November 24, 2006

Greetings division members:

You will find several items enclosed for your review.

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 19th for our division holiday party. Division members are requested to arrive between 4:00 and 4:30 pm, and then a light dinner will be delivered between 4:30 to 5:00 pm. The food and company should be good, so we’ll plan on everyone attending. We’ve invited our retirees too! For the purpose of preparation and ordering the hot food, please let me know only if you’re unable to make it, otherwise, we’ll plan on seeing everyone.

The faculty and administration have recently been discussing the retention rates, or attrition rates depending on how you look at it, and how we can improve on retaining our students beyond the first week, census, and so on throughout the semesters. You will find a few handouts and journals I’ve been reading that address student retention. They’ve been written by well known academicians from studies around the country. I encourage everyone to read the materials with an open mind, and hopefully some of the factors or suggestions may seem worth trying in future classes. Please note that the information in the journals and research have not been officially adopted by our college, so if you have any questions or wish to implement something new, please drop by my office or send an email.

Many suggestions have surfaced in recent meetings regarding retention. For example, our latest Division Unit Review session resulted with several suggestions for improving faculty-student communications, such as 1. A college email address issued to each student at the time of enrollment; 2. On the student or academic LAHC email system, an automatic student event-calendar-information screen open when they first log on, like a banner with dates, information, parking/construction updates, main events, and college services we’d like to students to be aware and attend <and must be updated daily>; 3. Have counselors work in other sites around the campus for easier access to students, especially evening students; 4. Install a rolling message board in key places that make campus announcements from the ASO, administration; 5. The college commit to a full-time webmaster; 6. Each faculty member be issued a permanent website from the LAHC address file; 7. Have easy access, easy to find items/areas on college webpage for both students and faculty.

Additionally, members discussed the expansion, role and use of the LRC, and the purchase of new technology equipment for each classroom in the General Classroom building.

Many thoughts have been discussed that may or may not affect retention, but discussions with genuine ideas will begin the process to a better learning experience at our institution. After you’ve had a chance to read over the materials, please write down your reactions so we may discuss them.

I truly wish everyone and their families a happy holiday season.