

**The State of the College of Arts and Sciences**

**August 24, 2012**

**John P. Ferré, Acting Dean**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**University of Louisville**

Good afternoon and welcome to the 2012-2013 academic year.

A&S By-Laws require the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to inaugurate each new academic year with an overview of the “State of the College” at a meeting of the A&S Faculty Assembly. Because of Dean Hudson’s medical leave, this obligation falls to me as Acting Dean.

Today’s report relies upon the address that Dean Hudson gave last year, certainly in structure and sometimes even in language. This reliance is to be expected from someone who has worked closely and harmoniously with Dean Hudson for more than eight years and who hopes that he will regain his health and strength so that he can return to his position of leadership. For now, though, my goal is to highlight the College’s achievements, to describe challenges that we face and how we propose to meet them, and to reaffirm our mission, our vision, and our values as a College.

A&S is as strong as it is primarily because of the faculty who have devoted their professional lives to teaching, research, and service here on the Belknap campus. Several of them retired at

the end of last year. We commend the following faculty members for their distinguished academic careers:

John Cumbler	History
Linda Gigante	Fine Arts
Carol Mattingly	English
Mary Ann Stenger	Humanities
Ronald Vogel	Political Science
Fred Wightman	Psychological and Brain Sciences

We wish them well. Having served the College for so many years, they will be missed.

We also mourn the loss of two friends and scholars: David Reed of the Department of Biology and Peter France of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. They too will be sorely missed.

Fortunately, our community of scholars is being enriched by the arrival of 17 new tenured and tenure-track faculty members:

Derrick Brooms	Sociology
Randall Dills	History
Arnab Ganguly	Mathematics
Tricia Gray	Political Science
Humberto Gutierrez	Physics and Astronomy

Robin Hognas	Sociology
Jinjun Liu	Chemistry
Paloma Fernandez Sanchez	Classical and Modern Languages
Mary P. Sheridan	English
Daniel Smith	Mathematics
Garry Sparks	Humanities
Christian Stilp	Psychological and Brain Sciences
Kristin Swartz	Justice Administration
Nathaniel Wright	Urban and Public Affairs
Stephen Yanoviak	Biology
Deborah Yoder-Himes	Biology
Stephen Young	Mathematics

We welcome these new colleagues to the College.

Ten A&S faculty were awarded tenure, a milestone that marks the end of a long probationary period:

Tomarra Adams	Pan-African Studies
James Alexander	Biology
Kevin Chapman	Psychological and Brain Sciences
Lindsay Della	Communication
Sarah Emery	Biology

Frank Goetzke	Urban and Public Affairs
Hamid Kulosman	Mathematics
Gul Marshall	Sociology
Alica Miller	Mathematics
Diane Pecknold	Women's and Gender Studies

Congratulations to all of you. I trust that you have savored your achievement sufficiently by now and that you are prepared to begin the next leg of your professional journeys.

Nine others were promoted to full professor in recognition of their distinguished records and their stature in their respective disciplines:

Annette Allen	Humanities
James Beggan	Sociology
Timothy Dowling	Physics and Astronomy
Linda Gigante	Fine Arts
Aaron Jaffe	English
David Simpson	Urban and Public Affairs
Joseph Steffen	Biology
Gamini Sumanasekera	Physics and Astronomy
Kandi Walker	Communication

Congratulations to each of you. You have joined the intellectual elders of the College and we are honored by your company and your good example.

A&S is home to nearly thirty academic departments and programs—each headed by either a chair or a director. These leadership roles are demanding and essential. This year, Lt Col Jesse Acevedo has joined our Department of Areospace Science. We commend your willingness to serve the College. And I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of your predecessor Lt Col Kevin Raybine.

Beyond these arrivals and departures and changes in rank or status, where do stand in material terms?

One key measure, of course, is budget. Despite last year's budget cut, our annual budget has actually increased by 9.3 percent. This year we will spend nearly \$75 million. But that record figure is far less than what we need to fund our strategic plan.

Unlike every other year in the past decade, we do not begin this academic year with a looming budget cut – at least not one that we know about at the moment. For this not-so-minor miracle, we should knock on an awful lot of wood. In the past, the College managed relentless budget cuts and still protected our core mission and programs.

But we should be mindful that our apparent budget increase is largely due to increasing revenue from on-line enrollment, which has more than doubled in the last five years. At first glance, it

appears that funds generated by distance education have more than made up for cuts in our Continuing Annual Requirement. But of course they do not. Money that can be used only for one-time expenditures is important, but it does not fully replace money that goes into ongoing programmatic priorities such as supplies, equipment, and the salaries of our faculty and staff.

Another measure of our stature is our enrollment. We in A&S take pride in being the heart of the university—the foundation that supports most academic programs at the University of Louisville. We remain the unit with the broadest and most complex mission. We are also the university's largest and most diverse academic unit.

Although our enrollment seems to have reached a temporary plateau, our student population has increased nearly 7 percent over the last four years.

Unlike that of the other colleges and schools, our role extends far beyond our own students. Because we offer nearly all general education courses, A&S serves the university's entire undergraduate population. The most accurate measure of our centrality is enrollment in A&S courses—which translates into credit hour production. Using this measure, we generate more credit hours than ALL other academic units combined—nearly 52 percent of all University credit hours and more than 60 percent of all undergraduate credit hours. And, of course, because students must pay tuition for these courses, credit hour production translates directly into tuition revenue. Thus, in the breadth and magnitude of our responsibility for educating students, we lead the university—by far.

