

## Address to the Board of Trustees

August 26, 2011

President Meadors, Chairman Roussel, Trustees,

I would like to thank the Board for this opportunity to outline some of the goals the Faculty Senate will address this year.

At the May Board meeting you approved the Strategic Plan that was the end result of months of collaboration from members of all aspects of the UCA family. Again we want to recognize Dr. Mike Schaefer and those committee members of SPARC for their hard work in guiding the University through a process of articulating where we are, where we want to be in the future, and identifying a path to get there. Now, however, comes the time to implement the initiatives that arose from the Plan. In addition, the University must respond to the Higher Learning Commission by May. A large portion of this response will relate to General Education issues and university assessment needs, some of which were prioritized within the Strategic Plan. Thus, we see the Higher Learning Commission response and the Strategic Plan initiatives go hand-in-hand.

My goal for the Faculty Senate, then, is to play an active role, where possible, in moving the university forward through the implementation of the Strategic Plan initiatives and in the completion of the Higher Learning Commission report. The July 14<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan retreat I attended provided the UCA community a starting point for prioritizing “cost” and “no cost” initiatives, and offered me a way to envision the role of the Faculty Senate this year.

Under the Strategic Plan No Cost Initiatives:

1. Issues of transparency and communication continue to be of central concern to all involved.

While I’ve seen positive progress in vertical methods of communication on campus:

- Development of the Board of Trustee sub-committees, and
- Invitations for the Presidents of the SGA, Staff Senate, and Faculty Senate to attend the summer Board retreat.

There have been a couple of areas of “slippage:

- The new organizational structure for the University has removed lines of communication to President Meadors from the SGA, Staff Senate, and Faculty Senate.
- In addition, the organizational structure does not provide a line from the faculty of the University College to the Provost. We can’t have faculty on campus with no recognized link to the Chief Academic Officer.

These are examples of vertical communication issues we’ll address this year.

It became apparent last year that another area of communication that needs to be addressed is our horizontal communication.

- To that end I’ve asked the Faculty Senators to meet with their Deans to get a feel for goals and needs at that level.

- Also, I'll start meeting with the Academic Council, which is made up of Chairs and Associate Deans. In addition, one of our Senators is a Chair so we should be better able to share information at this level.
- Finally, last year President Lynn Burley established a Faculty Concerns site on the Faculty Senate web page. We'll continue to expand it this year.

2. A second "no cost" activity is the development of a diversity statement for the Faculty Handbook. A subcommittee of the Senate was charged with this task yesterday. In truth, while a diversity statement for the Faculty Handbook is a "no cost" item, we recognize the implementation of a minority recruitment program will, potentially, be quite costly. As colleges and departments work to develop a minority faculty recruitment plan, hard decisions will have to be made throughout all of the UCA family.

Under the Strategic Plan Cost Initiatives:

1. Last year a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate outlined the various tasks that should be taken to make sure the University is prepared to respond to the concerns expressed by the Higher Learning Commission. This year the Faculty Senate will play an active role in the report that is due in May. I have spoken with the co-chairs, Deans Hattlestad and Lee about the role of the Faculty Senate and yesterday charged a Senate subcommittee with the task of participation in the completion of the final report.

2. The third prioritized item to come out of the Strategic Plan retreat this summer was a goal to address faculty salaries. I want to emphasize that this did not originate from the faculty, but rather a gathering of the UCA family. We recognize that to be able to best educate and retain our students we must first recruit and retain our faculty. This year the Faculty Senate will participate in the discussion of fund allocation along the lines of across the board raises, merit pay, equity pay, and minority recruitment funding.

3. Along the same line of faculty salaries are faculty benefits. Last Spring a subcommittee was set up to address the woefully outdated sick and maternity leave policy. We are currently drafting a new Medical, Parental, and Military Family Leave policy that we expect to bring before you in the Spring.

The above topics outline the goals I have set for the Faculty Senate this year. Please be aware that the Faculty Senators will meet with their constituents on August 30<sup>th</sup> and this will generate additional areas of need for us to address. As you can see, we will be very busy this year. I look forward to running down the list of our accomplishments for you at the May Board meeting.

Dr. Janet Wilson, Faculty Senate President