

Faculty Town Hall

Questions & Answers

Q: Could we establish an Academic Center of Excellence as a one-stop hub for first-year students to receive career and academic advising and tutorial services. This would help our freshman get on track to graduating in that four-year time frame.

A: Yes, this is similar to the idea that I presented at the last cabinet meeting. However, I included the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, IT Support. This project is underway.

Q: Many students have trouble with the Financial Aid Office, where paperwork snags make it difficult for them to return. Considering the emphasis on retention and graduation rates, what is going to be done to improve the "customer service" side of Financial Aid?

A: We have instituted a Continuous Improvement process with Institutional Operations (the non-academic units of Academic Affairs). This new process is being led by Dr. Rollinda Thomas, AVC for Academic Affairs. She led a workshop during our 2021 mid-year general meeting for institutional operation units focused on measuring our progress to improve our progress. It included a discussion of appropriate metrics for unique units, the Continuous Improvement Report (CIR), and Operational Plan and Assessment Report (OPAR).

Q: What is the Chancellor's position on programs in humanities, languages, letters, arts, and social sciences? We hear a lot about the big professional programs. Can you talk about the value of these programs?

A: As chancellor of the University, I support all academic programs, including humanities, languages, letters, arts, and social sciences and have met with the deans at all our schools and colleges since my arrival. These programs are an important part of our curriculum, and even more important to the advancement of our society. I am happy to continue learning more about each of these departments in the months to come and wherever possible, investing resources for their success.

Q: Are there some plans to build more bridges with international universities and boost exchange programs?

A: Our commitment to these types of initiatives is shown in Goal 2.3: Promote cultural and global learning opportunities and Goal 4.3: Create opportunities to conduct research with industry and national and international partners of our 2020-25 Strategic Plan. For Goal 2.3, Dr. Sharmila Udyavar, Interim Director of International Education, in collaboration with Deans and Department Chairs, is charged with creating a variety of international experiences for the student body, hosting cultural and global learning opportunities on campus, and developing programs for "International Week". For Goal 4.3, Dr. Daryush Ila, AVC for Research, in collaboration with Deans, Department Chairs, and Faculty, is charged with increasing partnerships and collaborations with industry, national, and international organizations to increase the university's research capacity.

Q: Something many of our faculty run into when training students is a lack of support for student research — journals are difficult to access, ILL funds are limited. What are some priorities for bolstering our library and the resources available through it and for helping students grow as researchers?

A: The Library has renewed the major journal databases, which should give faculty and students access to the leading journals for their research. Also, we are in the process of filling the reference librarian positions which are currently vacant. With Title III funds, we have purchased additional computers for students to use for their research projects in the Library.

Q: What is Chancellor's position on Faculty compensation? FSU faculty are among the hardest working members of UNC system. But Faculty salary is at the low end of the spectrum and has not been increased for 4 years. How will Chancellor and the administration fight for reasonable faculty compensation and deliver it?

A: As a former Board of Governors member, serving on both the Budget and Finance committee and the HMSI committee, I was involved in advocating for increased salaries for faculty and staff. Now as Chancellor, I will continue that fight at every level, until FSU faculty and staff are duly compensated for their work.

Q: With online course enrollments continuing to increase in recent years, what are the plans to expand services and support for online students and the faculty who teach them?

A: We have significantly expanded our online capabilities, (1) more than 75% of our faculty have been certified to teach online; (2) we have redesigned nearly 200 courses for online or remote learning; and (3) we are hiring a coordinator of online/remote instruction to booster our Office of Faculty Development.

Q: When will a survey be sent out to faculty so that they can address some of these questions regarding funding for travel and time for research? The responses from the deans reflect their experiences and knowledge, but perhaps there are faculty with different opinions.

A: For the past several years, faculty travel has been primarily funded using summer school revenue generated by each department. We can generate a survey, but we may need faculty assistance on what to ask on the survey.

Q: There are an increasingly large amount of non-tenure track renewable faculty positions (full-time lecturers) and interim leadership positions. What plans can be put in place for increasing stability in these areas?

A: For the 2020-21 academic year, the percentage of fixed-term (non-tenure track) positions is comparable to our peer institutions within the UNC System. In terms of the interim positions, the completion of searches currently underway and the launch of needed searches for key leadership positions is a high priority for this administration.

Q: What is the Chancellor's position on establishing new doctoral programs?

A: Expanding the number of doctoral programs can help increase FSU's Carnegie classification and research level. It can create another opportunity for student retention to and through the higher-level

degrees. Additional doctoral programs can serve as a recruitment pipeline to ensure business continuity. It can also help heighten the FSU brand.

In general, I am in support of expanding our academic programs, including new doctoral programs. I do understand the benefits to doing this and will work with the University's Provost and faculty members to include this in our future plans.

Q: What is the Chancellor's position on Prior Learning Assessment? This is the process of evaluating students' career experience, military experience, certifications, etc. to determine whether these experiences meet course SLOs and can be deemed creditworthy. This has been shown to increase graduation and retention rates long-term, and lower attrition, resulting in increased revenue to the universities that adopt such programs. The UNC System has encouraged exploration of PLA as a possible solution to reclaim the over 1 million stop-outs from universities in NC and better serve post-traditional learners.

A: This is a topic that I am learning more about. In general, I can see its value and understand its basic principles. However, I will need time to do more research to explore a concrete position. In the meantime, I welcome data and research from our faculty members that will help me make the best decision for our students.