Welcome back to the spring semester. The good news is that 90% of our classes are meeting college enrollment expectations and that enrollment college-wide is up a few percent. At the request of Administration, Division Chairs were asked to examine low enrolled sections and as a result our division was impacted mostly with the Friday and Saturday classes. With everyone’s cooperation, however, I was able to re-assign faculty into mid-week assignments with minimal interruption to other schedules. A draft summer and fall schedule will be available for review in a couple of weeks.

Our division welcomes the faculty members of Fire Technologies. The long-term instructors in FT have a great program and we are pleased they’re with us. The transfer of FT to our division will allow us to explore an interdisciplinary approach in public safety with the Administration of Justice program and will increase the possibilities of obtaining state and federal grant funding in First Responder and Homeland Security programs.

In recent years we’ve been discussing the concept of specific discipline degree and certificate programs from our division, and, now with the elimination the Liberal Arts degree, we’re able to move forward. The proposal by counseling and our articulation officer is to have a ‘Liberal Arts and Sciences’ AA degree. Each discipline that has a minimum of 18 units, in addition to the required GE requirements, may offer the newly titled degree with an emphasis in the specific discipline. All existing stand alone degree and certificate programs will remain the same. I will send out a list of scheduled meetings for specific disciplines so that all faculty members may plan to attend and participate in this process. Many disciplines will have to decide on which classes they’d like to add from the district data base to meet the 18 unit minimum so that students may have the opportunity to concentrate in a desired area of study. The History department currently meets the requirement for a stand-alone AA degree, therefore, we’re beginning the process with Ellen Joiner leading this effort.

The new Academic building is impressive and on schedule. I truly feel that everyone will enjoy the classrooms, classroom technology, and availability of offices for all faculty members. Each classroom will have smart classroom technology that will eliminate having to pull and push TV carts and projectors around the campus. I have consulted with Joan Thomas-Spiegel regarding adjunct office space. Adjunct members will be assigned a shared office with a computer, phone, filing cabinets, and printer access. During our initial planning over six years ago, we agreed to have, or set aside, two areas specifically for individual testing and advising during office hours or non-teaching times since so many members must share offices. This will greatly increase our efforts for useful office hours and student success.

The AJ and FT programs were originally planned and scheduled in the new Technology building. In order for the television and media arts program to grow and meet their needs, we’ve been asked to relocate, if at all possible. Being team players we accepted the challenge and learned the old administrative office area was available. The administration offices appear to be a blessing in disguise for many reasons. The AJ and FT have sixteen faculty members assigned (least number in years) that would otherwise have to be squeezed into the new building, thus creating a packed house. This area will allow for positive growth for new programs and grant projects. If this doesn’t work out, we’ll revert back to the original six to eight years of planning in the new Tech building.

Division meeting dates and times will be sent out to everyone as they are scheduled. See you around campus!