

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

From the 683<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate held on March 26, 2009

OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE FACULTY SENATE'S PRELIMINARY REPORTS ON  
REORGANIZATION

MODERATOR: JOHN MCCARTHY, CHAIR OF THE RULES COMMITTEE  
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)

*John McCarthy, Chair of the Rules Committee*

The Faculty Senate is responsible for reviewing the proposed Reorganization Plan. We will be voting on it at the last Faculty Senate meeting of the year. As part of its process of reviewing the Reorganization Plan, the Rules Committee asked several of the Senate's councils to look over the initial Reorganization Plan that was circulated by the Chancellor on February 3 and to give us reports. We thought it would be best to have these reports orally as well at this meeting, so we have asked representatives of those councils to come here today to speak to us. They are, from my left: David Evans of the Research Council, Dan Gerber of the Outreach Council, Christine King representing the Graduate Council, Randall Knoper of the General Education Council, John Jenkins of the Academic Matters Council and Richard Bogartz of the Academic Priorities Council.

*David Evans, Chair of the Research Council*

I want to stress that this report is the product of many people's input. Our charge was to look at the Reorganization Plan from the perspective of how it impacts research endeavors at the University, although we are aware that this interacts with graduate education, particularly, and to lesser extent with undergraduate education.

The first outcome of this report discusses the need to manage differences in the constituent parts of new units. When you create a new college or merge units together, there is a need for leadership which is not normally part of the job description of deans. When you are putting together units that differ widely in the kinds of research they do and the types of research that are viewed as legitimate, there needs to be a process of dialogue and respect for those differences. Those differences need to be managed and put together in a way that is constructive. There is what I call the fallacy of juxtaposition synergy. This fallacy suggests that by putting units together they will magically cooperate and their research endeavors will grow and blossom. It is just as likely to go in the other direction and result in entrenched civil war. We have examples of both on campus. These differences need to be managed carefully.

When you put units together, some units are relatively well-off in terms of sponsored research; other units are not. There are a variety of reasons for this, but when you put these units together, both sides are uncomfortable. The better-off units think that they are going to lose resources and their strength is going to be diluted. The less well-off think they are being discriminated against and not treated with sufficient respect. They believe resources should be coming in their direction. This is something that has to be managed.

The way we divide up the Research Trust Fund money helps us manage these differences. We follow the 70-10-10-10 model. This is a fairly effective tax mechanism. Principal investigators, such as myself, are used to being taxed by the dean and the department chair. We recognize that we have a responsibility to cross-subsidize other parts of the unit that we are in. That works pretty well if it is used correctly. It is one of the mechanisms that can be used to deal with these differences.

There are personnel procedures that depend heavily on research in terms of tenure decisions. The criteria of what constitutes legitimate, quality research and what kinds of research methods are acceptable within our discipline vary widely across departments. For example, there are many

differences between pure research, applied research and service and outreach. These are very different kinds of constituencies, and some departments would not view all of these types of research as legitimate.

Secondly, the Research Council considered how the University could strengthen the research process across the campus. While we have a very strong research management team at the university level, once you move below the university level, there is wide variation ranging from notable to non-existent within colleges, schools and departments. In some ways, we have professional researchers and amateur business men. Relatively few units have a systematic process for scanning the funding environment and making strategic decisions about what they are going to do. There are individual faculty members and groups of faculty who do this very well. But, as an institutional strategy, it is largely absent. We need a position at various levels of colleges, schools and departments that is responsible for research. This would go beyond accounting and following the rules of OGCA. The person in this position would be responsible for managing a business endeavor. He/she would manage marketing, sales and a clear process for making priority decisions about where the department needs to go to seek funding. This person would be responsible for looking at what the department will invest in and what it will not invest in. Our research strategy is okay at the amateur level, but if research is going to be a significant component of our income, then this needs to be managed on a more systematic and professional manner.

*Dan Gerber, Chair of the University Service, Public Service and Outreach Council*

After being asked to discuss reorganization by the Rules Committee, the Outreach Council had an excellent discussion. They actually went back and said, "We are not really against change." Several people from the Outreach Committee said, "It was not that long ago that we did not have an Outreach Office or Provost for Outreach." Not that long ago, everyone thought outreach was service. Today, most faculty know that outreach is research and teaching in service.

This started an excellent conversation. We went back and talked about what we have actually done in the past few years: we produced a White Paper discussing outreach as a form of engagement and discussing the mutual benefit between outreach and our external constituents. We talked about our symposium and our Carnegie classification as an Engaged University. Those of us on the Council knew we were an Engaged University, but we actually proved it over the summer by putting in this incredible application. Then, we talked about reorganization. We talked about the importance of linkages and the need to have identified administrative leadership in Outreach and Engagement at the college level. There are many people on the Outreach Council that said, "I can be the Outreach Coordinator for our college." We could work with the dean, the central office. We could have linkages to the Vice Provost's Office and Outreach and draw these linkages together.

