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## Discussion of change in title of Associate Provost to Vice Provost

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*Georgia Southern University*

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# Discussion of change in title of Associate Provost to Vice Provost.

Submitted by: Provost Ted Moore

1/31/2012

## Question:

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Reporting to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the Associate Provost serves as a liaison between the Provost's Office and the college community by interacting with students, faculty, staff, administration, and external constituencies. This position includes oversight of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; First-Year Experience Program; Honors Program; and support for VPAA initiatives and special projects.

## Rationale:

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The change reflects a shift in responsibilities to a more strategic orientation, while maintaining the same functional duties. The title Vice Provost is not uncommon at other institutions.

## Response:

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2/14/2012: Minutes: 2/14/2012, Provost's Report: The Associate Provost serves as a liaison between the Provost's Office and the college community by interacting with students, faculty, staff, administration, and external constituents. This position includes oversight of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; the First-Year Experience program; the Honors program; and support for academic initiatives and special projects.

He is retitling the position as Vice Provost, reflecting the shift in responsibilities of the position that has already taken place. The position now includes a stronger strategic orientation and has maintained the same functional duties as well. At the end of this

fiscal year (the end of Dr. Kathy Albertson's term as Associate Provost) he will launch an internal search for a Vice Provost.

Accreditation agencies are enacting standards that require greater accountability, and SACS is certainly no exception. At the annual meeting in the December we learned that we need to track each type of student complaint and present to SACS tables on how many complaints were received, how they were resolved, and so on. This requirement is new since the 2005 reaffirmation for accreditation and includes all types of complaints (for example, financial aid, diversity, grades, registrar issues, parking, health, etc.). SACS also will inspect specific, redacted examples of how online complaints are handled.

He has requested Senate approval of changes in the Faculty Handbook that pertain to the description of the strategic planning process. The current wording is extensive and the process that is described is complex. He wants to shorten and simplify and do so in a way that captures the way we are going about planning at our university. Also, the description presently in the Faculty Handbook describes a planning process that is the responsibility of a single committee. However, the various planning actions that are being undertaken by the Pathways group, the Service and Outreach task force, the Teaching Legacy team, our Soldiers 2 Scholars team, the Space Planning & Allocation Committee, and others are all part of our strategic planning process. This is a highly decentralized approach. The motion for changes was posted, but subsequent to that posting, in discussion with the Senate Executive Committee, we decided that further refinements in wording of the final paragraph would be helpful. The change in wording as posted will be brought forward today.

Robert Costomiris (CLASS) asked a question regarding the title change to Vice Provost, but then deferred it to when that issue was scheduled to come up on the agenda. 10 A Request for Discussion of Changing the Title of "Associate Provost" to "Vice Provost": Teri Ann Melton (COE) said the Provost requested a change in the title of Associate Provost to Vice Provost "The change reflects a shift in responsibilities to a more strategic orientation, while maintaining the same functional duties. The title Vice Provost is not uncommon at other universities, other institutions."

Robert Costomiris (CLASS) asked if Associate Deans would now become Vice Deans, too. Provost Moore noted that this is just for the Provost's office right now. At institutions worldwide, Vice Provost is a very common title; Vice Dean is not. A typical large academic affairs office would have vice, associate, and assistant provosts, plural. But we're not quite ready for that yet.

Costomiris asked what the tangible benefit is of changing the title of this position. Provost Moore said it's not so much tangible, but more "symbolic. All titles are symbolic. And this symbolizes something important and it conveys that we are a Provost's Office

that is beginning to move forward and in a sense grow with the overall stature of the University.” He added that the role has already changed from when he came in the office a year ago. Kathy Albertson, as the Associate Provost, has seen substantial changes in what that office does. It’s much more now on a strategic side, and far less on the transactional side: “If we had a Vice Provost and a couple of Associate Provosts then we would be approaching the size of an office that would be about right. But right now the title’s all I’ve got . . .”

Marc Cyr (CLASS) was unclear on the rationale; it seemed to say “that it will be a different job, but doing the same job – a shift in responsibilities, but maintaining the same functional duties.” Provost Moore said that’s exactly why this Vice Provost would be still responsible for overseeing First-Year Experience, the Teaching & Learning Center, etc. Those duties remain in place. They are not being delegated to someone else, but in addition that position has already expanded to include more strategic roles. Rob Yarbrough (COST) asked if this is considered a promotion, or simply a change in the title of the current position. Provost Moore said, “It is a change in title.” Yarbrough re-prompted: “With no promotion?” Provost Moore again replied, “It is a change in title.”