

**College of Arts and Sciences  
State of the College Address  
Dean Stephen E. White  
October 6, 2005**

Today, I wish to focus my remarks on four themes: 1) the institutional initiative to establish priorities and outcomes, 2) the current state of our College, 3) several diversity issues, and 4) some goals for the next academic year that will help strengthen the College's instructional and research programs.

**A Focus on the Future – Setting Priorities**

The art and science of plotting the College's future path should be a continuous process, but this year, setting priorities is our priority. President Wefald and Provost Nellis have charged all of us to reassess our priorities and outcomes: at the University, the College, and departmental levels. This is a complicated but important task for a College of Arts and Sciences.

Setting priorities that emphasize the attainment of specific goals at the College level is a challenging task given the thematic diversity of the College. In many ways, our College is different from the others. The disciplinary breadth of our College is extraordinary. It is the largest, providing over one-half of K-State's student credit hours. It is the only College in which students who major in other colleges are required to take a significant number of our courses. It is the College that has the greatest diversity, both in terms of thematic areas and the ethnicity of its students and faculty. It is the College that has the mission to provide the academic foundation for the entire University while maintaining a very large number of excellent, freestanding research and instructional programs. It is the only College that can accommodate the needs of a ROTC cadet, who happens to play trumpet in the marching band, major in philosophy, and desires pre-law advising!

I have asked the College Committee on Planning to work with me over the next year as we strive to develop strategies at the College level that will help us attain even greater success. In addition, I plan to meet with small groups of department heads this fall to discuss the process by which we set priorities. I have asked department heads to push ahead and engage the faculty in discussions about departmental priorities. From my perspective, the purpose of this endeavor is to respond to several questions. What do you want your academic programs to achieve over the next three to five years? How can you restructure your instructional and research programs to accomplish your goals? Can you develop areas of excellence that garner national or international recognition? If so, then how do you get there? We have many outstanding programs in our College. My sense is that the objective of setting priorities and outcomes is not an exercise that focuses on fixing programs but rather an opportunity to build upon our past and current success.

By mid-December 2005 each dean is expected to provide an update to the Provost regarding strategies that we are pursuing to engage department heads. By mid-May 2006 deans are to provide the Provost with a summary of college priorities, the status of each department's progress, and how departmental priorities are aligned with both the College and the University priorities. By mid-August 2006 each dean provides a report on plans to assist departments in completing the process. By mid-December 2006, each dean provides a final report.

### **The Current State of the College**

During the fall 2004/spring 2005 academic-year, our faculty taught 308,780 student credit hours (54% of the total for K-State and our biggest year ever). We had 6,736 undergraduate majors; a 12.5% increase between 2000 and 2004. Fifty-five percent of our undergraduates were female. Minority students comprised 15% of our students. The College had 511 masters and 343 doctoral students.

Our students continue to win outstanding awards. For example three of our majors won Goldwater Scholarships: Meg Fasulo (Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Biology), Matt Basel (Chemistry) and Michael Higgins (Math and Statistics). K-State's fourth Goldwater winner last year majored in electrical engineering but was doing research in the Department of Physics. Randy Regier in Art won a Jack Kent Cooke scholarship. This award supports graduate study for up to six years at \$50,000 per year.

Our students continue to gain national-level recognition. For example, the K-State forensics team placed seventh in the American Forensics Association national individual events tournament last April. Several student journalists received top honors at the National Convention of College Media Advisors. The 2004 Royal Purple won first place Best in Show. The editor was Lindsey Porter. Zack Long, former student publications photographer won first place in sports photography. The K-State Collegian staff received second place Best in Show for its October 29, 2004 issue. Alyson Deines, senior in mathematics received the Clare Boothe Luce Scholarship. This award is \$18,000 per year for two years. Our mathematics students continue to excel in the Putnam competition.

During the previous academic year, the College had 401 budgeted faculty members. Among those were 350 tenured or tenure track faculty. Thirty-two percent were female. Minority faculty members constituted 19% of our budgeted faculty. Twenty-seven of our faculty are University Distinguished Professors. Last year, 13 women and 13 men were hired into tenure track positions. Five women were hired in natural science programs. Four minority faculty members joined the college. During the current academic year only 16 searches will be conducted. The number is lower because, amazingly, only one tenured faculty member retired last year!

Our faculty continue to be super achievers. Elliott Pujol, professor of Art, was selected as the National Ornamental Metal Museum 2005 Master Metalsmith. Only one award is provided each year. Elliot has received significant recognition for his copper-clad 1960 Dodge pickup truck. Glenn Horton-Smith, Physics received the Outstanding Junior Investigator Award from the Department of Energy. Very few first-year assistant professors receive this award. Professor Wayne Nafziger, Economics, will receive the Balfour Jeffery Research Award in the field of humanities and social sciences. This \$10,000 Higuchi award recognizes research excellence among Regents Universities.

Three Arts and Sciences faculty members achieved the status of University Distinguished Professor: Mike Kanost, Biochemistry; Harald Prins, Anthropology; and James Shanteau, Psychology. Professor Prins was also the Coffman Teaching Scholar last year. Dallas Johnson received the Commerce Bank Graduate Faculty member award. These honors and awards are but a small reflection of our faculty accomplishments. Many other faculty members beyond those I have mentioned here have gained significant recognition for their accomplishments over the past year.

