Notes from Department Chairs Meeting, February 2, 2006

The Associate Dean, Dean, Department Chairs, and the Director of Resource Management met from 2:00-4:10 PM.

Nominations for CBA faculty for the Alumni Award are due to the Deanís office February 20.  Jim asked the Chairs to encourage nominations from their faculty.

Jim shared a handout from the Provost on graduation rates and units taken to graduate from SDSU students entering as freshmen.

Jim encouraged the Chairs to keep Randy updated on stories on outstanding students and alumni.

Jim shared the comments from the luncheon meeting he hosted on Wednesday with retired CBA faculty, FERPs, and people planning to retire in the near future.  We would like for retired faculty members to be connected to the CBA and have not done a very good job reaching out to them after their retirement dates.  Many valuable comments arose from the meeting.  Jim expects the Chairs to work on ways in which their departments can continue to engage the retired faculty in department activities as appropriate.  There was strong support to have a lounge, but not just for retired faculty.  Gail, Jim, and Deb will work on college-appropriate venues to encourage retired faculty to stay involved with the CBA.

There is a proposed change in the university grants procedures, to roll the RSCA, FDP, and GIA programs all into one program.  Jim has expressed to Gail that we need to ensure that if the new system is adopted, the colleges continue to get funded in awards at appropriate levels.

Jim asked the departments on the progress on their RTP criteria department policies which are due March 15.  Management has passed their policy with minor modifications to the initial template.  Accounting is currently working on something which may slightly modify the template.  IDS decided to reject the template and form their own criteria.  Finance and Marketing still have work to do.

Jim asked the Chairs to have their staff keep electronic syllabi in departments.  There are times that we need syllabi in which electronic files are far more efficient than hard copy.  When information from more than one course is needed, it is more efficient to get this from one set of files.

Jim briefly discussed FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), with which faculty may not be familiar.  This basically restricts the amount of information faculty can share with other people about a studentís record without permission from the student.  While Jim said he would send out a separate memo detailing some situations that faculty should understand, a later conversation with Assistant Dean Sandi Williams resulted in her agreeing to send the memo.
The Chairs discussed the Lecturer evaluation process for those that teach only one term during the academic year. We are not required to do this, but given the Lecturer union contract, Jim has encouraged the Chairs to evaluate all Lecturers. For those whose Spring term is their only term during the year, he has suggested that the Chairs include a blanket statement in the evaluation which reserves final judgment on rehiring until the Chair has a chance to look at the student evaluations from the term.

There were a series of enrollment issues that we have had to deal with this Spring that bore discussion for planning for the Fall term. We spent much of the meeting discussing these issues.

This semester, we had an extra unanticipated crush of senior demand in Marketing (472, 476, 479) and junior/senior demand in MGT 352/356. Jim passed out the admits to the major charts that the Undergraduate Office prepares each semester. Chairs were asked to study the changes in their new majors from Fall 2004 to Fall 2005 and Spring 2005 to Spring 2006 to better anticipate where the pressure for increased demand will come in their classes. The chairs were also reminded that they must do everything possible, including working with each other and with outside sources to expand their lecturer pools, so that potential new lecturers can be identified who would be qualified to teach some of these advanced major courses. Jim suggested the possibility of visiting positions if there are areas in which lecturers may not be available, but these are more expensive to the college.

Crashing seemed to be a bigger problem this semester than in previous ones, and there were multiple incidents of students being confrontational and rude when not given crash codes for their section of preference. The problems often arose in that sections were available, but students often decide there is only one section that fits their needs and are unwilling to add one of the open sections. Each department and faculty member has the right to establish their own priorities for crashing, but we are concerned about trying to alleviate the confrontations that occur too often between faculty and angry students.

Jim is looking at developing a web template that each course could use to have students sign up if they wish to enroll, once a section is filled. Faculty could set the criteria that they want to use, and students would provide that information. If this could be downloaded into a spreadsheet or text file, the faculty could then have the information they needed and just have the students who are selected bring the required transcripts, etc. to verify the information that they put on the crash list. This would also help us to better understand our demand for the advanced major classes.

This semester, we had too many students that went straight to the central administration to complain about not getting the classes they needed, without contacting the instructor or Chair of the department. This creates a misperception of the central administration about our lack of concern for the students. When we looked at these students case by case, it turned out that many of them thought that they were supposed to graduate but were missing prerequisites to get into the capstone courses, weren't getting the section they
wanted (when others were open), or werenít getting the specific elective that they desired when other electives were available.

We want to do what we can to make sure students have proper information both about their program of study and where they should be going, to keep them from sending angry emails to the President and Provostís offices. We agreed several measures could be taken. Each major has the appropriate road map for their major with the lists or requirements and prerequisites, and where to go with questions. These should be re-distributed to all current upper division students at the end of each semester (they are always available at Undergraduate Advising, but students do not always look at them), so that they have this information prior to their registration dates. They should also be posted on the department web sites.

Additionally, Sharon said that she keeps a list of major students and emails (they volunteer this information) so she can correspond with the Accounting majors by email when important issues arise. It was discussed that each of the Chairs try to do this, and then the lists could be merged so that Jim or Gail could send out a note at the end of the semester, reminding students to make sure they consult the information sheets and road maps. This would again show the central administration that we are truly concerned about our students, accommodating their course needs, and giving them the information to direct them to the proper places, rather than the central administration.

Jim found out that international exchange students whose exchange is arranged through the International Student Center (ISC) get priority registration. Unfortunately, many of these students who want to take business classes do not get advising as to appropriate classes to take, prerequisites, etc. Jim called the ISC to ask that any student wanting to take business classes be directed to our Undergraduate Advising Center. In addition, because of their registration priority, it would be assumed that they would get the classes they want, so when they need to crash, they should be given a high priority.

We had a new system to try to accommodate the ALI students this semester, and it seemed to work much better than the old system when the students would individually contact instructors. It was a lot of work for Jim so he will be working on a way to further improve the efficiency of the system for next Fall.

Occasionally, a student will be given permission to take a class for which their major code does not allow it. This requires a letter to Rayanne Williams (Enrollment Services) which requests an override of computer codes. The Chairs agreed that this letter (only to be written after a student gets an add code) could come from them, Jim, Sandi Williams, or Ken Marino. Jim will communicate this to Rayanne.