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Cultural diversity: ‘The Salad Bowl Theory’

The whole essence of cultural diversity works better in what is called the salad bowl theory, as opposed to the melting pot theory...

Joan Holmes
PFP director

At 8 a.m. on Aug. 1, one moving van and four movers pulled up to the Social Sciences building to begin the displacement of dozens of offices and years of accumulated files, an action which symbolized the physical formation of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The task of transferring records and office equipment between three separate colleges proved overwhelming, but with the help of two additional van and eight additional workers, the job was completed by 9 p.m.

"Nothing got lost or broken in the move," said Nancy Serrano, budget officer for the newly formed College of Arts and Sciences. "But the move goes far beyond just the physical move."

This merger combined the colleges that represent the heart of this university," said Rollin Richards, the new dean of Arts and Sciences. "The entire University, from the College of Engineering to the College of Medicine, depends on the College of Arts and Sciences to provide students with the foundation of their higher education."

The College of Arts and Sciences was brought into being so liberal arts at USF could be more focused, said Silbert, associate dean of administrative affairs for Arts and Sciences. The decision was made to combine the colleges after external reviewers determined USF programs dealing with the liberal arts needed more coherency, said Silbert.

Now that many of these programs are under the same administrative umbrella, connections between faculty and students from separate departments will be enhanced.

For example, said Silbert, now that they are in the same college, faculty with expertise in American Studies, American History and American Literature can work together to create a comprehensive course of study for advanced graduate students, such as a doctorate in American Studies.

Faculty may be more interested in teaching courses in other disciplines now because they do not have to transcend the inter-college boundaries and wrestle with red tape, Silbert said. And students might be encouraged to take more courses in other areas now that they are all in one college.

The transition from three separate entities to one will be slow, Serrano said. Organizations in the new college is a daunting task.

“We have been taking years of records from three different entities and merging them according to function," said Serrano. Files from each of the colleges were kept in different formats, making the combining of administrative and budget records, as well as faculty and staff files and student information, very difficult.

What’s more, academic administrators and staff have to become familiar with programs they know little about.

“We are in a state of discovery," said Silbert. ”I’m learning that in the

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Outstanding programs and faculty

Borkowski began the second half of his presentation by outlining established programs and professors he expects will receive extensive national recognition in the next decade. Those mentioned included:

- Graphic Studio, the only university art gallery in the nation to have its collection archived at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
- Obstetrics Department at the College of Medicine. The department's research on premature births and cocaine babies is winning national academic attention.
- New College, on the Sarasota campus, which ranks eighth nationally in the percentage of graduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees.
- Charles Spielberg, an internationally known expert on anxiety and stress and the current president of the American Psychological Association.
- Laurence P. Clarke, associate professor of radiology and physics in the College of Medicine, who heads a $200,000, three-year grant from NASA and the American Cancer Society to improve the capability of magnetic resonance imaging to detect cancer.
- Neurologist Charles Warren Olson, a leader of the biggest national research project in the field of Parkinson's Disease.
- Pat Rogers, renowned scholar of 18th-century British literature.

Borkowski notes that the faculty's quality and academic programs are "the key to attracting and retaining the best students." He also cites the university's strong research programs and the "national and international recognition" of its faculty members.

"We simply must find some innovative approaches to further address our library needs system-wide," he said.

Finally, Borkowski urged the Board to "improve the base budget for the SUS, which was reduced by $11.4 million."