

## Dean's Annual Report on the State of the College – 2010

As a testy Icelandic volcano reminds us of the interdependent and fragile quality of our existence on this planet, I applaud each of you for another year spent bolstering the best qualities of our species--the ability to explore, to reflect and to learn about ourselves, each other and our world.

Particularly in light of the worst economic climate since the Great Depression, our College and indeed our University has had a good year. Since January the College has hired 18 new tenure track faculty, 8 postdoctoral fellows, and 43 new GTA lines. We are in the process of searching for 6 additional faculty positions and 30 new full time instructors. We have avoided the fate of many of our peer institutions and have not eliminated faculty positions or programs, nor have we placed any faculty on furlough. We have held our ground on the faculty side and in some cases we have taken some important steps forward. As soon as possible, we must also address depressed staff salaries and an inadequate research infrastructure.

One way we have begun to move forward as a college is in the area of student success. My office has been working with your departmental leadership to identify and remove obstacles to student progress, efforts which we are confident will result in a significant increase in graduation rate. At the same time, we have added a number of professional advisors and are training them to play a more proactive role in tracking student progress and steering them into majors where they will be successful. One notable example of these efforts is the debut of our new Health Science major this semester. This new major will over time become one of many attractive options offered across the USF system to students seeking careers in the health care industry.

Our faculty have been very successful in research and scholarship this year, with a number of high profile discoveries that have gone viral as well as some significant national awards (please visit the college's outstanding research and scholarship newsletter for an up to date list of accomplishments <http://researchnews.cas.usf.edu/>). At the same time, we continue to do an outstanding job mentoring both graduate and undergraduate students in research. Our students' presentations at the annual undergraduate research symposium were impressive (see <http://www.ur.usf.edu/content/index.html>). For the first time this year, two of these stellar undergraduate students received the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship (<http://usfweb3.usf.edu/absolutenm/templates/?a=2201&z=45>). Meanwhile, we are excitedly awaiting the opening of the new interdisciplinary science building in the center of campus and making plans in the IDRB for the build out of a unique collaborative space for Materials Science research conducted by selected faculty in Chemistry, Physics, and the College of Engineering.

This joint research effort with Engineering is only one of a number of exciting cross-college initiatives. Another is the expansion of the Zimmerman Advertising Program (ZAP), which now includes students from both CAS and the College of Business. We have created a ZAP "living and learning community" in Juniper- Poplar Hall to encourage these students to make informal connections between the economic and creative aspects of advertising.

Faculty governance in the College is alive and well and I am most grateful to the College Advisory Council (now the Faculty Council) for their tireless and ultimately successful work on the revision of the College

governance document. You will hear lots more about this as we work to successfully implement the changes included in the new document.

I continue to advocate at every occasion for a balanced approach to a liberal education marked by equal time for the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. This has been an especially exciting year for the Humanities at USF, as we have brought many impressive speakers to campus through the Phi Beta Kappa Faculty Lecture Series (<http://www.cas.usf.edu/pbk/>) and the Humanities Institute (<http://humanities-institute.usf.edu/>) speaker series. In the Social Sciences, we have continued to make progress toward establishing USF as a global university, most recently through an extraordinary conference on Afghanistan and Pakistan attended by students, faculty, government, and the military. Our linked doctoral programs in History, Sociology, and Government and International Affairs have had a successful debut with their focus on global sustainable communities. Also this year we are seeking formal approval of our PhD in Economics, now separate from the College of Business.

This has also been an excellent for reconnecting with our alumni. I have personally visited graduates from our College in New York, Washington DC, and Los Angeles, and on each occasion have been encouraged by their strong sense of connection to their former professors, department, college, and university. Spending time with CAS alumni convinces me that we must adopt a more *relational* approach to all of our interactions with students, from the time they first hear of us throughout their professional lives. This is the only way we can hope to achieve the loyalty and engagement that most great universities enjoy with their alumni.

A College is only as good as its faculty and staff, and so it is with a bittersweet mixture of congratulations and regret that we say goodbye to our most recent retirees: Dennis Bennett, Fred Essig, John Hodgson, Bill Kinder, Edward Levine, Daniel Lim, David Stamps, Nancy Tyson, and Randy Miller. We wish you every happiness on the next leg of your journey.

As I look to the year ahead, I pledge to honor your faith in me as your Dean and continue to do all that I can to build our collective dream of a truly exceptional research university anchored by a superb College of Arts and Sciences. As we mature as a College and a University, I am committed to challenging each of you to compete at an ever higher level and to measure yourselves against ever more accomplished peers. As you do so, bear in mind that I fully recognize the difficulty of competing at a higher level given our relatively small faculty and limited infrastructure strength. In fact, the only way we can excel given these realities is to sharpen our focus on those areas of research and scholarship where we both have demonstrable strength and where unique national prominence is a genuine possibility. I will attempt this year to continue our conversation in the College about these worthy “CAUSES” (CAS Areas of Unique Scholarly Expertise) around which we can successfully collaborate and develop branded areas of national and international excellence.

To get more detail on any of the items in this report, you can download my address to the Spring '10 CAS faculty assembly, which can be found on our website: <http://www.cas.usf.edu/>

**- Eric M. Eisenberg, Dean**