

## A Message From the Chair

*Scott Hewitt*

As the state budget crisis continues to impact CSUF, the need for all of us to work together is greater than ever. For the most part, we do a very good job of cooperating with each other, in the spirit of our Fullerton Way. However, our department and college allegiances (silos) sometimes hinder cooperation. I have seen this manifest itself in several ways during my 19 years at CSUF. As our disciplines evolve, they move closer to each other and curricular and research overlap is inevitable. We no longer have the resources for each department or each college to offer the highest quality programs in isolation. However, due to our protective (silo) instincts, we sometimes try to prevent other disciplines from encroaching into our discipline or sharing our resources. I believe that all of our programs would be strengthened if we did more to foster cooperation and collaboration across disciplines. To do that, though, we need better institutional mechanisms for promoting and implementing interdisciplinary programs. If we were to develop an inter-college department, which dean would be in charge of the program? If I wanted to be a part of that department, would I lose all of my current lab space in my current department? If I stayed within my current department, but wanted to teach in the new department, would I have to do that above and beyond the 12 WTUs of teaching I already do for my department? Who would evaluate my RTP file if I was split between two departments/programs? The present answers to these questions make interdisciplinary collaboration a challenge and continue to keep us in our departmental/college silos. I encourage the Council of Deans and the Senate to discuss these issues in the near future.

On another note, Associate Vice President Huizinga and I identified the following potential Academic Affairs initiatives that involve faculty:

- improving the graduation rate and closing the achievement gap
- increasing externally-funded research
- expanding sustainability and globalization in our curriculum and research
- fostering interdisciplinary programs and collaborative projects
- promoting experiential learning opportunities for students (research, internships, creative activities, service learning, capstone projects, ...).

Vice President Smith incorporated these initiatives, together with assessment and online education, into the set of 10 Academic Affairs strategies that were presented to the WASC team during their March visit. I am hopeful that we will continue to work on these and similar initiatives in the near future so that we can focus our creative energies, enhance student learning, and write stronger external grant proposals

The Senate Executive Committee has been very busy this year. Initially, we worked on furloughs and their impacts. We sent out the Faculty Furlough Guidelines and were able to extend the date for second-year faculty to turn in their RTP files. Our efforts helped lead to increased funding for scholarly and creative activities and for sabbaticals, as these often lead to external funding that we dearly need during the continuing state budget crunch. Considerable time was spent on having a south Orange County presence and on program discontinuance. After reading the Irvine Task Force report, the Senate understands the reasons for having a continued Irvine presence, but has some concerns about the details and would like to have a Senate

standing committee that is focused on our Irvine campus. The Ad Hoc Program Discontinuance Review Subcommittee and the Planning, Resources and Budget Committee recommended to suspend the French M.A. program, and discontinue the German B.A. and M.A. programs. After much debate, the Senate recommended to the President that all seven French, German, and Portuguese language programs be continued.

Regarding WASC, as we only have about one year to respond to the visiting team report, the Senate Executive Committee is working to schedule a late spring/early summer retreat with the Presidents Advisory Board (usually the PAB/Sen Exec retreat is held in the fall). The retreat would focus on the main areas of the WASC review, campus-wide planning, student learning and its assessment, and student engagement, as well as the report's findings and recommendations. In addition, the Senate Executive Committee plans to work more closely with Mike Parker, the Interim Director of University Planning.

This is my last chair's report, as I will be returning to my regular duties of teaching, research and service at the end of May. I enjoyed being the Senate chair and learned a lot. From this perch, it is really amazing to see how well our university is run and all of the great things that take place on our campus. However, I am also excited to be able to focus more on teaching and research as of June. Have a great summer. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [shewitt@fullerton.edu](mailto:shewitt@fullerton.edu).

*Dr. Scott Hewitt is a professor of chemistry. He and his research students study how hydrocarbons react in air (smog), combustion systems (incinerators), archeological samples (Olmec tar), and biological samples (aging). Scott is an avid Titan baseball fan and mountain Ultrarunner. He currently serves as Chair of the Academic Senate.*



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