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As we come to the end of the first year of a new campus structure at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, it is appropriate to commend the extraordinary work of the students, faculty, staff, and administrators who created a success model for this institution. The work that occurred last year built on a long-standing tradition of academic excellence and a caring campus climate.

Among the many achievements of the year were the creation of colleges and the establishment of college governance procedures, implementation of institutional promotion and tenure guidelines, completion of phase two of the USFSP Strategic Plan, separate accreditation of the journalism program, agreements on the process and a timeline for separate accreditation of the colleges of business and education, and the introduction of fifty-one new faculty and a new administrative group.

There were many ‘firsts’ this year including the delegation of academic authority from President Genshaft to the Campus Board and me. From that delegation came a change in titles for the administrative group, authority for curricular change and sabbatical decisions, the creation of new campus policies and procedures, and awarding of degrees under the institutional designation of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. A new diploma format is provided in your board materials.

When we introduced the delegation of authority, most items on the list were immediately achieved like our promotion and tenure process. However, items that involve separation of information systems and decision making on student admissions from USF-Tampa have taken more time and are not yet complete. Our admissions and records process are still managed by the USF Tampa staff. To accomplish full authority, some processes will involve acquisition of new software and servers as well as additional staff time.

At the time of the delegation of authority, President Genshaft delineated the University of South Florida as a system of institutions, and the President and I continue to work to define the institutional privileges and responsibilities that derive from that relationship.

Our institutional application for separate accreditation remains with the staff at the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS). Despite my personal eagerness for information on the status of our application, we have a little longer to wait. Last month, we learned that our application was in the queue for analysis with several schools ahead of us. The President and I were disappointed that even though our submission was received in February, staff analysis was not completed in time for consideration at the June commission meeting.

USFSP is currently accredited and will remain accredited under the University of South Florida system-wide accreditation. USFSP is participating in the re-affirmation process of the USF system institutions so that we will retain our current status while seeking separate accreditation. We hope that the SACS staff will forward our application for a site visit to the December meeting of the commission.

I am pleased to announce the promotion in rank of six faculty: Dr. David Carr and Dr. Ambe Njoh were promoted to professor and Dr. Guda Gayle-Evans, Dr. Lisa Starks, Dr. Gary Patterson, and Dr. Joani Spadero were promoted to Associate professor with tenure. Peer review and administrative recommendations were completed on this campus and approved by the President and by the Board of Trustees.

I would like to recognize the recent passing of Dr. Edward Leslie Cole, Jr., a physician and former mayor of St. Petersburg. Dr. Cole was central to efforts to purchase land for expansion of USFSP and in 1990, donated $500,000 to establish the first endowed chair at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Joining us this fall semester is Dr. Hugh Lafialette who will serve as Marie and Leslie E. Cole Professor of Ethics. Dr. Lafialette earned the PhD in Philosophy at Vanderbilt and most recently served as a Professor at East Tennessee University.

We will also be joined by four additional tenure track faculty.
Dr. Rich Brody, Associate Professor of Accounting, earned the PhD at Arizona State University and most recently taught at University of New Haven.

Dr. James Gore joins us as Senior Scientist and Professor of Environmental Science, Policy and Geography. His PhD is in zoology from the University of Montana and most recently taught at Columbus State University.

Dr. Eric Odgaard, Assistant Professor of Psychology completed the PhD at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and was an instructor there during his graduate studies.

Dorian Angello earned the Master of Science in Communication Design from the Pratt Institute and joins us as Assistant Professor of Graphic Design. His most recent position was as professor at Delaware College of Art and Design.

Dr. Christopher D'Elia joins us as Regional Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Community Partnerships. Dr. D'Elia earned the PhD in Zoology and served as Vice President for Research at the State University of New York, Albany.

Dr. James Malek, most recently provost at Rollins College, has joined us as Interim Regional Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. He has delayed his retirement from higher education and his desire to write the definitive American novel to provide academic leadership and guidance here at USFSP. Dr. Malek has an illustrious career having served as provost at Ithaca College, Dean at Florida Atlantic University, University of Nevada Las Vegas and University of Nebraska at Omaha. He brings us expertise in strategic planning, accreditation, and assessment. The search for a permanent VCAA will begin in August and will be led by Dean of Education Vivian Fueyo.

I would like to highlight the activities of a few of our faculty and students who are involved in international programming.

Dr. Andrew Price-Smith, assistant professor of Environmental Science and Policy is one of two dozen international experts invited to participate in a two-day discussion on National Security and the HIV pandemic sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and UNAIDS Joint Programme. Dr. Price-Smith was editor of Plagues and Politics, a series of essays on infectious disease and international policy.

Dr. Todd Shank was awarded a $23,000 grant from the Fulbright Commission to create academic linkages between USFSP and Sun Yat Sen University in Guangzhou, China. A first step will be to sponsor a three week study trip for 15 USFSP business students that pairing them with 20 Chinese students. Dr. Shank served previously as a Fulbright Teaching Scholar in China.

Dr. Lisa Culp is currently participating in a Fulbright Seminar Abroad in China studying history and culture with other American academics. The competition for these seminars is fierce and we are pleased that Dr. Culp was recognized for this honor.

Sarah McDougal is the first USFSP student to win a $5,000 award from the prestigious Freeman Foundation to attend Nankai University in China this fall semester. Sarah is a gifted student who plans to utilize her experiences in research in cross-cultural psychology. She will receive further institutional support from the Regional Chancellor's Fund that assists outstanding students in national and international research opportunities.

The end of the spring semester marked a new USFSP tradition – the Tomorrow’s Leaders’ Symposium. Students who participated in undergraduate research projects gave poster presentations on topics from psychology to business ethics. Some research activities were conducted with community partners such as the Lowry Park Zoo and social service agencies such as CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse).

The Civil Rights Movement Conference attracted many individuals from across the state to discuss the history and progress of the Civil Rights movement in Florida. The Florida Studies program is to be congratulated for fostering many outstanding and thought-provoking sessions that occurred.

Governor Jeb Bush was on campus in June to sign legislation related to health care. During that time, Chairman Duncan, President Genshaft, and I were able to acquaint the Governor with some of our construction needs and plans for the future.

In today’s board meeting, you will hear further refinement of the master plan including additional information on residential housing and the parking garage. Master planning is a dynamic, evolving process and may need further amendment if the city’s plans for the Bayfront Center and the Dali museum are approved by voters in a November referendum. We have met with the city council and have expressed support for the Dali proposal and our interest in acquiring the site of the present museum and all parking lots affiliated with the museum. I believe there will be a joint legislative request apart from the PECO list to assist the museum in construction and the university in acquiring the property.

I am delighted to announce that the Chancellor of the State University System has placed a USFSP initiative on the Legislative Budget Request to be submitted to the Board of Governors at their meeting tomorrow. If funded by the legislature, a joint program between the USF Health Sciences Center and USF St. Petersburg will be established to produce 60 baccalaureate nurses each year. The base budget request for USFSP is $457,900.
The next academic year will be exciting as we set new goals and further refine and define our concept of institutional niche and how to assess our progress at achieving it. I thank the board for its continued interest and support of the campus, its students, faculty and staff.