

# All-Faculty University of Phoenix Conference Call

August 20, 2010  
9-10 a.m.

## Overview

University of Phoenix conducted its faculty call on August 20, 2010. More than **2,700 faculty members** attended to learn about the results from the recent faculty survey, the new first-year sequence for undergraduate students, enhancements to the online learning platform and student preparedness. The speakers engaged in discussions regarding the current regulatory environment focused on for-profit education and the subsequent media attention.

The speakers announced that faculty members will have an opportunity to attend these calls several times a year to ensure everyone is kept up-to-date on University news. Further communication will be provided in the coming months.

Speakers on the call included Dr. Russ Paden, vice president of Academic Operations; Dr. Bill Pepicello, president of University of Phoenix; Dr. Adam Honea, provost and senior vice president, University of Phoenix; Joe D'Amico, president of Apollo Group; and Greg Cappelli, co-CEO of Apollo Group.

## Faculty Survey Highlights

Dr. Bill Pepicello kicked off the call by sharing some of the highlights from the recent faculty survey, which included some revealing insights:

- **More than 15,000 UOPX faculty completed the survey**
- **More than 80% of faculty are satisfied with their current role**
- **94% often think of how to be a better instructor**
- **More than 75% of faculty members believe the University plays a critical role in education, and that the quality of education offered has a measurable effect on students**
- **The primary reason cited for teaching for the University is the desire to impact students' lives**

Dr. Pepicello noted some positive sentiments that came out of the faculty survey as well as some areas of opportunity for the University. "You told us that you have pride and you enjoy your work with the University and that you also have a good appreciation for your faculty colleagues," said Dr. Pepicello. "On the other hand, there are some opportunities for improvement, one of them being communication about the University."

Dr. Pepicello shared some areas where faculty members would like to see increased communication and how faculty fit into the University's future plans. He assured faculty that we are committed to listening to their needs and providing them opportunities for their "voice" to be heard. As part of the University's long-term strategy he briefly discussed GPA 4.0, a set of initiatives designed to provide value for all of the constituencies of the University beginning with students and the shareholders at Apollo.

## The University's Vision

Dr. Pepicello stated that over the next several months University of Phoenix is going to produce a series of videos and e-mail messages to explain GPA 4.0 to faculty. These videos will provide information about specific initiatives at the University that will enable faculty members to understand that what they do every day is aligned with the mission and the vision of the University. "We're going to lay it out for you so that when you provide input you'll know what sorts of things are on our mind and conversely you can tell us what's on your minds as you look at those initiatives going forward."

## Academic Quality

Several recent initiatives that have been implemented focused on enhancing the faculty-to-student relationship, ensuring academic quality and exploring student outcomes. Dr. Adam Honea, provost and senior vice president, University of Phoenix, spoke about two initiatives that have been developed to address faculty concerns about student skill level.

*University 100* is a complimentary three-week orientation course in which students learn the University of Phoenix system and gain knowledge in areas such as goal-setting and time management. *University 100* gives students the opportunity to experience what the University of Phoenix classroom will be like without incurring any cost. *The First-Year Sequence* is a set of courses that help students adjust and be successful in college, broaden the students' view of the world and improve their writing skills.

Dr. Honea added that both *University 100* and the *First-Year Sequence* were designed for undergraduate students who have less than 24 college credits and noted that so far these programs have been very successful.

## Portal Enhancements

Dr. Honea also shared some exciting news about future enhancements coming to the online learning platform. He mentioned a new vertical (or portal) which will distinguish the schools from colleges within University of Phoenix. For example, when a business faculty member enters eCampus for the School of Business, there will be current information, videos and other relevant information about that school. Additionally, he mentioned the launch of a new social networking function that will allow students and faculty to connect in a much more meaningful way.

"The new learning platform will give students and faculty many more choices than our current platform and we will report to you in future calls how that platform is going and when it will be launched," said Dr. Honea.

## Vital Role of For-Profit Higher Education Institutions

Greg Cappelli, co-CEO of Apollo Group spoke about setting the record straight with regard to the recent media attention surrounding for-profit education and the vital role proprietary colleges and universities play in higher education. He added these institutions provide access to students who previously have been left behind or excluded from the traditional higher education system.

More importantly, Cappelli boldly stated that Americans should be free to make informed decisions about what education goals they pursue. **“This is not a decision that the government should make for them. Why should a school’s corporate tax status have anything to do with whether or not a student can use their student loan? Academic quality and a record of success is what matters.”**

## Reinventing Education

In light of recent scrutiny of proprietary colleges and universities on debt levels, graduation rates and enrollment practices, Cappelli assured all that the University has been working to “reinvent education” with a total focus on the student, student experience, faculty and employee experiences. He shared that they are seeing student debt levels come down, reporting significant improvements in reform and in student protections.

Cappelli added that they have been working with the Obama administration and the accrediting bodies. He explained that Apollo Group has brought in a new management team with the goal of creating a world class student experience at each of Apollo’s Universities. The team has initiated a vigorous compliance process designed to improve oversight of company policies and procedures including recruitment practices and developing significant improvements for the student counselors who are trained and evaluated.

*“Both Apollo and University of Phoenix are committed to setting the standard for transparency, accountability and student protections, and we’re dedicated to being leaders not only in the education of our students but also in compliance with all the applicable standards and the regulations,” Cappelli added. “If we fail at educating every American who wants a higher education, who desires an education then we all fail. For America to succeed and compete in a global economy we can and we have to do better. When our K-12 system is failing, when our community colleges are full to capacity then we should welcome a school that has opened doors and has the services needed to help students learn, develop, prosper and graduate.”*

## Student Success

Joe D’Amico, president of Apollo Group, echoed those comments adding the company is moving from a recruitment environment to an advisory environment. The focus is on the success of students, the student experience and ultimately graduation. D’Amico further discussed the importance of programs such as University Orientation, which further emphasizes student preparedness.

From an operational and compliance perspective, D’Amico mentioned several changes that have been implemented to reinforce the company’s overall objectives. These include a digital quality recording system which identifies if certain phrases are used during calls, so those calls can be flagged for further investigation, and the development of

an enrollment process tool to help students determine what they will need to pay for their courses. “That has had a substantial impact on reducing the number of students who actually borrowed the maximum amount of Title IV Funds, so we’re really proud of what that’s accomplished,” D’Amico said.

## Closing

In closing, all speakers thanked the faculty for their dedication to servicing our students and emphasized the critical role faculty members play in making University of Phoenix great. As mentioned above, future calls will be scheduled several times a year to assure faculty are kept informed. Lastly, more information will be coming soon on the several part video series that Pepicello mentioned regarding the University’s long-term strategy and vision on GPA 4.0.

**For those interested in sending follow-up questions, e-mail [facultycommunications@phoenix.edu](mailto:facultycommunications@phoenix.edu).**

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