To: Faculty Assembly

From: Cynthia Clabough, Art
Mark Cole, Theatre
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Re: P&P report on the Formation of School of Communication and Creative Arts

Date: September 27, 2007

The Priorities and Planning Council (PPC) deserves our thanks for demonstrating its willingness to spend time to review our proposal for the School of Communication and Creative Arts (SCCA). Members of the council have already expended a good deal of time and effort considering the benefits and concerns raised by the proposal. We are taking this opportunity to address their concerns, as well as to clarify what we believe are the benefits to forming SCCA.

From our perspective, the primary benefit that accrues from the creation of this new school is that it will provide Oswego with a highly visible set of distinctive programs and majors that will attract new high quality students. In turn, we believe that our success in meeting the needs of these students will attract dollars in the form of donations and grants. As the members of Faculty Assembly know well, the changing demographics of upstate New York will have an impact on our traditional cohort of student applicants in the coming years. We believe the School of Communication and Creative Arts will provide the College with a new level of visibility by offering highly desirable programs for a new cohort of talented students. Thus, while we agree that the opportunity to seek donations is an important plus to Oswego, we believe it secondary to the goals of attracting new high-quality students and meeting the needs of future Oswego students.

PPC rightfully points out that there is quite a bit of interconnectedness and collaboration between the fine and performing arts and communication studies. It is equally true that all of our departments enjoy interconnected, collaborative relationships with various departments across all three units that make up Oswego. We do not believe that a new structure will somehow automatically inhibit our current good relations with these departments. In fact, the new identity we are proposing pivots on interdependence while relishing in interdisciplinary. SCCA is a proposed identity by teaching scholars looking towards the future in their disciplines and trying to prepare for it. This unified identity offers a distinction that further supports interdisciplinarity while clarifying the interdependent relationship of all four departments due to the melding, merging, and morphing currently happening as the result of rapidly changing art and communication forms.

A substantive question surrounding the creation of the new school and A&S’s identity is the question of support for the general education program and liberal arts education, something largely done currently by departments in A&S. With the formation of SCCA the preponderance of this burden is no longer born by a single school. With more than three-quarters of all SCCA students in BA degree programs, the health of each department is dependent on maintaining the quality of liberal arts education on campus; three of the four departments have accreditation that is dependent on adherence to the principles of liberal arts education. Additionally, SCCA departments have already