sufficient seats in courses are available to allow undeclared students to advance toward eventual transfer into majors.
- Be certain that all students are making progress towards a degree while eliminating students from entering majors in which they have no intention of pursuing a degree.
- Review barriers to the transfer of students into majors and remove those that are unnecessary.

Review of Deans

The Provost's office has taken two actions in response to a request from the University Senate to continue the 360 review of deans that was begun in 2004. The three veteran deans who have not already been reviewed will undergo review with the same process and survey instrument that had been used previously. All faculty and staff within the dean's respective college as well as selected out of unit personnel will be given the opportunity to complete the survey anonymously. The provost will share the aggregated data and discuss the results with the dean. An executive summary will be provided to the college community.

Strategic Enrollment Management

The task force has been charged to examine trends in enrollment and applications across departments, review the basis for restricted majors, examine the history and potential impact on enrollments of CPCE students, internal transfers, and transfers from community colleges, and help develop data-driven strategies for looking at areas for growth and for optimal enrollment sizes and make ups.

Statewide Transfer Agreement

A task force will be charged to examine the impact of the statewide transfer agreement on general education at Rowan and to assist departments in verifying that their transfer practices and curricula comply with the new state law.

Possible Tenure/Recontracting-Promotion Document Merger

The Provost's office is continuing to work with the union and the senate to look at the feasibility of merging the tenure/recontracting and promotion documents. The senate leadership, union leadership,

and the provost's office are currently creating a task force for this effort. The task force will make recommendations to the administration and the AFT.

Admissions Update

----Albert Betts, Jr.

To meet the increased institutional enrollment demands, the Office of Admissions was called upon to produce results that were never previously required of it. We are pleased to report that we were quite successful in achieving our enrollment goals for fall 2007. The 10,000 total applications mark was surpassed for the first time ever this year. This included exceeding both 8000 freshman and 2000 transfer applications. The final enrolled student figures

were 1399 freshman and 932 transfers, making this our largest incoming class. Despite the considerable increase in the size of the class, the profile of our regularly admitted freshmen remained relatively steady with average SATs of 1163, class rank of top 21% and GPA of 3.6. Minority and out-of-state student numbers also increased significantly.