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# Annual Report, Arts & Sciences Faculty President, 2014

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## A&S Faculty President Report of 2013-2014

This was a year of many meetings that did not seem to accomplish much and then, of course, they did. The President Duncan had the Executive Council meet monthly and he also met with Thomas Ouellette, vice president of the faculty, and myself on an almost monthly basis. The Executive Council approved many policies necessary for our SACS review and, starting in the fall of 2013, talked about the need for an ad hoc all campus curriculum committee and an ad hoc all campus tenure and review committee. At our very last meeting of the year on May 5<sup>th</sup> we finally saw and approved the two proposals. The committees are supposed to begin work in the fall. The Executive Council also had the unexpected side benefit of giving us an opportunity to work more closely with, and get to know more about, our colleagues in CPS and Crummer.

As President of the A&S faculty I attended the monthly Planning and Budget Committee meetings along with Hoyt Edge, chair of Finance and Services, where we discussed the deficit for the 2013-2014 academic year and the development of a realistic balanced budget for 2014-2015. The college largely resolved the deficit by giving employees "stipends", as opposed to raises, and tapping some contingency funds. A plan was devised to have departments submit 3 and 6% cuts to the President, Provost and Vice President for Finance. They came up with a 2014-2015 balanced budget that included no raises but 2% stipends. The Vice President for Finance reported to the Planning and Budget Committee that the budget was balanced using "low hanging fruit" and that to return to raises for faculty and staff more difficult cuts will have to be made in the 2015-2016 budget. The college is not in a serious fiscal crisis, given our considerable endowment and the small, in terms of percentages, deficits, but the Executive Committee remains concerned about the lack of any strategic plan to balance the budget. We are also concerned about the lack of planning for projected decreases in enrollment in the day program.

The long process of getting committees approved and the budgeting shortcomings were symptomatic of our continuing problems with higher administration. We talked in many meetings about many things and nothing ever seemed to get done. We were not alone in our frustration. As I walked around campus and met with various administrators I heard about their concerns about lack of follow through and about how little communication happened, even within the administration. We would discuss things in the Executive Council, hear about decisions, and I would then discover that the relevant administrator knew nothing about these decisions.

These concerns led the Executive Committee to write a letter to the Board of Trustees about the performance of President Duncan. The letter was overwhelmingly approved by the faculty at our April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting and sent on to the Board. The Board has now announced that Dr. Duncan is stepping down and we look forward to better communication patterns and a more strategic approach to planning.

We spent too much time this year dealing with crises and not enough time with positive innovations. We did approve the Jindal initiative, which holds the possibility of making our campus more international in nature. We approved a policy on blended learning so that faculty can experiment with new conceptions of the classroom experience. We approved one new multidisciplinary major, Public Policy and Planning, and revised the Honors program to align it with our new General Education requirements.

Another positive note was our increased contact with the Board of Trustees. Subsets of the Executive Committee met with Board members on several occasions. Two of us represented Arts and Sciences at the two Education Committee meetings of the year and we have been told this will be a regular occurrence in the future. We met informally several times during the course of the year to express our concerns about the future of the college and have been, most recently, included in discussions about priorities for next year, the selection of an interim president and the search for a new long-term president. I believe we are building good will with the Board and a sense of a community with common concerns.

We look forward to next year's challenges. We need to rebuild our own sense of community. We believe it is time to focus on a sustainable long-term budget. This should flow from not only cutting unnecessary expenditures but also increasing fund raising and developing exciting programs on the undergraduate and graduate level that will help keep our current students and attract a plethora of new ones. We will need to hear from, and have the help of, many faculty if this is going to happen. We have a window of opportunity for positive change that I hope we use effectively.