As an extension of our teaching mission, A&S plays a central role in retaining and graduating undergraduate students. In the past several years, our six-year graduation rate has risen from a third to just over half. But however proud we might be of this accomplishment, our task is hardly finished. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education has mandated that we target a 64 percent graduation rate by 2020. This goal dovetails both with Phi Beta Kappa's recent review and with Metro Louisville's 55-thousand-degree initiative. Achieving a six-year graduation rate of 64 percent would demonstrate that we are serving our student population effectively and it would raise the University's reputation and national stature.

As you know, increasing the number of permanent faculty in A&S is our over-arching goal. To become a truly great College of Arts and Sciences, we need a critical mass of outstanding tenured and tenure-track faculty committed to teaching, research, and service. Our numbers need to increase significantly.

Our full-time faculty numbers have hovered around the 400 FTE mark for the past several years. More than a year ago, President Ramsey approved a plan to reduce the number of contingent faculty in A&S by converting some 40 term lines to tenure track and convert another ten from lecture lump sum. The plan is for the university to supplement the A&S funds that support these positions to make the conversions possible—which will add nearly \$1.5 million to our total budget and 50 more tenurable faculty by 2016. The last budget cut has delayed implementation of this plan – but, we hope, only temporarily. Admission to PBK – and the academic excellence that such membership signifies – depends upon it.

Despite multiple demands on their time, A&S faculty members remain productive in their scholarship and creative work. Our faculty average between one and two refereed publications or creative works each year—many of which appear in high profile venues. In addition, our faculty members have been successful in attracting extramural research funding—although funding levels continue to fluctuate because of the vagaries of federal and other funding sources.

To address these fluctuations, we now employ a grant writer in our research office. She will not write grants for you, but she will help you develop and refine your ideas and submit competitive proposals. Although most extramural funding at the University has been in the health sciences, the hard sciences, and engineering, A&S has tremendous unrealized potential for extramural funding—particularly in the social sciences. The social sciences lead the funded research effort at many great universities. There is no reason for that not to be true at the University of Louisville, too.

Along with attracting more extramural grant funding, we remain effective in our fundraising efforts—even in a weak economy. In 2011, the A&S annual fund received contributions exceeding \$3.2 million. With our national advisory board, we are working to raise \$35 million in the next few years through the university’s “capital campaign.”

We depend on the skills and dedication a large number of support and administrative staff members. They do the work that most of us are not trained to do—and they are colleagues in the finest sense. Their numbers have grown over the past several years because of grants, the expansion of Advising, and changes in the employment status of post-docs.



In 2011-2012, we continued to lead university diversity and outreach efforts. Over 25 percent of our tenurable and term faculty are persons of color and over 50 percent are women. Award-winning programs such as the Saturday Academy, NETWORK, U of L at the Yearlings Club, and the Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research have established themselves over the past several years. Furthermore, at the request of the President and Provost in 2007, we have coordinated university efforts to forge partnerships with most local museums, historic homes, and cultural institutions. The resulting Center for Arts and Culture Partnerships is growing in numbers and impact—and has the potential to become a regional model.

We have also taken great strides in global education—with formal relationships now with institutions on all continents, except Antarctica. Increasing numbers of A&S students are pursuing studies in other countries and the A&S Office of International Programs is exploring even more opportunities for student exchanges. As a result, we expect to see more students from other continents in our classrooms.

We have been most successful when we have concentrated our talents and our resources on what is most important to us: educating students, advancing knowledge through scholarship, and pursuing social justice through service.

So, for 2012-2013 our agenda has four key priorities:

- First, we must devise and implement strategies to continue increasing our student retention and graduation rates.
- Second, we must increase our research productivity.
- Third, we must resume the contingent faculty reduction plan.
- Fourth, we must continue to find ways to contribute what we discover and what we teach to the community in which we live.

Let me add urgency to these priorities by pointing to the gathering storm of criticism surrounding higher education. *Newsday* recently ran an editorial entitled “Higher Education System Needs Some Schooling.” After summarizing findings from the Harkin Committee that exposed unconscionable profiteering on the part of for-profit, online universities, the editorial turned its attention to state universities. Here’s what the editorial charged:

The most illustrious professors at state universities spend the least amount of time in the classroom.

Instead, students are more and more often taught by contingent faculty.

Students learn less today than they did in the past, but they receive higher grades than ever before.

Tuition has far outpaced inflation, partly because of availability of federal student aid.

Too few students graduate.

Finally, students who do graduate increasingly carry a burdensome debt load.

I wish that I could say that these often repeated charges don't apply here at the University of Louisville. I also wish that I could say that we have a plan in the College to so enthrall our students with the life of the mind that most of them will stay engaged enough to graduate in six years if not in four. But we are not there yet. We need to tackle these issues head on while we still enjoy the good will of much of the public. Otherwise, we will continue to face the mounting burden of federal- and state-imposed accountability measures, not to mention the very real possibility of sanctions, all of which combine to diminish the liberal arts and sap the spirit of inquiry. Fortunately, we have considerable experience, devotion, and brain power, so we have the capacity to devise workable responses to the very real problems that we and our students face, responses that involve inspired and effective teaching, pure and applied research of the first order, and community engagement that defines the very concept of service learning. Rethinking the incarnation of liberal arts in the twenty-first century is the order of the day. It should certainly be on our minds as we consider our teaching, our research, and our service to the community in which we live.

So, this is the state of the College of Arts and Sciences as we begin the 2012-2013 academic year. All of you have contributed to these achievements, and I commend and thank you.

Let me conclude by thanking all of you for your collegiality and the supportiveness that you have demonstrated as I fill the role of Dean during Blaine Hudson's absence. It is my honor to serve as Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as long as I am called upon to do so. The challenges before us are huge. But so are the opportunities and possibilities.

Once again, I thank all of you.

Please join us for a reception in the Hite Art Galleries in Schneider Hall. Thank you and good afternoon.