Shortly following the 2013 Faculty Retreat, the 10th anniversary of the first faculty retreat, I sent faculty members an e-mail which asked each faculty member—particularly those faculty members who attended every retreat since the first held back in 204 at French Lick—to reflect a bit on the past ten years of retreats and tell me how they experimented with making their classrooms more engaging, inviting places to learn. After all, if “the great aim of education is not knowledge but action,” it seems reasonable that a good starting point for faculty members would be to take action by using the transformational knowledge gained during the previous ten years and transforming the classroom experience.

Suffice it to say, many of you took the challenge seriously and provided some rich insights into how one or more of the tools, techniques and technologies informed the way you teach or made the classroom environment more engaging places to learn. For instance, Annaliese Bratcher coined a new word in her response to my original e-mail called “edu-tainment,” meaning that real student learning and entertainment do not necessarily run counter to each other. To illustrate, Annaliese provided several examples from her CED 100 class which emphasize problem-based learning designed around course-level learning objectives; the biggest drawback from using such approaches appears as if fellow teachers ask her to keep the noise down during class.
Several reported giving smartphones and other personal devices a place in the classroom. For instance, Dawn McGiffen notes that she gladly breaks the old rule of “cell phones off” during class and allows students to use their smartphones to apply concepts and emphasize subjects covered during the week. Students are required to search for information, critically evaluate the value of information obtained, and report how the information obtained applies to the concepts and subjects covered during the lecture portions of the class. Taking a slightly different approach, Jeff Johnson finds that *Poll Everywhere* helps students participate in class discussions by having students first text their responses to poll questions, getting immediate feedback, and maintaining anonymity so that nobody is embarrassed about possibly providing the wrong answer. Kurt Huntley looks for and uses “the perfect YouTube video” to introduce subjects covered during class and to provide contexts for sometimes esoteric or difficult-to-understand concepts covered in economics textbooks.

Perhaps, the greatest aim of all and the real reason for the retreats have been, as Tim Swenson proposed in his reply to my request, nothing short of a cultural shift. Quite simply, the ways in which we teach, engage, and approach students today are vastly different from the ways we taught, engaged, and approached students just a few years ago. We embrace technology instead of spurn and discard technological change; we experiment, share ideas, and are aware of and more open to different ways to engage and energize students. Through substantial investments in human capital, the faculty retreats have brought about a cultural shift in the way Sullivan University approaches education.

Over the past decade of faculty retreats, Sullivan University faculty members have rethought traditional notions of when, where, and how students learn and have, at least I believe, become better teachers in the process. The “great aim,” as it may turn out to be, is nothing less than changing the ways we approach educating students by first changing the ways we view ourselves as educators.

Wishing you the best as we approach a new academic quarter—

Ken

Ken Miller
Provost
Sullivan University
Last month, the university opted to obtain the latest Web 2.0 technology: Xitracs™ Plus assessment and compliance software. This software Xitracs Standards™ makes preparing and publishing agency compliance reports much easier; and within the software, Sullivan University content providers can work collaboratively not only to actually assemble compliance narratives and evidence, but also to build the webscale delivery mechanism to be used by offsite and onsite reviewers. As their web page declares: “Xitracs™ is the solution to managing all aspects of the ongoing accreditation and compliance process, including self-study report preparation and submission, credentials management and exception reporting, strategic planning, curriculum mapping and program review.” The Xitracs™ Plus software comprises a dual module: one for assessment and compliance; and, one for credentialing, which – in addition facilitating the often thorny credentialing issues relating to SACS CR 2.8 (Faculty) and CS 3.5.4 (Terminal degrees of faculty), this software will also greatly assist the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs with both her credentialing and organizational needs.

