

**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL  
FOR  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009**

**Presented at the  
688<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
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**Academic Priorities Council Annual Report  
2008-2009**

The Academic Priorities Council met 12 times during the 2008-2009 academic year. The Academic Priorities Council (APC) considered the Chancellor's proposal for reorganization of the Amherst campus relative to its academic vision and how it positions the campus for success now and as we emerge from the recession. In doing so, the APC sought input from the campus community and held a series of meetings with Deans, Department Chairs/Heads, and faculty members and welcomed feedback via email as well. The Academic Priorities Council offered its recommendations based on the discussions and input received. In addition, ten program proposals were evaluated and the Council's decision and rationale for each are provided.

**Campus Restructuring Discussions and Recommendations**

The APC held four meetings in the spring with members of the campus community to discuss Chancellor Holub's restructuring proposal for the Amherst campus. In attendance at these meetings were Deans Steve Goodwin (NRE), Jim Kurose (NSM), Mike Malone (Engineering), Janet Rifkin (SBS), Joel Martin (HFA), and Tony Butterfield (ISOM) in addition to Associate and Academic Deans, Department Heads and Chairs, faculty, and Jane Fountain, Chair of the Chancellor's Reorganization Task Force. A summary of the discussions appears in the Appendix of the Academic Priorities Council Report on Campus Reorganization and in the APC Minutes of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Academic Priorities Council offered the following observations and recommendations based on the discussions and community input.

As the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system, UMass Amherst seeks to be a nationally-recognized, top-tier, public research university. In addition, it is recognized that both undergraduate and graduate education and the "student experience" are critical components of our success. Students are the foundation of our financial support and demographic trends suggest that competition for students will intensify over the next ten years. Thus, it is critical that the organizational structure we create be supportive of faculty research and teaching across disciplines, supportive of providing students with a high quality educational experience, and allow us to take advantage of strategic opportunities both within and across disciplines which have the potential to foster external funding and investment and build our national and international reputation.

It is also necessary to create an organizational structure that will allow departments and colleges to build on their core strengths, maintain their identity, and continue processes they have developed to support their faculty and students effectively. An organizational structure should encourage efficient use of resources, break down barriers that inhibit multidisciplinary research and study, allow units to take advantage of synergies, and foster a sense of community and shared purpose.

Upon consideration of the feedback received, the goals and mission of the University, and our academic priorities, the following recommendations and rationale are offered.

**Proposed Organizational Structure**

The Academic Priorities Council supports a modified version of the Chancellor's reorganization proposal, one that builds on the life science initiative by combining departments in NSM and NRE, but allows SBS and HFA to remain separate. Two structures were viewed as acceptable, although one was considered preferable to the other.

The preferred structure would be a College of Arts & Sciences with three divisions managed by Divisional Associate Deans and four colleges outside of the Arts & Science College. The three divisions in an A & S model would be (1) a combined NSM and NRE college, (2) SBS, and (3) HFA. The schools and colleges outside of Arts & Sciences would include (1) the College of Engineering, (2) the Isenberg School of Management with Resource Economics, (3) the School of Education, and (4) a College of Public Health and Health Sciences that includes a School of Nursing. Some concern was expressed that this structure would require an additional level of administration and three Associate Deans. However, this structure was viewed as potentially superior in encouraging cross-disciplinary use of resources and collaboration to meet the needs of the general education curriculum.

A second acceptable structure would be a seven college model that includes: (1) a combined NSM and NRE college, comparable to that proposed by the Chancellor, (2) SBS, (3) HFA, (4) the Isenberg School of Management with Resource Economics, (5) a College of Public Health and Health Sciences that includes a School of Nursing, (6) the College of Engineering, and (7) the School of Education.

In both structures, while NRE would join with NSM, not all departments would necessarily need to make the move. In addition, it is recommended that a subcommittee consider the best placement of departments such as Landscape Architecture and Linguistics.

Support for the proposed modification includes:

- The sciences would be together, thus, facilitating the life sciences initiative supported by the individual units and the State of Massachusetts with the potential for significant funding opportunities.
- Combining the sciences within a single college or division would promote more effective management of large scale science projects involving the life sciences, clean energy, and the environment, as examples.
- Combining the sciences should facilitate the streamlining of processes including grant administration, curriculum development and support, financial management, and advising.
- Both structures could facilitate better management of the science curriculum.
- Both structures could contribute to ameliorating the “two cultures” issue.
- In the A & S structure, interdisciplinary research and teaching efforts among divisions could be promoted. This structure would facilitate cooperation and collaboration across divisions, both curricular and funding. Servicing of the general education curriculum across divisions is recommended and would be facilitated.
- The A & S structure would potentially allow for a more integrative, potentially interdisciplinary experience for many students.
- Both structures preserves successful initiatives established in well functioning colleges and allow highly productive units to continue to be productive without disruption.
- Both structures allow established business processes to remain in place without interruption, such as Spire, existing personnel committees, tenure and promotion processes, and the community college transfer model.
- Disciplines can maintain their identities, a concern expressed by some.

Issues that need to be addressed in the Proposed Reorganizational Structure include:

- An exact list of departments within each division needs to be worked out. Concern was expressed about departments moving to colleges against their will. In these cases, it is proposed that Faculty Senate approval be required in a manner to be determined by the Rules Committee.

