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Norine E. Noonan
nnoonan@mail.usf.edu

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January 23, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

It is with deep regret that I inform you that Dr. Chris D’Elia, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, has submitted his letter of resignation to me effective July 1, 2009. Chris has accepted the position of Dean of the School of the Coast and Environment at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA.

Chris came to USFSP in 2004 from the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY) where he had served both as a faculty member and as Vice President for Research. Chris has had a distinguished career in academia and government with previous appointments as Director of Maryland Sea Grant College (University of Maryland System), Provost at the Maryland Biotechnology Institute in Baltimore, and Program Director for biological oceanography at the National Science Foundation, *inter alia*. He is a recognized international expert in coral reef ecology, estuarine ecology, environmental policy and climate change.

Chris is a prolific author with over 60 refereed publications through 2006. He is also a successful grant writer with over $10 million in grants, including the $1.5 million EPA grant to USFSP (Center for Science and Policy Applications for the Coastal Environment, C-SPACE) which he leads and which has supported a number of faculty. Chris has also been a global leader in bringing the International Ocean Institute –USA to the USFSP campus. IOI-USA sponsored the successful “Coastal Cities Summit” here in St. Petersburg last fall with attendees, both scientists and policymakers, from around the world. IOI-USA (USFSP) was officially named in 2007 as the newest of 25 operational centers for IOI which has consultative status with the United Nations. This is a real “feather in the cap” for USFSP and IOI-USA will remain here.

Chris bravely stepped in as Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from June 2007 to June 2008 at a time when the State of Florida, the SUS and USF System were all experiencing multiple rounds of wrenching budget reductions. Chris managed that process within Academic Affairs with a thoughtful and caring approach. He worked with the Dean of Arts and Sciences to create the first-ever departmental structure within that College and continued his ground-breaking work on development of our Graduate School. Amidst all that, he still found time to teach Marine Biology here, serve on the Board and as Chairman of the Science Center of Pinellas, and serve on the Board of the Hudson River Foundation, a national organization.

At LSU, Chris will be leading an organization at LSU which will bring him back to his research “roots” in coastal and environmental science and policy and will also allow him to build on his personal and professional successes. LSU is fortunate, indeed, to have a person of Chris’ talent and energy on its team. I speak for the Academic Affairs team in saying that we will greatly miss his thoughtful presence, his ideas, and his drive. He has been a significant and positive force for progress at this institution during a key period in its development and he will not be easily replaced.

Please join me in wishing Chris and Jennie all the best in Baton Rouge. We’ll all have to help him practice saying “Laissez les bontemps roulez.”