At present, a core of Sullivan staff have received Xitracs™ Plus training and I have uploaded all on-hand narratives and evidence into the system. While some content and evidence is still outstanding, most had been received from the departmental and operational content experts that had had SACS standards assigned to them back in August. All content was to have been submitted to me by October 15th as directed by Dr. Marr. A Xitracs™ Plus also enable all that narrative and evidentiary content to be presented with internal endnote linkages, which will demonstrably facilitate reviewers navigation between text and evidence.
The system also affords users the option of displaying a web-based introductory page as well as a tool bar to facilitate internal navigation to applicable compliance documents. As a consequence, Creative Communications is developing graphics to beautify the final webscale compliance report.

With much of the narrative-cum-evidence-based framework in place – and much first-draft content uploaded, I am now editing narratives for writerly and compositional flow: I am correctly grammatical, punctuation, syntactical and other issues that “break Priscian’s head,” or, as my Phd chair (Yale and Princeton) used to say, eliminate “stylistic betises.” But being attentive to stylistic punctilios is not the only thing I am doing: I am also reading the content for assessment adherence and conceptual alignment with the dictates of SACS standards. In last quarter’s Illuminator, I alluded to the process by which content providers would pre-vet their content prior to submission. This vetting has been done in some instances better in some than in others. As a result, wholesale vetting is being redone. Remarkably for me and our SACS processes, Dr. Kimberly Daugherty, PharmD, BCPS, Professor and Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Assessment, Sullivan University College of Pharmacy and Mr. David Tudor, Dean of Academic Affairs, Sullivan University Lexington, are greatly assisting me with vetting – and concurrent spellchecking/format checking - content against SACS Resource Manual’s quodlibetical questions, e.g. (for the aforementioned SACS CS 3.5.4 relating to terminal degrees of faculty):

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**
- How does the institution define course hours within a major?
- What percentage of courses/course hours are taught by faculty holding the terminal degree?

**Documentation**

**Required Documentation, if applicable:**
- List of faculty in each major who hold the appropriate terminal degree
- Evidence verifying that at least 25 percent of courses or course hours required for a major are taught by faculty members holding a terminal degree

**Examples of other Types of Documentation:**
- Definition and listing of majors
- Evidence that disaggregation data includes consideration of location and modality of course work

Using the portfolio of SACS Resource Manual questions as an assessment touchstone, this vetting is uncovering an array of issues which will need resolution in order for the
university to meet compliance. But, I suspect, we will have no difficulty to addressing all the vet-revealed to become compliance-worthy. Vetting can also be done – time permitting, against the 4. A brief statement from the SACS HANDBOOK FOR INSTITUTIONS SEEKING REAFFIRMATION (http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Handbook%20for%20Institutions%20Seeking%20Reaffirmation.pdf), which – basically, is SACS’ comprehensive guide to the reaffirmation process. Additionally, all content is being uniformly formatted; and, more specifically, all evidence is being subjected to a stringent file naming convention, which will make all such files manifestly intuitive to reviewers.

So, content is being reviewed and delivery systems built all “at one fell swoop,” (Macduff, on discovering that his wife and children have been slain by Macbeth: Macbeth Act 4, scene 3, 213–219), and all work is proceeding pari passu. We are ten months out from submitting this report and approximately 60% of the report is loaded. Once all writing, rewriting, editing, and content vetting has been accomplished, the document will be reviewed by the Sullivan University SACS Steering committee and corporate, all of which should result in further polishing and gilding the lily. At this point, I am very happy that we have a lily and not a thistle to gild.

Here is what been uploaded to date, the preponderance is Pdfs because their response time is less:

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**Total files:** 121  **Total items:** 122
Everyone, it seems, in post-secondary education is looking for a method to determine indicators that will “guarantee” success of students who enter their freshman year with eyes toward graduation. To date there is no such primary indicator, but there are some specific warning signs. During the summer of 2013 a committee was formed and, with the assistance of Dr. Forest Houlette, looked for such indicators at Sullivan University. Similar to the results of other research, we did not find a primary indicator but did discover items that should be used as warning signs. Recently published information from a larger scale research project at the University of South Carolina at Charlotte confirmed our results and this information is being shared with you. All quotes from the article are with the recognition and appreciation of the work done by Mark M D’Amico and Sandra L. Dika who are the authors of the paper “Using Data Known at the Time of Admissions to Predict First-generation College Student Success.”

