**Activity Report for Compendious Review**

Fred Antczak, 2011-2015 (submitted February 2015)

I want to talk about the sum of my activities as CLAS Dean these four years in terms of establishing, maintaining, and extending CLAS culture. I take this approach because, ten and a half years since its founding, CLAS now has the luxury of established and tested processes, growth and maturation, and the passage of enough time to achieve a shared organizational culture. Perhaps through our scale and diversity, perhaps through concerted efforts to build this culture, the college shares widely and deeply a sense of responsibility to be the heart of liberal education and a proving ground for initiatives at the university. Building that culture has been a matter of relationships, innovations, and a few different kinds of development.

In the last few years particularly, our college has enjoyed its most productive relationships with other GVSU colleges, allowing us to work more colllaboratively on the challenges we face as the state rapidly changes the landscape in education, as new programs and opportunities open up in colleges relying on our faculty or on facilities we routinely use, and as our increased focus on serving our students toward successful completion of their undergraduate and graduate education requires us to think far beyond the level of the individual academic unit far more frequently than in the past. Where once we looked at the demands on curriculum in a particular unit, we now look at the pressures across several departments or colleges as well as fluctuations in transfer populations on the scheduling of service courses from our units. Just as we seek to teach our students to be good global citizens, we’ve been collectively learning how to be better whole-of-university thinkers.

Certainly since the last compendious review in 2011 and increasingly in the last couple of years, CLAS has embraced opportunities to pilot new programs and initiatives, with the philosophy that if we can make it work across CLAS and help in working out the bugs of implementation, we can contribute to viable systems for the whole university. Whether this was spearheading adaptations to Digital Measures that will greatly facilitate our HLC accreditation processes, or our commitment through the CLAS Academic Advising Center and faculty advisors to testing the Student Success Collaborative, CLAS used what we discovered from very different units to help communicate benefits to the wider faculty who might otherwise resist “another new piece of software.” We continue this work by exploring a regional consortium of languages through meetings with her counterparts and language faculty at several universities. We are building out five Research Clusters from their initial loose affiliations to teams that can successfully compete for grants. We are handling our budget with care and effectiveness, examining scheduling pinch points and addressing information gaps that allow us to reclaim seats, reducing the opacity of some processes that frustrate unit heads and advisors, and more generally contributing to a climate of mutual striving for the best processes (that is, both effective and humane) we can design.

We have also initiated many new programs to disseminate creative solutions at the college level. In response to concerns throughout the academy for adjunct faculty, I began meeting regularly with an Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee to provide a voice in the college for these colleagues. Also by working with Matt Boelkins, we are expanding some of the successful registration initiatives into more of the high demand courses in our college so that incoming students achieve a satisfying schedule. Building on the success of the CLAS Teaching Roundtables event for spreading exciting teaching innovations, we developed the CLAS Staff Roundtables event (which built on the success of a series of short seminars taught by PSS employees to one another) to allow staff to come together to share areas of expertise and innovative approaches to widely experienced challenges with everything from renting vehicles to budgeting.

Development efforts in the college have been enhanced through the somewhat more college-specific method of working used by University Development. CLAS has embraced this changed paradigm, working closely with the quick succession of three development officers assigned to us in the last 18 months. Despite this turnover, we’ve completed a major cleanup of fund names and terms, new scholarship funds have been initiated (for instance, for the “GV in DC” program in Political Science), and many more explorations have taken place such as the feasibility of scholarships to close the gap between in and out of state funding, the identification of new donors, and a reinvigorated feeling among the faculty that endowed scholarships are within their reach.

As a college, we constantly seek to build a deep bench of leadership. We have regularly reviewed and enhanced our unit head and new faculty orientation programs, striving for well-timed information that supports key activities ranging from resource allocation to advising. It is not uncommon for our faculty to move into various leadership roles in our college, other colleges at GVSU, central administration and even other universities. We strive to create opportunities that encourage diversity, routinely testing and assuring that the systems for leadership roles and awards selection are not excluding international faculty, any ethnicity, any sexual orientation or gender identity, women, any of our disciples, or any faculty or staff rank or category. In ways large and small, the College Office works hard to model the best practices we can find or design. We have not only strongly encouraged Inclusion Advocate certification, Allies and Advocates workshops, and sustainability, but my associate deans and I have gone through the trainings. I was named a “sustainability champion” in fall 2011.

Accepting the need to walk the talk, I taught graduate seminars in two different semesters, have served as a leadership mentor in the Hauenstein Leadership Academy since its inception, and also served a two year term as Executive Director of my national organization the Rhetoric Society of America.

The work and accomplishments of the past four years have been aimed at annual goals of enhancing academic quality and rigor, fostering diversity, managing resources to assure an optimal learning environment, and engaging with the community. You’ll find the particular activities sorted under such headings in the annual reports, but I hope the larger pattern as one of building a community committed to collaboration with all our colleagues, and to the thriving of our students, faculty and staff.