STATE OF THE COLLEGE REPORT

Donal O'Shea, President

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New College has just entered its fifty-third year and welcomed its fifty-first class. We've lost our claim to newness, but not to vigor.

On May 24, 2013, the College graduated the largest class in its history, topping even the 1975 pre-merger class of 182 graduates by 15 for a class of 197. New College has always been associated with academic excellence, as defined by the quality and intensity of the interaction among first class faculty and highly talented students. Never has that been more apparent than this year: six Fulbrights, six French Government and one Austrian Government Teaching Assistantship(s), a State Department Critical Language Fellowship, and an impressive number of admissions to top graduate and professional programs. Our third year students were just as singular, winning the state's only Truman Scholarship, two of the five Goldwaters (the premier U. S. undergraduate scholarship in math and science) awarded in Florida, as well as another Critical Language Fellowship and a Gilman Scholarship. This type of performance has been consistent over the last decade, and its statistical unlikelihood beggars the imagination. This past year, our 830 students comprised a tenth of one percent of the total 800,000 students undergraduate students enrolled in public and private institutions in Florida. Yet they received nearly 10% of the Fulbrights and 40% of the Goldwaters (and 100% of the Trumans).

The extraordinary teaching that makes such student achievement possible has been nourished by the outstanding scholarly, artistic and community work done by our faculty members. Seven have funding from peered-reviewed national foundations that are highly competitive. Such funding rarely goes to undergraduate institutions. Carl Shaw, for instance, won an NEH summer stipend and a Loeb fellowship. Gordon Bauer, Amy Clore, Elzie McCord, and Steve Shipman work on National Science Foundation funded research. Mariana Sendova's research is funded by the U. S. Army Research Lab. Others have state and private funding that is equally competitive. Uzi Baram's work on public archaeology has been funded by the Florida Humanities Council and Time Sifters, the local chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society, and Heidi Harley and Sandra Gilchrist continue their work, both scientific and educational, funded by a number of private and local foundations. David Harvey, Susan Marks and Paul Scudder each had major, substantive books appear, and more than a dozen other faculty members had significant exhibits, artistic performances or scholarly articles appear in peerreviewed journals. Amy Reid, Jocelyn van Tuyl, and Eirini Pomenidou hosted major disciplinary conferences on campus. A half dozen others have been on the front lines in community engagement.

Following extensive national searches, six new tenure-track faculty members have joined the faculty this August: Tracy Collins in Economics, David Gillman in Computational Science, Jack Reilly in Political Science, Ty Ryba in Biology and Bioinformatics, Xia Shia in Chinese History, and Meccasia Zabriskie in Sociology. These scholars bring extraordinary new intellectual strength and excitement to the faculty, and they will change us in ways that we do not yet know.

In order to better support the academic part of the New College program, we took advantage of a departure in the Provost's Office to create the position of Dean of Studies, which we envisage being filled by a faculty member on a rotating three-year basis. The first holder of the position, Robert Zamsky, has taken charge, and is doing great work. He has focused on improving advising, with a view ultimately to improve retention and assure student success. The newly-reconfigured Writing Resource Center will report to Robert, as a way to close a perceived gap between the faculty and the WRC. We have a newly energized advisory committee, an online referral center, and multiple sections of a new module-length course, "Writing at New College: Rhetoric and Argumentation."

Our academic success apart, we are five to ten years into the fourth period of greatest change in American higher education, and uncertainties abound. Residential liberal arts colleges are viewed with increasing skepticism, as are the central liberal arts cores of the nation's great research universities. The State of Florida supplies well over seventy percent of our revenue, and we simply do not, should not, and will never do well on the narrow metrics (such as well-paid jobs in major, in Florida, immediately after graduation) favored by some legislators in an age in which public discourse focuses on accountability and employability.

It is hard not to be daunted facing into this. Nonetheless the College has some assets not enjoyed by others, and we are in the final stages of planning for the next four years. Hopefully, you have received one of the drafts that have been circulating. The animating idea is to leverage the assets we have to improve the education that New College offers and to grow slightly while increasing the proportion of out-of-state and foreign students. The recession has made it apparent that we must do a better job helping students link their liberal arts education with the world of work.

We are currently working on restructuring Student Affairs to make it a full partner in students' educations. One of the College's goals has been to increase our retention and six-year graduation rates, and cooperation between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs is vital to this effort. This year, Student Affairs spearheaded the most welcoming and inclusive orientation program for new students and their parents in the last decade.

Our search for a new director of Communications and Marketing is entering its final phases. We had a superb pool of over one hundred applicants from around the country.