- A huge science division could make personnel committees and tenure and promotion processes difficult. Processes would need to be worked out so that these functions are manageable.
- Consideration should be given to the Chancellor and VCR being more outward focused rather than inward focused. They should be entrepreneurial in order to generate additional funding opportunities and facilitate the research and outreach efforts of faculty. They should also promote entrepreneurial efforts among individual units so departments and colleges will be less reliant on state funding and be able to deal more effectively with budget reductions.

### **Program Proposals**

The following program proposals were evaluated and acted upon throughout the year:

- **Proposal to establish a combined Juris Doctor and Master of Science in Labor Studies Program with Western New England College School of Law**

Harris Freeman, UMass Labor Center and Faculty Member WNEC School of Law and Eve Weinbaum, Labor Relations and Research Center attended the meeting on September 18, 2008 to answer questions posed by the Council last spring relative to their proposal.

#### **The Outcome**

The Council requested a revision of the original proposal that incorporates a needs assessment, clarification on the required courses from both institutions for labor and law, clarification on the satisfaction of UMass' residence requirements, how credits are counted, program overlap, and a reevaluation of the program after 5 years. The proposal will be revised and resubmitted to the Council for approval.

- **Proposed Revision for the Minor in Computer Science**

#### **The Decision**

The Council voted to approve the Computer Science Minor revision.

#### **The Rationale**

The Council was enthusiastic about the potential for the minor to encourage interdisciplinary study and to prepare students for a changing workplace which values technological skills.

- **Proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science**

#### **The Decision**

The Council voted to approve the Computer Science Bachelor of Arts (BA).

#### **The Rationale**

The Council valued the potential for the program to encourage interdisciplinary degrees among students and to prepare students for a changing workplace which values technological skills. The degree offers the potential for students in complementary disciplines to attain a dual degree. The Council also viewed favorably the potential of the BA degree to encourage more students to enter the field of computer science and gain a degree.

- **Proposed Revision for the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science**

#### **The Decision**

The Council voted to approve the Computer Science Bachelor of Science (BS) revision.

### **The Rationale**

The revision was viewed favorably in light of the changing technological environment, the rigor of the degree in preparing students for careers in programming or for graduate study in Computer Science, and the potential for students in complementary disciplines to attain a dual degree.

- **Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Public History**

### **The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Graduate Certificate in Public History.

### **The Rationale**

The certificate provides recognition for Master's students in other disciplines of a concentrated study in Public History involving a four course sequence that includes an internship in a specialized area of Public History practice. It formalizes a departmental certificate program offered to Master's students in Public History since 1986. The APC recommended to the History Department that they have a conversation with the Graduate Registrar on how to post the degree on the transcript of History majors since, for them, the certificate is superseded by the History degree itself given that the certificate requirements are the same as the requirements for a concentration in History.

- **Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Film Studies**

### **The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Graduate Certificate in Film Studies.

### **The Rationale**

The certificate is interdisciplinary and recognizes interdepartmental collaboration between graduate faculty in such areas as Communication, Comparative Literature, Art/Photography, Music, Anthropology, Theater, Afro-American Studies, and Languages. It is designed to provide recognition for a concentrated area of study in the absence of a departmental or degree program in Film Studies.

- **Proposal for a Multicultural Theater Practice Certificate**

### **The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Certificate in Multicultural Theater Practice.

### **The Rationale**

The certificate requires the completion of 24 credits involving seven courses and an internship. The program capitalizes on the presence of the New WORLD Theater and supports the ongoing collaboration between New WORLD Theater staff and faculty members in the Department of Theater. The APC indicated that for students majoring in Theater, taking the courses required in the certificate proposal should be considered a concentration, while students outside the department would be given a Certificate.

- **Proposal for a Center for the Study of African American Language**

### **The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Center for the Study of African American Language.

**The Rationale**

The Center will foster research on language in the African American community and application of that research in educational and social settings. It will enhance the training of educators concerned with language and dialect-related issues, and support the University's outreach mission, multicultural awareness and respect for diversity. The Center will build on the expertise of UMass and Five College faculty and can serve as a catalyst for external funding opportunities.

- **Proposal for a Social Justice Education (SJE) Graduate Certificate in Teaching for Diversity**

**The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council approved the Proposal for a Social Justice Education (SJE) Graduate Certificate in Teaching for Diversity

**The Rationale**

The Certificate will provide a graduate program of study incorporating social justice topics, curricular design and facilitation skills and practicum opportunities teaching UMass General Education and departmental diversity courses. It will support graduate students across various programs and can serve to enhance their skills in teaching general education courses incorporating diversity and social justice.

- **Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in African Diaspora Studies**

**The Decision**

The Academic Priorities Council approved the Graduate Certificate in African Diaspora Studies at its meeting on April 7, 2009.

**The Rationale**

The certificate program will allow graduate students and secondary school educators interested in African Diaspora to increase their knowledge and preparation to teach and pursue research in this increasingly important area. It also supports outreach to the graduate community at UMass and collaboration between faculty in the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies and the Five Colleges, Inc.