**President’s comments**

**Spring Faculty Meeting**

I want to thank you for a year in which the hard work and dedication of the university as a whole has begun to be recognized by others outside the university. Whether it is Tree Campus USA status, a recommendation free SACS review and a QEP that focuses on partnering academics with community engagement (great work Jill Lane and Antoinette Miller), college access.com recognition of the 19th safest campus in the US, or Payscale.com’s recognition of us as having the 365th best return on investment in the US (identical to my alma mater of UMass Amherst), or US News’ identification of us as the 8th best publicly supported comprehensive college in the southeast, or the AJC’s notice of us as one of the top 100 workplaces in metro Atlanta—for the 3rd consecutive year, people are beginning to recognize your great work—something our students have known for a long time. The university is one of a handful of institutions who have continued to experience increased enrollments during a time when nearly 2/3 of our colleagues have experienced enrollment declines—and of course this is a university wide and not a single office activity.

The University, in connection with the CSU Foundation, began two different recognition programs for faculty and staff accomplishments. The making a difference awards acknowledged colleagues who in their own way help each of us do better and want to come to campus most days. We also initiated the University professorships for six colleagues in recognition of their special contributions to our university (recipients of each award mind standing).

We are exceptionally blessed to have talented leadership in academic affairs, to allow for Dr. Demmitt lead the continued momentum of accomplishment in academic work. On the horizon, we see a redefinition of our advising strategy, creating a professional staff that will schedule with students, as well as free up faculty advisors to use their expertise to support students. Large data will be used to better advise our students and keep them better informed. The collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs will lead to a better strategy for internship development and career services—and hopefully opportunities for all of our students to gain such experiences. The complete college Georgia initiative, and continued refinements of enrollment management, come at a time in which our future state funding will be dependent on continued success of our students. And we will need to continue to be thoughtful in the ways that we approach new and continuing academic programs, to assure that we continue to give our students tools for both a living and a life. So for example, how do we contribute quickly to an emerging film and digital media industry? How do we integrate clusters of learning into conventional academic programs that better prepare our students for a changing world, while being able to more quickly adjust to those changes without abandoning many aspects of conventional curriculum development and review? (These are not incompatible if we are thoughtful about identifying exactly those things that we have and do value). They thus serve as a foundation for making modest adjustments in the strategic plan objectives.

Clayton State has been named explicitly as a participant in successful economic development and visioning activities by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Fayette County Visioning Plan, the Henry County plan, and the Clayton County Economic Development plan. We cannot be all things to all people, but we can invest and prosper on those things in which we currently succeed, and in which changes will allow for future successes.

Provost search will be based on some conversations we will be having during the summer and into the fall—identifying a search committee, engaging the campus in conversations about hopes and expectations for the next provost—and I look forward to these conversations.

I want to thank the campus, and certainly the faculty senate, for reinforcing and taking advantage of values of presumed benefits of collaboration, transparency of information used to make decisions, continuous learning, and using the community as a site for learning as well as source of support. The author Jim Collins observed that a great vision without great people is irrelevant. We are blessed to have great people, to whom I wish the best.