**Dean’s Update**

**October 2014**

All – I hope September was a good month for you. I just wanted to share some College news items with you as we start October. I plan to send these updates every month or so to help keep you up to date.

First, as you know, WCU set another enrollment record this fall with 10,382 students! That includes a record freshman class of 1745. This growth represents an increase of nearly 300 students over last fall and nearly 100 freshmen. That’s great news, but it also stretches our instructional capacity, especially in our College. I am working with the Provost to find ways to staff our Liberal Studies and gateway courses, and our growing majors. Providing high quality faculty for our students - and supporting those faculty - remains essential to student retention, degree completion, and our future success.

One way we are working to support faculty work is the College of Arts and Science Research Grant. Initiated last year, this program provided three faculty members with funds to support a range of research activities. The winners from last year – Channa De Silva in Chemistry and Physics, Heather Coan in Biology, and Honor Sachs in History – will present their work on Wednesday, 22 October at 2:30 in Blue Ridge Conference Room A. Applications for 2014-15 funds are due to the College on 14 November. The call for proposals went out in early September, but if you missed it, contact David Kinner for details (dkinner@email.wcu.edu).

Last year, a faculty committee worked to create a College strategic plan based on the *2020 Vision: Focusing on our Future.* I emailed the final strategic plan to the College last spring, but I have included it as an attachment as well. This fall, we are starting to implement that plan. I worked with the Department Heads to identify some items we could begin to work on this year. I’ve also attached that list. As you will see, some things are relatively easy and some things we will need to work on over several academic years.

In September, I formed a task force to revise and update our College By-Laws, an initiative identified in our College strategic plan. While we have edited this documents several times, the structure it outlines has not changed materially since the School of Arts and Sciences formed in the 1960s. Their mission is threefold: 1) To modernize the by-laws to insure compliance with the Faculty Handbook and provide meaningful faculty input into College decision making; 2) To revise the College committee structure; and 3) To eliminate superfluous faculty service commitments. I offer my thanks to David Dorondo (chair), Erin McNelis, Al Kopak, and Carmen Huffman for their willingness to work on this project. They will be in touch with you for feedback and ideas.

Our development efforts are continuing to bear fruit with the College raising over $125,000 for student scholarships since August. To enhance this work, we have formed a College Advancement Board. Members include alumni who have distinguished themselves in their fields and are willing to help us raise much-needed funds to support scholarships, student and faculty research, and other projects. We held an initial meeting in August and will meet again in November to plan future initiatives.

In an effort to better keep the campus, the larger community, and each other better informed about the great things our students, faculty, and staff are doing, we have continued to maintain a very active social media presence. We post news updates at least four days a week to our Facebook page ([https://www.facebook.com/WCUcollegeofartsandsciences](https://www.facebook.com/WCUcollegeofartsandsciences?ref=bookmarks)) and we are working with the Office of Communications and Public Relations to improve campus and media coverage of our activities. Also in September, we launched our first alumni e-newsletter. Envisioned as a semi-annual publication, we emailed it to nearly 6000 College alumni this week and hope it will be a way to keep them better informed about and connected to our College. I’ve attached copy of this e-newsletter to this email.

This update provides just a brief overview of the many things happening in our College. Thanks for your hard work and dedication to our students and our College. Please contact me if I can answer any questions.