The Admissions Office has done a bang up job with a small staff in a saturated market. Last year, in an effort both to engage alums in different areas, and to improve out of state admissions, we chose three cities, Washington, New York, and Boston, on which to focus. Admissions, Alumni Affairs, the Foundation, Communications/Marketing, and my office coordinated to visit alumni, guidance counselors, high schools, and prospective students. The Admissions Office worked to make financial aid more transparent and to focus attention on a smaller cohort of inquirers judged more likely to attend New College. Almost all faculty members have opened their classes to prospective students visiting the College. It is not clear exactly what worked, but something did, and not only did Admissions meet a very aggressive target for out-of-state students, but also increased the diversity of incoming students. We will repeat the programs initiated last year, and introduce some new ones, such as out-of-state guidance counselor visits.

An extensive national search for a new head of our Foundation resulted in our attracting Shannon Duvall to New College as our Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of the Foundation. She brings a wealth of experience in higher educational fundraising, and in the three months since arriving has continued to reshape the Foundation to focus on raising funds to support the mission of New College. Last year, the Foundation raised \$6.4 million from gifts, events and bequests. This year, we seek to re-energize the Promise Campaign and seek to raise \$7.5 million. Private philanthropy is critical to the College's continued excellence. There is no cause more worthy of one's support than the education of our youth. It transforms them. It transforms our society, and ensures its future.

Increasing diversity has been one of the chief goals for the College for over a decade. Despite the best of efforts, our progress has been slower than we would like. Many of the analyses point to campus climate. To address this systematically, we convened a standing committee on Diversity, Community and College Life with the broader charge of examining and advising on issues affecting the overall health of the community. The committee has already begun to play a significant role in altering campus climate by bringing together on a regular basis a number of individuals who have worked on inclusion in separate areas of the college. The influence of the committee will grow in the coming year.

Towards the end of the last academic year, we entered a partnership with an extraordinary nonprofit, the Daughters for Life Foundation, and several community partners to bring up to ten academically strong, but economically disadvantaged, female students from Egypt, Gaza, Israel, Syria and Lebanon to New College as first-year students each year. The partnership, entitled "Educate for Change," has brought together different faith groups, on campus and off, different nonprofits, and community members from all over the region. It has great promise. The program, starting in Fall, 2014, will not only benefit the Middle Eastern students who come and receive an education here, and through them the part of the world to which they will return, but it will enhance the internationalization and diversity of our student population.

Nothing could be truer to our mission, and few initiatives have so much promise for making this world a better place.

One of the assets enjoyed by our campus is its gorgeous location on Sarasota Bay. State funds to rebuild our seawall, together with a private gift to rebuild our dock and an allocation of a relatively small amount of operating funds to landscaping, have allowed our highly skilled grounds crew to perform a minor miracle. The campus looks noticeably better and the bay front west of College and Cook Halls is entrancing. This year we foresee making significant improvements in the bay front area of our Caples campus, south of the Ringling Museum.

We piloted a summer course program and learned a lot. A preliminary analysis suggests that there is a very real possibility to enhance both revenue and what we offer the community by tweaking the program. We are also exploring some terminal Master's degree programs that build on the strengths of our faculty and students, would serve the needs of the region, and would enhance the earnings of students who do not wish to pursue doctoral degrees. As a result of a gift from an alumnus that provided a computational laboratory as well as other critical infrastructure, the state awarded us \$0.5M to enhance our excellence in data analytics. We have made a couple of tenure track hires that contribute to our strength, and that would provide a nucleus for a Master's degree program in data analytics (colloquially known as "Big Data").

Last, but not least, there are a number of fine institutions, most within three miles of us, with different missions and with whom we do not compete. The Gulf Coast Community Foundation funded a retreat in June for presidents, provosts and faculty member from New College, Ringling College of Art and Design, FSU's Asolo Conservatory and Ringling Art Museum, USF-Sarasota/Manatee, State College of Florida and Eckerd College. The retreat was a great success, and our collective willingness to collaborate surprised all of us. We discussed, and are pushing ahead with academic collaborations (courses, programs, research), joint spousal hiring, possible joint emphases (internationalization, remediation, advanced work), back office collaboration (internet access, power, purchasing, specialized legal counsel, enterprise risk management), North Trail and local economic enhancement, shared faculty and/or student housing, and shared student services (such as food, chaplaincy). Such collaboration will create new opportunities for students and faculty, allow new efficiencies, and make Sarasota and Bradenton an educational destination.

The College looks ahead to the next year with hope and the promise of exciting changes ahead. We will host the Florida Board of Governor's regular meeting here next week, and have an opportunity to share our campus with the other SUS universities' leadership as well. I thank the Board of Trustees for their continuing dedication and enthusiasm, and look forward to working with them and with my administrative colleagues, with faculty, staff, students, alumni, other educators, and members of the Sarasota/Manatee community to make the New College's Institutional Priorities for 2013-2014 a reality.