Small Changes to Senior Leadership Make Big Impact

Terence Hicks
This fall, President George C. Wright’s executive cabinet will have a new look after the creation of a new position and the naming of several new academic officers.

“PVAMU is experiencing some tremendous growth and these changes allow us to use the skill set of these leaders to enhance our University in key areas,” said Wright.

The appointment of Dr. Michael McFrazier to the newly created role of vice president for administration supports this notion. He will serve as chief of staff, reporting directly to the president, and is responsible for providing leadership for a broad range of academic and non-academic matters related to operations and overseeing administrative functions, strategic planning, student services, compliance and customer service.

McFrazier, who is currently vice provost and dean of the Northwest Houston Center, will assume the role this fall.

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Dr. Terence Hicks who has been serving as interim dean of the Whitlowe R. Green College of Education was formally named its leader in May. Hicks’ background in college retention and the psychological well-being of college students will align with the University’s tradition of excellence in the preparation of teachers and administrators. He has held a variety of leadership positions including department chair and director of the School of Education Research Center at Fayetteville State University. Additionally, he served as a Research Fellow for the National Institutes of Health, National Center of Minority Health and Health Disparities. He earned his bachelor and master’s degrees from Virginia State University, a doctorate in educational leadership from Wilmington University and a Ph.D. in counseling and counselor education from North Carolina State University. Both posts will be presented to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents for formal approval.

A 16-member committee is also interviewing applicants for the University’s next athletic director, a position that was vacated after Fred Washington stepped down from the role in May. The final candidate should be announced by mid-June. Additionally, the University is undergoing a nationwide search for a chief of police and a vice president for research who also serves as dean of the graduate school.

“These hires will infuse the campus with a fresh perspective from individuals who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in their particular fields. Indeed, their presence will have a positive impact on the delivery of academic programs and student services,” said Wright. ★ S. Reed

JUMP START + MATH = GREAT DIVIDENDS

For John Gardner, math is a breeze. He can do some complex algebra problems in his head almost without thinking about it. It’s a good thing he serves as the coordinator of developmental studies during the school year and it’s a bonus that he will serve as the coordinator of MathUp, a math summer bridge program, which will be rolled out this summer.

Under the direction of Dr. Cheryl Sneed-Greene who serves as the associate director of University College, MathUp is designed to assist incoming students to meet the state required college readiness standards in math even before they begin their freshmen year.

According to reports, many college students spend an extra semester in college trying to complete their required math classes. This depends on a student’s major, and for those pursuing a career in science, nursing, math or engineering this time frame can be extended up to one year. At PVAMU, up to 40 percent of students aren’t eligible to take college algebra when they enter as first-year students.

“When considering all of the opportunities students have available to them throughout their academic tenure, completing a degree in four years, even for the most prepared student, can be a challenge,” said Sneed-Greene. “A program such as MathUP helps students complete pre-requisites so that they are ready to start on their degree plan, Day 1.”

This program, a partnership between academic affairs and freshman learning community, University College, hopes to eliminate that problem.

During the four-week program, students receive personalized mathematics instruction from highly trained professionals, and upon successful completion they receive developmental education credit while also moving closer toward eligibility to enroll in college algebra.

Classes are offered at the Northwest Houston Center and the College of Nursing campus in the Texas Medical Center to help local students with scheduling.

“We know students want to spend the summer before college resting, spending time with their family and friends, and even taking vacations or working, so a commuter program like this gives them the flexibility to do the things they need to do,” said Sneed-Greene.

MathUp joins a collection of previously established summer enrichment programs offered annually through various departments and programs. ACCESS and Panther Pride, along with discipline specific ACI for youngsters interested in architecture, E2C1 and the Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp for engineering hopefuls, and the G.R.I.N.D. (Getting Ready to Initiate a Nursing Degree) are under way with a record number of participants. ★ J. Peavy