

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE CHATTANOOGA

Provost's Page

September 10, 2010

Welcome to all of our new faculty along with our returning colleagues to the 124th academic year at UTC! On September 15th we will officially celebrate our Founders Day and 124th birthday with the Fall 2010 convocation at noon in Roland Hayes Auditorium. In connection with the university's strategic plan, the theme for convocation this year will be environmental sustainability. I encourage all faculty to attend and bring as many students with you as possible as we set the tone for this new academic year.

For those of you who were away from campus this summer I will simply note that it was a very busy, productive summer for us. The obvious progress made with the new library, the Aquatic and Recreation Center, and Grote Hall may be the most visible, but progress has been made in several less visible areas. Despite the economic stress due to a 22% reduction in state funding since 2008, UTC finished the fiscal year in good shape. With the help of one more year of stimulus funds, continued enrollment growth, a 9% tuition increase, and improved student retention, we currently enjoy a very optimistic future.

This fall brings another record enrollment of 10,781 students at UTC. The 2010 freshman class is slightly smaller (~10% smaller than 2009) by design, but with the highest academic qualifications in UTC history. By all accounts, freshman orientation went better than ever this summer. Although we still have work to do, particularly with transfer orientations, I want to congratulate Shasta Bischell, Yancy Freeman, Fran Bender, and all the associated faculty and staff that helped make the orientation sessions comfortable and productive. Additionally I am happy to announce that effective this fall, Yancy Freeman along with the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Orientation are joining the division of Academic Affairs with direct reporting through the Provost's office. The purpose of the realignment is to enable a more strategic approach to the challenges raised by the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010. We are also actively continuing our efforts to determine a long-range enrollment vision that will tie into a new campus master plan to be developed later this year.

This summer also marked the successful completion of our search for the next Dean of the Graduate School. Dr. Jerald Ainsworth has officially accepted the position as Dean of the Graduate School to begin on November 1, 2010. Dr. Ainsworth comes to UTC from Southeastern Louisiana University where he currently serves as Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Jerald has an impressive scholarly record along with many years of administrative experience. As we welcome Jerald to UTC, please join me in thanking Dr. Stephanie Bellar for her outstanding service as Interim Dean for the past couple of years. Her leadership and promotion of graduate education at UTC was very important and productive during a time of great fiscal challenges. Despite those challenges, she led efforts to add a new master's program in mathematics and our fourth doctoral program in nursing practice.

We have made substantial progress at UTC and have reason to be proud. However, the 2010-11 academic year brings its own set of challenges and opportunities for us. This is our reaffirmation year with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). We have accomplished the first major portion of that effort by submission of our compliance report to SACS just this week. This report will be reviewed in November by an off-site committee. The second portion of the process involves the development of our unique quality enhancement plan (QEP), which we have already determined to be on the topic of "Critical Thinking." The QEP will be submitted early in the spring semester to be followed by the on-campus site visit on April 5-7, 2011.

Congratulations to Clint Smullen, Debbie Parker, and the entire Banner team for a very successful initial implementation of our new student information system! All of the basic functions involving student admissions, financial aid, and registration are operating well at this point. Now the team's attention will move to many of the important user functions for most of us, such as advising reports (CAPP), classroom management, and prerequisite checking. We all need to remain patient for a few more months as the Banner implementation continues to be a work-in-progress.

With the many positive changes we have implemented, we also continue efforts to address the statutory requirements included in the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010. We now have a newly approved funding formula driven by institutional outcomes, such as number of graduates produced and student progression, rather than total enrollment as with the old formula. This formula will certainly require us to push our recent efforts regarding student success and retention to even higher levels. The legislation also mandates us to facilitate student transfer and articulation within and across the UT and TBR systems. These articulation initiatives are being actively accomplished with discipline-specific faculty committees across the state from both systems. Many faculty from UTC are involved in that process. Finally, the legislation also requires the four-year universities to discontinue providing remedial or developmental courses by July 1, 2012. This piece of the legislation poses a significant challenge for us as approximately one-third of our incoming freshman have been required to take at least one developmental course. The Department of English is using this year to pilot self-placement for freshmen in introductory English courses along with some special sections with additional instruction designed to help students get caught up. The Department of Mathematics is also looking at similar approaches to replace developmental math.

Although there is much more to be said about all these efforts and several others, I will leave that for subsequent newsletters. We clearly have a full agenda ahead of us this year. Below are announcements and a briefly annotated list of a few of the current initiatives. As always, please feel free to contact me directly at phil-oldham@utc.edu with any suggestions, questions, and/or concerns you may have regarding any university-related issues. Best wishes to all of you for another great year at UTC!

CURRENT INITIATIVES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Convocation 2010- The campus is invited to celebrate Convocation 2010 on September 15 at noon in the Hayes Concert Hall of the UTC Fine Arts Center. UTC alumnus Brad McAllister, partner and director of WAP Sustainability in Chattanooga, will discuss sustainability and its effects for our students and our campus. Chancellor Roger Brown will discuss our campus's historical commitment to sustainability and steps being taken to make UTC a leading campus in the sustainability movement.

- Dual Admission Agreements- We have recently signed Dual Admission Agreements with both Cleveland State Community College and Chattanooga State Community College. These agreements will allow students who meet the respective admission requirements at both institutions to be admitted simultaneously as a freshman to both the community college and UTC. Thus, we can track the progress of these dually-admitted students during their first two years at the community college and provide advising support to ensure efficient transfer to UTC for the last two years of study.
- New Graduate Dean- Please welcome Dr. Jerald Ainsworth who will be joining UTC as Dean of the Graduate School on November 1, 2010. Dr. Ainsworth curriculum vita can be found on-line at http://wiki.lib.utc.edu/images/f/fb/Ainsworth_CV_6-2-2010.pdf.
- Grant Wins Award- We congratulate Dr. Greg Grant in the Department of Chemistry who has been selected as the recipient of the 2011 American Chemical Society Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution (<http://www.acs.org/awards>). Only one person in the United States receives this award each year, so it is an incredible recognition of a career of scientific research with undergraduate students. The Award will be presented at the Spring Meeting of the American Chemical Society in 2011 in Anaheim, CA. It includes a plaque, cash award, \$2500 in travel expenses for the meeting, a symposium recognizing Grant's work at the meeting, and \$5000 to his home institution.
- Research Reorganization- Dr. Greg Heath has accepted the interim appointment as Assistant Provost for Research and Engagement. Additionally, the grants office has been officially renamed the Office of Partnerships and Sponsored Research. Ms Diane Miller has retired as director, and we are currently recruiting her replacement to lead this office.
- Record Year for Sponsored Research- We recorded a record \$15.5M in sponsored research awards this past year. The full year-end report can be found at <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/PartnershipsAndSponsoredPrograms/documents/FY10ExternalGrantReport.pdf>.