Sullivan University Results:

The two pieces of data that stood out indicating student persistence challenges and should serve as warning to you regarding retention are: 1) Grade Point Average (GPA) and 2) Attendance. Before you say it, this should be intuitive; the data was not so overwhelming to be the sole indicators of this group of students. Similar findings were found by the research done in Charlotte and published in the article mentioned above. Mr. D’Amico and Ms. Dika expanded their review to the following areas:

- Cultural Shifts (from home to the college culture)
- Financial Issues (managing money and paying for school)
- Academic Factors (prior academic achievement and current academic success)
- Integration with the College Environment (socialization to a resident campus)
The results of the D’Amico and Dika study stated that all these have an impact on the first generation college student’s (FGCS) persistence. This paper’s findings should be specifically interesting to you as many of our students, with special attention to day school, fall into that category. Sullivan University is moving forward in attempting to address these issues in a more aggressive way. D’Amico and Dika state as follows:

“Colleges and universities should consider using these data to identify students for interventions (e.g., learning communities, first year seminar courses, academic support services). While it is not recommended to mandate FGCS participation in such programs, institutions can use these data for more targeted communication, with these populations representing specific barriers to academic performance and retention.” D’Amico & Dika “College Student Retention Research Theory and Practice,” Volume 15, November 2, 2013-2014, page 189, paragraph 1

You know, from prior articles, how important your role is in the retention process. Your proactive involvement is helping FGCS solve problems they perceive to be impossible to solve. Along with your effort, the campus mandates a first year experience class for these students (if you aren’t aware of the particulars, please find out) and is adding to that program as well as to the student portal a “LIFE SKILLS” portion to assist existing students in removing stress that will cause them to falter and fail.

Students who have less external stress, manage their personal life, know how their financial aid is being handled, and are in a manageable course load stand a better chance of succeeding. The tools to be made available both to the FYE classes and to all students on the student portal (winter quarter 2014) are free of charge to the student and answer specific questions that many of you have attempted to answer in the past for them. These issues directly impact both results discovered in our research and the research of the paper mentioned in this article. The stress caused, in many cases, by money management issues results in bad decisions regarding time management, study habits, class attendance, and more.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly at extension 8772 or by email jkearfott@sullivan.edu. As always, thank you for all that you do and keep spreading the work of retention.
The full text of the University’s policy on graduation requirements may be found in the 2012-2013 Catalog, located at http://www.sullivan.edu/student-activities/pdf/current-catalog.pdf. The policy itself is located on page 106.

The University has minimum standards for the number of credit hours completed, overall GPA, and number of hours completed at Sullivan University (as opposed to being transferred in) that students must meet or exceed in order to graduate. The requirements vary between programs and level of the degree being completed.

Undergraduate Degrees
To earn an Associate’s degree, students must complete a minimum of 90 credit hours, and possibly more depending on their major. A dual Associate’s will require a minimum of an additional 20 hours, so the student will need to complete 110 hours overall, and possibly more. Students earning a Bachelor’s degree will need to earn at least 180 credit hours. Like the Associate’s degree, this may vary between programs. For example, a Bachelor’s degree in Paralegal Studies requires 182 credit hours. Also note that developmental or remedial courses assigned to a student will increase the minimum number of required hours.

Undergraduate students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 to graduate. In addition, candidates for the Associate’s degree must complete the general studies assessment, and all undergraduate students must complete their major’s competency exam.

Students who transfer in to Sullivan University must complete 25% of their credit hours at the university. Students enrolled in medical-related degrees have additional transfer requirements, and are encouraged to read the current catalog for details.

