The meeting began at 2:30pm in room 273D of the Ferguson Building. People in attendance included the following:

Dr. Kwame Antwi-Boasiako (Government)
Dr. Freddie Avant (Social Work)
Dr. Mark Barringer (History)
Dr. Al Greule (College Council)
Ms. Dixie Groll (Dean's Office)
Dr. John Hendricks (Media Communication)
Dr. Scott Hutchens (Psychology)
Dr. Mike Martin (Multidisciplinary Programs)
LTC David Miller (Military Science)
Dr. Brian Murphy (Dean)
Dr. Mark Sanders (English)
Dr. Robert Szafran (Social & Cultural Analysis)
Dr. Jeana Paul-Urena (Languages, Cultures, & Communication)

Dean Brian Murphy introduced Ms. April Smith from the Office of Development who directs the Annual Giving Campaign. Ms. Smith outlined “best practices” on how departments can enhance outreach to alumni. Above all, she noted that solicitations should focus on tangible items that would be within the financial capabilities of potential donors. Ms. Smith concluded by reminding the chairs that all requests for financial gifts must be channeled through the Development Office to avoid conflicts with other university-sponsored initiatives.

Dr. Bob Szafran delivered an update on the Core Curriculum Committee while Dr. Mark Sanders covered the directions in which the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee is moving. Dean Murphy announced that implementation of the college’s new unit goal assessment plan is delayed until feedback is received from the Assessment Office.

Dean Murphy asked for a review of the college’s recent freshman convocation. It was agreed that next year’s event would omit the college-level meeting in favor of individual events at the departmental level. Dean Murphy informed the chairs that the college received its HEF allocation for the academic year and the amount is flat from the previous year. These monies are to be used for instructional improvements in the classroom. After discussion, it was agreed that classroom upgrades would remain the funding priority. Departmental requests are due to Dean Murphy by September 30th.

Dean Murphy informed the chairs that, to date, the college’s enrollment of majors is down 183 students from the previous Fall Semester. Several steps will be taken to reverse the downward trend. First, a study by the Advisory Board will be conducted to acquire recommendations on how programs in the liberal arts and humanities can improve recruitment and retention. This study will target two unique characteristics of SFA: (1) the high proportion of first-generation students and (2) the rural location of the institution. Second, a committee will be formed to consider how the advisement process can be improved. The committee will also investigate whether an ombudsman and internships are viable options that could promote retention. The committee will be composed of both chairs and faculty members. A December deadline for a proposal was established. Finally, the Provost has charged the college and each of its units with developing recruitment and retention plans by November 4th. A college-level committee will be formed to investigate possible strategies that could be adopted uniformly across units. The committee will again be composed of a mix of faculty and chairs. Its proposal is due in mid-October. Departments should utilize this proposal as a template but remain free to insert any actions that address their specific needs.

Dean Murphy provided a quick update on plans for the summer pre-law camp, indicating new speakers and funds have been secured. Dr. Marc Guidry reported on the performance of the RAP and PLAN programs. Each has achieved some goals but neither has been entirely successful. Further evaluation of both programs will be conducted. Dean Murphy noted that Dr.
Michael Martin will follow up on the strategic planning committee’s report on interdisciplinary programs.

Dean Murphy informed the chairs that decisions on university facility space would be forthcoming by the end of this semester. In preparation, the college will investigate how each room in its buildings is currently occupied. The meeting concluded with a series of announcements.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.