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Merging of A&S, RWC, and Clermont English Units: March 8, 2009

I have been meeting with Dept. Head Phil Luther of RWC and Coordinator Tom Dinsmore of Clermont. We have a long working relationship and feel that our units can be successfully combined. Keep in mind, though, that our respective faculties have not been taking part in our meetings and will need time, support, information, and reassurance if we are to avoid major panic and disruption. We haven't yet brought in our faculties because the whole process is only beginning, and we still need to establish a broad outline for a future arrangement.

English offerings are numerous at the branch campuses. Thus, both RWC and Clermont will require Assistant Heads or Coordinators to work on scheduling, hiring, faculty review, day to day operations, possibly RPT, and other matters. Faculty will for the most part remain at their current location under the new arrangement, though with some movement taking place if needed for strategic reasons. Faculty will be distinguished as "graduate" or "undergraduate" or "teaching" and "research" for workload and RPT purposes. Current teaching loads will be maintained, though a mechanism should be provided to allow for possible movement between the two faculty designations. Workload will be determined by a consistent set of criteria (e.g. a baseline load with adjustments based on other contributions, such as research, publication, service, and administrative work.

Curriculum will be centrally planned and coordinated, with consistent numbering of courses and syllabi, as already exists at the 100 level. Mainly 100 and 200 level classes will be offered at the branches, while the Clifton campus will continue to offer the entire range of courses. We will experiment with offering higher level courses at the branches that count for the undergraduate major, to see if an acceptable level of demand exists for expanding such offerings. Faculty availability is an issue, as at present large numbers of adjuncts are required at the branches just to staff their existing courses. Space is also a concern at both branches, with classroom use practically maxed out.

Different RPT criteria will be established for research/creative track and instructional track faculty (or graduate/undergraduate). A single departmental committee will evaluate RPT files. Much thought will need to be put into potentially problematic area issues such as committee formation, differential criteria, and participation by branch vs Clifton faculty. Department head will appoint search committees for full-time hires. For a branch hire, faculty from the branch will be involved. We would hope the branches will remain as distinct entities, but with closer ties to the central campus and to each other. Salaries should be brought into line with national averages. Adjunct salaries should also be consistent, as they are currently lower at RWC and Clermont.

Field service faculty at Clifton campus look very similar to tenure track faculty at branches. Should FS lines be converted to instructional TT?

How will budgeting and oversight take place? For example, RWC has reading and study skills centers, a writing center, 9 salaried staff, grants, and an operations budget. Would that all be centralized via Clifton? Doing so would place a huge burden upon an already stretched English administration and staff at Clifton campus. However, if it's all one big unit, somebody has to have oversight.

RWC and Clermont hire large numbers of adjuncts. Would the branches continue to hire their own adjunct faculty or would such hiring be centralized?