Graduate Degrees
Like undergraduates, graduate students must complete a minimum number of credit hours based on their major. The number will be listed in the catalog. In their courses, they must maintain a 3.0 GPA. They cannot transfer in more than 49% of their credits; they must earn over half of them at Sullivan University. In addition, students must have earned a “B” in courses they wish to transfer. Finally, graduate students working towards a Master’s degree have a time limit. They must complete their studies within five years of admission to the program.
As chair of the Academic Council, I am pleased to present another edition of Academic Council Highlights (ACH). The goal of ACH is to keep faculty and other interested parties informed, on a quarterly basis, about the workings of the Academic Council (Council) and matters it addresses.

In my last article, I presented what are considered to be the two funniest jokes in the world based on a serious year-long academic study conducted by a group of scientists and psychologists. Here they are once again:

**JOKE #1:** Two hunters are out in the woods. One of them falls to the ground. He doesn’t seem to be breathing, his eyes are closed. The other hunter takes out his mobile phone and calls emergency services. “My friend is dead!” he cries to the operator, “What can I do?” The operator, in a calm voice says: “Don’t worry. I can help. First, make sure he’s dead.” There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Bang! The hunter’s voice comes back on the line. He says: “OK, now what?”

**JOKE #2:** Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retire for the night, and go to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and says to his faithful friend: "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see." "I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes," replies Watson. Holmes follows, "And what do you deduce from that?" Watson thinks for a minute.

"Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes is silent for a moment. "Watson, you idiot!" he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!"
in the same article, I suggested that our Council members be given the chance to vote on which one they believe is the funniest joke. The purpose for doing so relates to the fact that cultural, geographical, and sociological variations will determine which way one person, one group, one state, one country, or one continent will lean in choosing between the two jokes. This is much like how any group like our Council will consult, deliberate, and advise when summoned to convene on all sorts of matters. This means we all bring different views to the table. Despite these differences, we reach consensus on matters, propose solutions, and, on occasion, cause real change – hopefully for the benefit of all.

Well, I did in fact bring the two jokes to the Council for a vote at its last meeting. Drummml rolilll! The winner by a margin of 9 to 7 - JOKE #1. By the way, JOKE #1 was also selected as the funniest joke worldwide. What does this mean? I’m not sure, but personally I liked the second joke better because no one was injured or killed. It is just very interesting how our brains work as we as individuals or as a group make decisions.

My advice to all is to find a joke you think is funny, share it with others, and laugh, laugh, laugh!! It will do you and those around you a world of good.

As I always conclude this article - rest assured that the Council has lively debate and discussion at all meetings and regularly sends important matters to the Provost for consideration and requested action. With that in mind, please don’t hesitate to send me an item for Council deliberation at nriggs@sullivan.edu. The Academic Council is here to serve you!

Submitted 10/29/2013
For this installment of “Five Questions For...,” we interviewed John Foster, the culinary chair for Sullivan University’s Lexington campus. In addition to serving as the chair, he teaches Advanced Techniques and Basic Skills. He also coordinates the Restaurant Practicum program for the culinary degree. He possesses a Certified Executive Chef certification from the American Culinary Federation and a Certified Hospitality Educator certification from the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute. He has been with Sullivan University since August 2006.

1. Where are you from originally? Where did you attend school?
I am originally from upstate New York, what is now known as the Finger Lakes Wine Region, from a little town called Painted Post. I attended college at Colby College in Waterville, Maine and culinary school at The French Culinary Institute in New York City.

2. How did you originally get into education? What was your motivation?
In my role as a chef and manager education has always been a key to success. The ability to motivate through education, and reward through the development of new skills is to me very much like education. You have to have energy, excitement and passion for your job, and if you are in a position of authority and have credibility with your staff, then your role becomes very similar to a teacher in a classroom, and your goal is most certainly education.

3. What do you like the most about teaching? What do you find the most challenging?
There are definitely peaks and valleys in the field of education. For every small story of motivation comes an equal story of frustration. The enormous amount of assessment and documentation that we have to do prevent us from completely enjoying a student’s moment of triumph as most commonly it is onto the next in line. But if we take a moment to reflect, it is the growth of skill and awareness in a student that is probably the most gratifying aspect of my job. The “light bulb” moment when the student gets it and progresses to the next level motivates me to continue the process undaunted.

