Well, we need to have a Department meeting fairly soon to discuss this in detail. However, the word is out that JSU is undergoing a massive reorganization. The reorganization plan is the only way that JSU can stay viable in the new economy with cuts instead of increases in funding from the State of Alabama. There are three key aspects to the plan that will concern us:

The current plan has Physical and Earth Sciences combining with Biology to create a School of Sciences that will be in the College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty will be expected to teach across the School. Thus, you could be asked to teach a biology course if enrollment numbers tend in that direction. Similarly, a biologist could be teaching map reading, if the enrollments tended towards the geography courses. While existing faculty might resist these teaching assignments, all new hires will be told that they are being hired to teach across the sciences.

The University is also phasing out all support of research, both academic work and research performed with students. The expense of research can no longer be afforded and it is thought to be a minor concern for new and incoming students. Major pieces of research equipment will be made surplus and sold. All research laboratory space will be converted to classrooms.

Finally, all courses must put at least 1/3 of the course online. Thus, courses meeting 2 hours a week will meet for only 2 hours a week. Faculty will have workloads of 12 contact hours instead of 12 credit hours. While this is good news for the chemists (their 3 hours labs will be converted to 2 hour labs, but will count as contact hours), this is not good news for the geographers, who will end up teaching an extra course each semester.

I will happy to meet with anyone to discuss this in more detail. I would also suggest that you attend the next Department meeting!

-- Lou

Department News

**JSU Faculty and Staff Required to Complete Statements of Economic Interest**

The Office of Human Resources has received its annual notice from the Alabama Ethics Commission regarding the requirement to complete the Statement of Economic Interest form. The criteria for requiring completion of the form are numerous, but the most
common are a salary of $50,000 or greater and/or responsibility for handling or investing public funds. This year you must also watch a video as part of the newly legislated “ethics training. Schedule some time and get this completed.

Spring Preview Days
JSU will host Spring Preview Days for high school students, community college students and their families on Saturday, April 2, 2011. Activities begin at 9:30 am (CT) in Stephenson Hall. Representatives from academic departments, student clubs/organizations, and support offices will be available for the browse session that lasts until 12:00 pm (CT). Please see Joe Morgan if you are interested in helping.

One Can Program
Since fall 2009, JSU faculty, staff and students have participated in the ONE CAN program benefiting Jacksonville Christian Outreach Center (JCOC). As we finish up the spring 2011 semester, we have an opportunity to double our efforts. For every non-perishable food item collected for JCOC, the Feinstein Foundation will donate $1 to JCOC. All of the money will go to support needy families in our area. Through April 15, faculty, staff and students can donate non-perishable food items to their departmental offices for pick-up. Thanks for supporting JSU in giving back to the Jacksonville community. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. George Cline, x5798, Kim Stevens, x5762, or Karen Gregg, x5231.

University News

JSU Seeks Feedback for Strategic Plan
As part of an initiative to define and position JSU’s strategies for the next five years, the Strategic Planning Committee developed a definition of a learning centered university, identified core university values, and developed draft mission and vision statements. You now have an opportunity to review these and provide your feedback to the Strategic Planning Committee. Please respond to the survey at the link below by April 8, 2011.

https://survey.vovici.com/se.ashx?s=61BE3D9E69CCB05408CDBA5E46F4CC3547C
You are welcome to review articles and materials found at www.jsu.edu/redballoon/discussiongroups.html that JSU faculty, staff, students and alumni studied and discussed to develop these components. Additional information about the strategic planning process can be found at www.jsu.edu/redballoon/strategicplan.html.

Blackboard Partners with JSU for First eLearning Symposium
Jacksonville State University announced plans today to host the first Blackboard eLearning Symposium on its campus on Thursday and Friday, April 21 and 22, 2011. The event is sponsored by Blackboard Inc. This two-day event is free to attend and limited to the first 500 higher education faculty, technologists, and leaders from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi. All meals will be provided.

The keynote speaker for day one of the event is Katie Blot, Senior Vice President of Blackboard Learn Consulting. In her role, Katie oversees Blackboard’s strategic consulting and solution development including Blackboard Developmental Education and the Effective Use of Educational Technology. Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., Blackboard is a global leader in enterprise technology and innovative solutions with the mission to build a better education experience.
JSU’s own Misty Cobb, Director of Distance Education, is the keynote speaker for day two. In her role, Misty develops, coordinates, and manages distance education and educational technology initiatives at JSU.

Dr. William A. Meehan, President of Jacksonville State University said of the event earlier today, “This symposium will provide JSU with an opportunity to share best practices, network with members from peer institutions, and leverage existing and emerging technologies from Blackboard and other leaders in educational innovation to improve student learning.”

