Provost’s News

Well, we are already in our third week of the spring semester and the campus is alive with activity. This is the time of year that we typically start working on budgets for next year. Establishing budget priorities is necessary, but certainly not popular with anyone; setting priorities forces us to make decisions about the future of the institution and in the harshest of terms forces us to say we will pursue “this but not that.” The good news is that Mines does not face tough choices that are present at some institutions. See for instance:

- Moodys Issues Negative Outlook for Higher Education (Chronicle.com)
- Deep Cuts in Louisiana Could Force Campus Closures (Insidehighered.com)
- Kentucky State U. Slashes Budget to Trim $7-Million Deficit (Chronicle.com)
- Enrollment drop gouges University of Northern Colorado’s budget (Greeley Tribune)

Instead, we are in the enviable position of being able to choose how to use any “new money” to support the goals and strategies within the strategic plan. In their simplest form, budgets are nothing more than a way to ensure planned expenses and reserve funds equal projected revenue. The complexity of budgeting comes from uncertainties in both expenses and revenue and the level of detail required to accurately describe the institution so that all functions are funded at an appropriate level. Budget planning requires efforts from many levels on campus with faculty and department heads promoting activities (and the funds required for those activities) that create positive impacts aligned with the strategic plan. These requests are prioritized within a college by the Deans which feed into a set of priorities for Academic Affairs that are recommended by Deans, Provost, and Associate Provost. Budget requests are then formally presented to the campus budget committee (tentatively scheduled for February 18). Faculty on the committee are Paul Santi, John Speer, Anthony Petrella, and Dinesh Mehta. As this description notes, within Academic Affairs, the Deans play a critical role in budgeting. Hiring priorities within a college are defined by the Deans and advocacy for funding increases for particular functions is carried by the Deans. An example of budgetary decision making is shown in “Mines by the Numbers” below. These charts show the growth in direct graduate student support; since 2012, the growth in graduate student funding has been driven by the Deans.

As a separate subject, last semester Associate Provost Boyd and I hosted 23 faculty lunches designed to provide open forum input to the administration from the faculty. For the spring, we will continue the dialogue with the faculty by hosting a number of morning or afternoon sessions with faculty to discuss individual topics. Topics will be suggested by the Deans or by direct replies to this newsletter. (Please email suggestions to academic-affairs@mines.edu.) In the coming weeks, we will announce the topics and the venues for these discussions.
Faculty Achievements

We are pleased to welcome two new endowed chairs to the campus this January.

Lesli Wood (GE), just joined Mines this Spring as a Professor and the Robert Weimer Endowed Chair in Sedimentology and Petroleum Geology, where she is Director of the Sedimentary Analogs Database and Research Program (SAnD). She received her Ph.D. from Colorado State University. Dr. Wood specializes in quantitative seismic geomorphology of clastic basins, structural and sedimentary system interactions, submarine mass failures, petroleum geology, mobile shales and geomorphology of Mars.

Mark Jensen (CH), just joined Mines this Spring as the Grandey University Chair in Nuclear Science and Engineering. His research interests are focused on the nuclear fuel cycle, ranging from mechanisms of selectivity in chemical separations to biologically-based metal separations and the biochemistry and environmental chemistry of the transuranium elements. He received his Ph.D. in Inorganic and Nuclear Chemistry from Florida State University.

We also want to welcome to Mines the following new faculty members who started in January 2015: Timothy Strathmann (CEE), Hongyan Liu (CEE), Josh Ramey (CBE), Mansur Ermila (PE), and Svitlana Pylypenko (CH) who started in October 2014.

Mines by the Numbers

TA Budget History

There is always conversation about the TA budget and how it supports both the graduate program and the undergraduate teaching mission. The plots shown describe the history of the TA budget in terms of institutional dollars and then the number of students that the budget supports. In terms of students supported, the FY15 budget shows an increase of approximately 140% since 2006. For that same time period, the undergraduate student population grew by 40%.
What’s Happening

E-access to the digital library at Mines:

Electronic journals began appearing in the late 1990’s and within ten years almost all library subscriptions were for electronic format scholarly journals, rather than print. The Library joined with other regional libraries for greater access to more content from select publishers. Additionally, previous publication years were purchased for some high use journals, extending online access to the first volume. Currently the Library has access to 80,000 full text journals.

Typically electronic books are additions to the collection rather than a different format of an existing item. The Library began acquiring these in 2001. Currently the Library has access to 90,000 full text titles. Electronic books and journals are available inside and outside the Library, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If one uses the Library website to look for information, the discovery and delivery tool Primo allows those researchers to have one-stop service for their research needs. Through a single search box, users can now search not only the full breadth of content from the Library’s collection but also content from the region and around the world. Results are relevance-ranked and full text made available as applicable.

Mines’ Mission

Education and research in engineering and science to solve the world’s challenges related to the earth, energy and the environment

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