

October 25, 2007

Dear College Community,

Last spring, as part of its on-going financial realignment, the College announced that there would be staff and faculty adjustments to position the College, relative to its enrollment, more in line with other strong liberal arts colleges. Staff reductions were implemented at the end of June after extensive internal and comparative research. During the summer, the College undertook a review of its academic programs and faculty positions in light of its 8:1 student-faculty ratio. As part of this process and in accordance with the Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Representative Committee also reviewed each of the College's academic areas.

In late July 2007, voluntary retirement options were offered to faculty who met certain age and service thresholds. Six faculty members, five of whom will retire at the end of 2007-08, chose to accept the voluntary retirement option:

- Larry Bowden, Professor of Religion and Culture and former chaplain
- Pat DeMars, Reference Librarian (retired summer 2007)
- Jan Hullum, the William E. Thoresen and Catherine Ehrman Thoresen '23 Professor of Sociology
- Pam Quaggiotto, Associate Professor of Anthropology
- Tom Stephens, the William E. Thoresen and Catherine Ehrman Thoresen '23 Professor of Speech and Theatre
- Ivor Thomas, Professor of Religious Studies

These individuals are among the College's most senior academic leaders, and we acknowledge and thank them for their service and their important roles in the history of this institution.

This fall, the College began the hard task of identifying additional faculty reductions guided by three principles:

- To eliminate departments with low current or projected student participation, while giving appropriate attention to preserving the College's broad liberal arts curriculum with global emphasis.
- To increase the student/faculty ratio to more sustainable levels over time by both increasing enrollment and reducing the number of faculty, while giving appropriate attention to the College's tenure process and its future teaching strength.
- To help balance the College's revenues and expenses, which are currently in deficit.

The College has made a careful effort to respect the overall soundness of the liberal arts curriculum and to protect declared majors. The Dean of the College's Office has scheduled

individual meetings with students impacted by the decisions. The College believes it will be able to accommodate the needs of all full-time students who have officially declared majors. In the plan that follows, the student-faculty ratio is projected to increase to 10:1 by fall 2009 based on the College's estimated enrollment growth.

- At the end of 2007-08, the College plans to close the German Studies, American Culture, and Anthropology departments. The German Studies and American Culture departments are among the College's smallest majors. Anthropology does not offer an official major, although students bringing coursework done elsewhere have been allowed to fashion an independently designed major. We will be studying the addition of gender studies and culture courses to a reconfigured Sociology department.
- At the end of 2008-09, the College plans to close the Russian Studies and Japanese departments. Russian Studies is also among the College's smallest majors. Japanese, which does not offer a major, and Chinese, which the College also offers, compete for enrollment among students wanting to take an Asian language. Given current geopolitical realities, the College will move forward with Chinese as its Asian language offering.

The American Culture Program will continue through the spring of 2009. This program is recognized as a powerful learning experience for students and faculty alike, but cost and recruitment have been persistent challenges. During the next two years, the program will be carefully evaluated with a decision made as to its future.

Students, faculty, and the educational experience are the heart of this institution. We recognize that any reductions to curricular components, directly or indirectly, affect the experience as a whole, and that losses of faculty are particularly hard.

The strength of this College's spirit and community has allowed it to surmount a multitude of challenges throughout the College's 116 year history. I came here, drawn especially by that quality, and I hope it will provide the foundation for the College's strong and successful future.

Sincerely,

John E. Klein  
President