Over the course of the two days, Blackboard and their educational technology partners from NBC Learn, Barnes & Noble, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ConnectYard, Learning Objects, and Sprint will showcase their benefits for the Blackboard client community. Conference highlights include pre-conference workshops (usability lab, Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1 Roadmap, instructional design, and Blackboard Development Education), presentations from the Blackboard Connect, Mobile, and Blackboard Collaborate teams, and the first meeting of BamaBUG, a Blackboard Users Group that aims to provide members with opportunities for networking and collaboration with other higher education Blackboard users in the State of Alabama. Workshops and meals will be held in JSU’s new stadium and housing addition, Stadium Tower, as well as Leone Cole, Houston Cole Library, Wallace Hall, and the Coxwell Room in the Gamecock Fieldhouse.

Attendees may review the schedule and learn more about registering for the event by visiting http://www.blackboard.com/Contact-Us/Events-Center/Industry-Events.aspx. Special rates have been reserved with local hotels for attendees requiring overnight lodging. Participating hotels and reservation details may be found via the event’s registration website.

JSU Drama to Present “The Exonerated”
Production dates are March 31, April 1 and 2 at 7 p.m. and April 3 at 2 p.m. This production contains strong prison language and situations, and is not recommended for children under the age of 13. Tickets are $10 for adults; $8 for JSU personnel and senior citizens; and $5 for students.

Brief Synopsis: How many have been wrongfully accused? How many of those are wrongfully convicted? How few of those exonerated? This profoundly intense play about six wrongfully convicted survivors of death row will make you stop and think about “justice.” We hear in their own words stories of these six brave souls who persevered and survived a system gone wrong. “Stark...riveting...cunningly orchestrated.” ~The New Yorker.

HR Events in the News

2011 Employee Vendor / Benefits Fair at JSU
The Office of Human Resources at JSU announces the 2011 Employee Vendor / Benefits Fair on Thursday, April 7 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the Stadium Club on the 5th floor stadium tower. Vendors from Calhoun Country and surrounding areas will have booths set up with information about their products and services. There will also be samples,
coupons, items for purchase and possible free promotional giveaways.

TIAA-CREF Individual Consultant on Campus April 4-5
Setting up a long-term financial plan can be a complicated task. It involves evaluating your potential income sources and then factoring in the impact of taxes, inflation and the larger economic picture. Meeting with a TIAA-CREF Individual Consultant can help you sort things out and make informed decisions. Paul Cimino, a TIAA-CREF Individual Consultant will be at Jacksonville State University to conduct individual counseling sessions on the following days: April 4th & 5th 2011 at the Human Resources Conference Room, Bibb Graves Hall - Room 323
If you are interested in signing up for a counseling session, you may do so please call (800) 732-8353.

Academe News

Academe to Feature Dr. Jimmy Triplett
On Thursday, April 7, 2011, Academe will feature Dr. Jimmy Triplett, faculty member in the Department of Biology and curator of the JSU Herbarium. His topic will be "The National History of the Appalachian Fiddle." He has made many trips to the Appalachian area to learn about fiddlers and to collect music and stories of the region. In addition to providing attendees a historical perspective into the fiddle music of the region, Dr. Triplett will perform a number of different fiddle tunes and reveal what the older generation of fiddlers has taught him about the music and culture of this region. You won’t want to miss this educational and entertaining presentation to be held on Thursday, April 7, at 3:15 p.m. in 1101C, Houston Cole Library. We cordially invite all faculty, staff, students, and members of the public to attend.

Webinars

Creating Learning Environments: Virtual and Physical
This webinar is hosted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The webcast will explore examples of creating both virtual and physical learning environments that can fuel innovation and collaboration. The webcast will take place on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. CDT and will be broadcast in Room 208 Self Hall.

Degenerate States

Bar Jokes
A blind man wanders into a bikers’ bar. He finds his way to a stool and orders a drink. After sitting there for a while, he yells to no-one in particular, "Hey, you wanna hear a blond joke?" The bar immediately falls silent. In a gruff voice, the patron next to him says: "Before you tell that joke, sir, it’s only fair, given that you’re blind, that you know five things...
1. The bartender is blond and keeps a baseball bat behind the bar.
2. The bouncer is blond.
3. I’m a 6 foot tall, 175 lb, blond with a black belt in karate.
4. The person sitting next to me is blond and a professional weightlifter.
5. And the woman sitting to your right is blonde and a professional wrestler.
Now, you think about it seriously mister, do you still want to tell that joke?" The blind man thinks for a second, shakes his head and mutters, "No -- not if I'm gonna have to explain it five times."

Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.