4. Do you have any heroes or role models in education or your field of study?
Of course every student had a master and for me it was a group of teachers spread throughout my life. From my middle school history teacher who expected creativity within the framework of fact to my college English professor who taught me the value of a second look at things. My mother and father teaching me the value of sacrifice and hard work, my first chef at my first job seeing in me something more than a teenage dishwasher, those people among others were role models, drill sergeants and mentors to me every step of the way.

5. Do you have any advice for new educators?
If you plan on teaching, or entering any part of the education profession be prepared to document everything. We are well on our way to dissecting every element of our method, procedures, skill sets, and outcomes. It’s no longer just enough to motivate, mentor, and educate; we need to justify our actions and predict the outcomes. A certain element of that documentation is valuable, but the fact that we seldom act on our own assessments for any length of time is symptomatic of the failures which sometimes occur. Learn to utilize technology; it is your ally and friend, and a bridge to future generations that will know little else but instant access. Be patient with the students who learn more slowly or in unconventional manners; they will get there eventually (with your help and guidance). Above all else, learn on a daily basis. Use your past experiences as teaching tools for you and your students. Bring like stories into the classroom to ease a troubled student with the vision that they aren’t the first to go through a particularly trying time. I value past experiences as a jumping off point for students searching for their way into and upwards through their career, and I ask them to return the favor to the next in line, thereby turning the student into the mentor, and perhaps in the future into the teacher.
Calendar Of Events
Winter 2014 Quarter

Day School New Student Orientation ........................................... December 27, 2013
Night School New Student Orientation ........................................... December 28, 2013
Late Registration ........................................................................... December 28, 2013
First day of classes ......................................................................... January 6, 2014
International Orientation ............................................................... January 10, 2014
Last day that a student can enter an online class ............................ January 13, 2014
Last day that a student can enter a day class* ................................. January 13, 2014
Last day that a student can enter an evening or weekend class ...... January 16, 2014
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday ...................................................... January 20, 2014
Academic Council Meets ............................................................... January 23, 2014
Last day that a student can withdraw and still receive a “W” ........ February 21, 2014
Academic Council Meets ............................................................... February 27, 2014
Break .............................................................................................. March 24-28, 2014
First Day of Spring classes ............................................................ March 31, 2014

*Standard protocol requires students to attend by the 5th meeting.

Note: For night/weekend classes, a roster will be placed in the instructor’s mailbox on each day of his or her class and that same roster with signatures is to be returned to Enrollment Services after each class by the instructor.
His future’s so bright, he has to wear shades.
The Academic Illuminator is an informational publication for faculty members at Sullivan University. Issued before the start of each academic quarter, the Illuminator covers topics of interest to faculty such as policy changes, compliance with regulatory bodies, the ongoing process of accreditation, the activities of the Academic Council, and upcoming events. Back issues of the Academic Illuminator can be found at http://library.sullivan.edu/archives/sulou_illuminator.asp.

Questions, comments, requests for article coverage, and article submissions may be sent to editor Nathan Ragland, at nragland@sullivan.edu.

NOTES TO THE FACULTY

- The QEP Update column was absent from this issue due to the injury and ongoing recovery of its author, Dr. Forrest Houlette. The staff of the Academic Illuminator wishes him a speedy recovery!

- In the event of inclement weather, classes may be cancelled but faculty and staff may be expected to report to work as usual. Faculty members should familiarize themselves with the inclement weather policy in the employee manual, located at http://manual.sullivan.edu.


- Reminder: If you need a Turnitin account for use with your classes, or need assistance with a Turnitin issue, contact a librarian. Printable instructions for faculty and students on using Turnitin can be obtained by contacting Nathan Ragland (Louisville/Online) at nragland@sullivan.edu, Kandace Rogers (Lexington) at krogers@sullivan.edu, or Jill Sherman (SCTD) at jsherman@sctd.edu.