

# Academic Affairs Meeting

May 20, 2022

Mr. America called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Present: Jim America, Ronnie Chronister, Timothy Thornton, Cynthia Lovelace, Pamela Keller, Laken Smith, Felicia Mucci, Catherine Wehlburg, Robin Moore (recorder)

Absent: Macke Mauldin, Missy Ming Smith, Jimmy Baker, Donna Estill, Rita Wallace, Ira Lacy, Philip Way

Review of last meeting's minutes

Motion to approve – Mr. Chronister

Second – Dr. Thornton

All in Favor

Intro of Dr. Joe Delap – Dr. Delap will be serving as Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences during the search for the permanent selection.

New Programs

Master of Science in Acquisition and Contract Management – this degree has been requested by Redstone Arsenal to fill a need that they have. It will be a 33 hour master program, most of which (24 hours) are new courses. Dr. Charles Roberts is the lead on developing this new program and has worked hard to get everything together in a short period of time. We will be hiring additional part timers to get us going, then as the program grows, we plan to hire additional full-time faculty. Mr. America asked if it is a governmental-related program, Dr. Roberts said yes and also there will be some corporations sending students as well who work in related government contracting programs....companies like Raytheon and Northrop. Classes will be offered by the College of Business and will be in person and online.

Graduate Certificate in Accountancy – builds on our recently approved Master of Accountancy program. This will give employees another credential to get a boost in their jobs. It will begin Fall 2022 and is a 15-hour certificate.

Undergraduate Certificate in Bioinformatics - This will be an 11 or 12 hour certificate (based on which courses are taken) and is built on existing courses and will start in fall 2022. This is in response to a demand in industry for more employees versed in how to describe research and report. It is also in response to a request from Hudson Alpha for more students trained in Bioinformatics.

College of Business Spotlight

Dr. Wayne McCain discussed the new Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Systems Management and opportunities for the students in the program. One of the most interesting is the use of cube satellites.

They have expanded the aviation management minor to turn into full fledged bachelor degree and rebranded to aerospace systems management – with concentrations in aviation management and one in space systems management.

Dr. McCain displayed a cube satellite and reported that Athens has signed an agreement last fall with Vaya to launch our satellite next year. Calhoun built it and we collaborated with them and their students did the mechanical design. It will be launched with a commercial payload and then our cube satellite will piggyback on it. The majority of the cube satellites are launched by industry and the Department of Defense. It gives our students and other stem students an opportunity to participate in design, mission planning, tracking, communication, and data analysis.

A similar program is planned for the aviation concentration as well. We are working with Sonex in Oshkosh, Wisconsin to obtain a jet kit and we will work with Wallace State students on this project. We are planning on doing fund raisers to get enough funds to obtain the jet kit and are working on developing a partnership with Sonex.

We are hoping to promote and advertise the new program to get students signed up for fall semester and get up and running.

#### Academic Affairs Update

Horizon 2030 report card highlights – approved in January 2021. Have some data in but not full set yet. Jeff Guenther has done amazing work putting the report card together for us. It is partial in that we don't have data just yet on everything, just the first half year.

We are moving forward on 5 goals.

1. Have viable and innovative academic programs both in new programs and programs submitted over last 4 years.
2. Quality teaching and engaged learning – looking at rankings provided by outside entities. One difficulty we face, is because we are upper level and we can't be ranked as part of the US News and World Report. But we still do have rankings – 13<sup>th</sup> best in supply chain management is one that we are proud of. Where we can be ranked, we are.
3. Recruit retain and graduate – demographic cliff is coming and many of our potential students getting are credentialed in other ways – google certifications, Amazon, etc. Some in higher education view these others as a threat. But we feel we can look at these as an opportunity to accept these credentials to bring the students and give them credit. We have been involved with CAEL and ACHE. ACHE has reached out to us to work with them. And Felicia is working that now. What does learning look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
4. We have outperformed all of the national averages for growth. Spring 2021 – the national average decreased 4.9 percent but ours was only 2.3 percent for Undergraduate. Then for Graduate, the national average increased 3.6 percent and ours was 7.2 percent. We are offering relevant programs needed and necessary.
5. Increase quantity and quality of researchers – obtain more gifts and donations to go to academic programs and people will provide us funding if they see a need or requirement. We already have a new literacy lab, and stem lab in education. In FY 21 our gifts totaled \$634,000. 63% increase over previous years. We recently had an economic impact study – and showed

that having Athens state in the north Alabama area contributes millions to the local and area economies.

Next year we are moving into working on an academic master plan – our departments will look at where they want to be in 5 years and then come up with a plan that is aligned with those goals. We have to be strategic and make sure we aren't doing everything at the same time, that we have an intentional focus and plan.

The ACA has done well with Calhoun and have been working together. This has helped to bring in more students and potential students.

Mr. Chronister said that it is critical that we adapt to the changing environment and ever-changing educational ways. Be creative and partner with other organizations/colleges.

Mr. America loves to see the creativity and diversity of programs and that we listen to the business community to help them when it is needed.

Dr. Wehlburg reported that we at Athens take our mission of being an anchor institution seriously and want to keep that up and continue building strong relationships with our community.

We are also planning on starting a "LaunchBox" for local entrepreneurs. This will be a space where they can work and then move to an incubator phase. This is yet another way we are building a strong community with Athens.

Old business – None to discuss.

Motion to Ajourn – Mr. Chronister  
Second – Dr. Lovelace