

November 15, 2012

**Sent on behalf of the Faculty Senate's Faculty Select Panel on Growth and Quality (background here)**

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

FGCU has grown rapidly over the last decade, increasing the number of students we teach and guide, the number of programs we offer, and the size of the physical plant in which this occurs. Financial support for this growth has not kept pace. We now face real threats to our future.

State funding for our enterprise has changed dramatically in recent years, dropping to 40% of our total budget, and may be changing more in the future (for trends in state support for FGCU, see page 19 here: [http://www.fgcu.edu/trustees/AgendaFile/2012/9-2012/BOTIS2\\_9-2012.pdf](http://www.fgcu.edu/trustees/AgendaFile/2012/9-2012/BOTIS2_9-2012.pdf)). This shortfall in funding actually grows as our student numbers increase (see Table 2.2, page 11 here [http://www.fgcu.edu/trustees/AgendaFile/2012/9-2012/BOTIS2\\_9-2012.pdf](http://www.fgcu.edu/trustees/AgendaFile/2012/9-2012/BOTIS2_9-2012.pdf)). We cannot address this shortfall simply by unilaterally increasing tuition, as we discovered to our dismay this year. This situation will compromise our ability to deliver quality education for our students both in terms of section size and classroom space, and perhaps more critically in faculty and staff numbers and teaching loads.

In addition, there is an emerging focus at the state (and national) level for the use of efficiency metrics in determining the use of tax dollars for higher education, putting to question the model of a liberal arts approach to education and the relative values of degree programs (for more on performance funding, see here: [http://www.flbog.edu/about/performance\\_funding.php](http://www.flbog.edu/about/performance_funding.php); for more on threats to the liberal arts model of higher education, see here: [http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/files/NINE\\_Flawed\\_Assumptions\\_Final.pdf](http://www.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/files/NINE_Flawed_Assumptions_Final.pdf)). Targeted growth at the state level may be focused in the future on STEM degrees to the detriment of other degree programs (see, for instance, HouseBill 7135 – the so-called Proctor Bill – and the report of Governor Scott's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Higher Education at the following links respectively: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/7135/BillText/er/PDF>; <http://www.slideshare.net/FLHigherEd>).

The signs are clear. We are at a critical point in the development of FGCU. Many external conditions are changing, thus calling our present strategy and its assumptions into question.

Indeed, our current situation and our approach to growth are not sustainable.

As faculty, we now have an opportunity to participate in the response to these threats and more clearly define FGCU's academic identity and commitments, especially within the context of state and local priorities. Our ability to fulfill the stated mission of FGCU (see here: <http://www.fgcu.edu/info/mission.asp>) and our shared goals as faculty dedicated to educational excellence, scholarship and service to our academic fields and to our community depends on our examination of these phenomena objectively to participate constructively in planning processes that will determine, among other things, the number and qualifications of the students we admit, the programs we offer, the size of our physical plant, and on our land use.

We have been given the task by the Faculty Senate to solicit, collate, and assess faculty sentiment with respect to these issues. We need you to engage in this process and provide us with input. To facilitate this input process, we have created a response page on Angel that is divided into a few key question areas.

**To provide your response(s):**

Log in to your [Angel](#) account

Under COMMUNITY GROUPS, click on FACULTY FEEDBACK ON GROWTH AND QUALITY

Click on each link to read the question for that topic.

To post a response, click NEW POST in the upper left corner.

**We are asking for you to provide your comments and constructive criticisms to any or all questions now through November 30, 2012.**

These responses will form the basis of our continuing research and examination of the issues involved, and will contribute to our final report to the Faculty Senate. Our hope is to be able to deliver a report by the end of the calendar year or early in Spring term so that faculty representatives in Senate and to the Planning and Budget Council can benefit from the focused faculty perspectives the report will bring together.

Sincerely,  
Faculty Senate Faculty Select Panel on Growth and Quality  
Margaret Banyan  
Cecil Carter  
Stephen Drew  
Amanda Evans  
Win Everham  
Sim Komisar