Dear Colleagues,

At last Friday’s first Faculty Senate meeting, I outlined for Senators some leadership initiatives that will be a priority for the Faculty Senate Executive Team this year. I’m sharing that discussion with you as a way to make good on my promise late last month to update you on some of what to expect in the coming year from Senate.

1. Outcomes and Assessment Task Force: As I have described in previous messages<http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/specialinitiatives.html>, this faculty-led task force has as its goal the urgent and mission-critical work of identifying an assessable set of University-wide student learning outcomes and plan for assessing them. This work, undertaken in collaboration with administration, is central not just to the institution’s accreditation status and to the University’s identity; the task force is also an important model for faculty actively fulfilling our obligations to the curriculum and the shared governance of the University. The task force is in the final stages of forming and will begin its work by the end of this month. Ongoing updates and information can be found here<http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/specialinitiatives.html>.

2. Framework for Shared Governance: This process will collaboratively engage faculty and our partners in shared governance in a constructive dialog about what it means for stakeholders to share in the decision-making processes at the University. Building off statements emerging from the statewide Advisory Council of Faculty Senates, this initiative has at its goal the adoption of a clearly articulated framework for what shared governance means at FGCU.

3. Evaluation of Chairs and Deans: This last initiative seeks to complete work begun last year to provide constructive, formalized faculty feedback about the performance of chairs and deans. The goal is a collaborative process for implementing a survey that has buy-in from faculty and administration and can be used formatively in the improvement of academic working environments on campus.
These initiatives and all other Senate business will rise or fall in large part on the success of Senators in representing their colleges and units, and in-unit faculty providing engaged input to their Senate delegation. This means that faculty should expect summaries of important information and major action items (whether enacted or upcoming) from one of their Faculty Senators on a biweekly basis. It also means there needs to be an ongoing dialog between Senators and the faculty they represent about the issues and business before the Senate (or other topics that need to be considered). This process may play out differently in different colleges and units. But if faculty are in equal parts to claim their rights and fulfill their responsibilities, it will take perhaps more substantive engagement than that to which many of us have become accustomed.

As always, you can find more information about Senate, its business, and resources for faculty at the <http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/index.html> Senate website<http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/index.html>, which is in the process of being updated for the new academic year. In the meantime, please let me know what’s on your mind. And have a productive academic year.

Sincerely,

Douglas Harrison