New department heads and directors this year include:

Colonel Thomas O'Boyle, head of Aerospace Studies

Professor Richard Marston, head of the Department of Geography

Professor Betsy Cauble, head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology  
and Social Work

Professor Angela Hubler, interim director of the Women's Study Program

I am very pleased to say that today, there are seven women who are currently department heads or directors of our academic programs. Five years ago there were only two. In addition three women serve as deans in our College.

Two former colleagues now reside in Anderson Hall: Professor Al Cochran, Assistant to the Provost and Professor Cia Vershelden, Director of Assessment.

Our College has consistently received a disproportionately high share of teaching awards. This year's teaching and advising award recipients were:

Xin Tang, (Mathematics) Presidential GTA Teaching Award

Mary Ellen Sutton, (Music) Presidential Advising Award

Jeffrey Pickering, (Political Science) Commerce Bank Teaching Award

Seven faculty members received the William L. Stamey College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Award:

Lorena Passarelli, (Biology)

Lee Behlman, (English)

Hyun-Seung Jin, (Journalism and Mass Communication)

Lauren Ritterbush, (Sociology)

Robert Schaeffer, (Sociology)

Sarah Bishop, (GTA in Modern Languages)

Robert Pettay, (Advising in Kinesiology)

Another area where Arts and Sciences faculty excel is cross-disciplinary collaboration. For example, targeted excellence grants have had a tremendous impact on programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. Or, conversely, perhaps I should say that our faculty members have had a tremendous impact on the success of targeted excellence grants. Faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences are leading and participating in such TE grants as "The Center for Understanding Origins", "Enhancing Military History and Security Studies," the "GIScience Infrastructure Enhancement Program," and the "Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy." Our natural scientists are heavily engaged in the Ecological Genomics grant as well as the "Nanoparticle Sciences and Environmental Technology" project, the "Biomaterials Design" initiative, and the "Consortium for Global Research on Water-Based Economies". In all, at least 35 faculty members are taking leadership roles on 11 of the 12 targeted excellence grants that are currently funded.

This level of success in collaborative research is not surprising when you consider that our college generates almost 27 million dollars from extramural, competitive research grants. Importantly we generate more sponsored research overhead than any other college. The quality of our faculty is supported by the fact that we are home to 75 percent of the University Distinguished Professors, and 6 of the 11 Coffman Scholars.

Perhaps one of the strongest indicators of excellence and the academic health of a great university is the degree to which the arts and humanities programs are valued and supported. When I arrived at K-State the arts and humanities were viewed as important because they helped us to meet our instructional obligations. Today, I am confident that most of us view the arts and humanities as important because they have intrinsic value and are essential if we wish to be truly educated. Thanks to help from President Wefald and Ruth Ann Wefald, many of the arts and humanities programs have received greater visibility, financial and moral support. Importantly, our alumni have stepped forward as well. Last year we celebrated the completion of the Chapman Gallery in the Department of Art. For the first time, the Art Department has a state of the art gallery for faculty, students and visiting artists. The funding for completing this space was provided by Mark Chapman and Cheryl Mellenthin. More recently, the History Department received an endowed chair in the name of Mark Chapman. Last month a new high-tech music classroom was unveiled in McCain. With the help of Dean Unger, ITAC, and our facilities staff we now have an outstanding classroom where students can compose music, learn keyboard skills, arrange music, learn marching band drill designs, and rehearsal techniques.

But to be fair and balanced on a less positive note, Arts and Sciences salaries are 14.4% below NASULGC peers (last among K-State Colleges).

## **Diversity**

Enhancing diversity is a continuing priority. Over the past year, four minority faculty members were hired. The College's 16 member Diversity Committee was established, and Dr. Juanita McGowan wrote the College of Arts and Sciences report to the President's Commission on Multicultural Affairs. Some of the findings outlined in the PCMA report reveal some positive steps but they also highlight the need for significant improvement. On the positive side, it is clear that many of our departments are doing an excellent job with respect to infusing multicultural content within the curriculum, establishing diversity partnerships with institutions all over the world, and enhancing the community, climate and centrality of diversity. However, much remains to be done with respect to minority student enrollment, recruitment, and retention. The same can be said of faculty. While we claim to be the most diverse College, the percentage change in our minority students and faculty has increased at a snail's pace in recent years. Also, more effort needs to be focused on raising private or corporate funds to promote diversity initiatives.

## **Development**

Our three outstanding development officers continue to do a terrific job. For example we recently received four pledged, funded or lead gifts for endowed chairs within a two week period.

## **Goals**

Selected goals for next academic year

- Complete a College level strategy for setting priorities
- Departmental priority setting
- The completion of Chalmers Hall
- Move the Department of Biochemistry to Chalmers Hall
- Submit at least four different proposals for Congressional funding consideration
- Implement the security studies masters and Ph.D. degree programs,
- Establish a Collegiate Research Center for Math Education
- Identify strategies to increase extra-mural funding in the social sciences

- Complete a feasibility study to explore the possibility of building a performing arts facility for theatre, dance, and music
- Explore the prospect of a secondary major in forensics studies
- Expand the College Alumni Advisory Council
- Explore the opportunity to establish a College equipment fee

All in all, we have much to be proud of in the College of Arts and Sciences. Our faculty and students have achieved tremendous success during two periods of severe financial limitations. We expect this level of achievement to continue into the future.