We talked about the decision to move the Office of Community Service Learning from Commonwealth College into the Provost's Office. Everyone applauded that decision. We always felt it should be under the Office of the Provost. Now that it is in the Provost's Office though, we are concerned about who is going to be in charge of it and how many resources they are going to have. John Reiff did an excellent job in the Provost's Office and Commonwealth College, but he has been told to work for Commonwealth College now. Who is going to take over John's job and go forward and improve upon it? We know there is a lack of coordination in our tracking system. We want to improve upon that. We know that congress is tripling the Learn and Serve Grants. We have Learn and Serve Grants, but we want more. Unless this Office is really primed under the Provost's Office, we are not going to be ready to go for these grants. We are concerned about who is going to be in charge. We want to know what kind of resources this person is going to have and how to go forward. Overall though, we are looking forward to it.

*Christine King, Representative of the Graduate Council*

The Graduate Council did not have a formal meeting on the Reorganization Plan. Requests went out to Graduate Council members to submit feedback and we discussed the plan by email. Some members spoke to Graduate Program Directors and administrators and faculty in their colleges. They then pulled together comments that they felt were germane to graduate education. They seemed to center on two areas: the impact of reorganization on graduate education in general and then the whole process of reorganization. Feedback was offered from about 11-12 individuals. The support and opposition seemed to cluster by school and department.

Supporters of the Reorganization Plan referenced their link to the mergers between NRE and NSM and also the merger of resource economics into the Isenberg School of Management. Comments opposing reorganization were particularly relevant to the SBS and HFA merger with some opposition from the NRE departments as well. At the time it was discussed, many people felt that the details of the Reorganization Plan were not clearly understood by everyone. There appeared to be general confusion about what the plan was and what the alternatives might be. It was also not clear how much money would be saved through any kind of reorganization effort. Faculty members expressed a real need to explore other opportunities to realize any savings rather than embarking on a reorganization. They also questioned the process of reorganization for having limited dialogue and a lack of transparency. Of course, this was before committees were set up to actually provide dialogue and increase the faculty input on reorganization.

Faculty members also thought it was a good time to look at other opportunities to explore and develop on campus. They thought that this reorganization and any kind of change on campus should look at major issues, including the better utilization of technology in the classroom. Council members also wanted to increase the leverage of online and professional and continuing education programs relevant to graduate students. They wanted to influence the advantage of a Five College network in terms of graduate education. It appears that both sides of the Isenberg and Resource Economics merger responded favorably to the Reorganization. Primarily, there was concern expressed, however, by NRE about the loss of a land-grant mission if there were to be a merger. A lot of the feedback did not focus on graduate education in general but on the process of reorganization.

Faculty members also asked what impact proposed mergers would have on the recruitment of graduate faculty and graduate students. There was also some concern expressed regarding resource allocation, particularly for smaller graduate programs or departments.

*Randall Knoper, Chair of the General Education Council*

The General Education Council had a rather lively discussion about reorganization and also had a wrangle over producing the report which ended up being relatively short. The Council decided it could not support any specific reorganization proposal. It did agree that reorganization should support interdisciplinarity. This is the fundamental idea that General Education and a liberal education are designed to encourage the connections among the different parts of a student's education. The Council asked "that any proposed reorganization provide clear and explicit administrative support and coordinating structures for a curriculum that challenges disciplinary divisions" and also one that sustains an interdisciplinary General Education.

Aside from that, the Council went to questions of resources. The concern was that General Education and the resource support for it is generally not addressed and thought of as an important consequence of reorganization. The Council wanted the question of resources to be at the fore of reorganization questions when thinking about General Education. Council members questioned whether colleges will have to choose between providing General Education and serving their majors once this reorganization is accomplished. They asked: will resources be redistributed to ensure the integrity of General Education?

In light of reorganization, the Council wanted to support curricular incentives. The report states: “we believe that there are opportunities for all schools and colleges to contribute to the General Education and that reorganization can provide leverage to engage those opportunities. Currently, a few schools and colleges carry the bulk of the General Education curriculum, a situation that is not healthy for General Education on this campus. We urge that a reorganization proposal ask whether there will be a clear financial and curricular incentives for those colleges that do not currently contribute to General Education to begin to do so, so that the burden of providing the General Education curriculum not be further split and de-institutionalized.”

Overall, the report questioned whether reorganization will support interdisciplinarity, make sure that resources are available for General Education and provide curricular incentives to broaden the provision of General Education.

*John Jenkins, Chair of the Academic Matters Council*

At a meeting on February 18, the Council gave preliminary consideration to what they then knew about the Reorganization Plan. From that discussion, they agreed to list the following questions:

- What will be timeline for implementation? More importantly, can we extend the timeline to a more reasonable time?
- How will the reorganization of schools and colleges, prerequisites and degree requirements be implemented when many campus resources are committed from the present through October for testing and implementation of PeopleSoft 9.0?
- Have we even determined whether the programs, policies and courses that the AMC has approved will be negatively affected?
- Finally, should proposed mergers be happening at all?

Recognizing that since that time our members have gained much more information and have benefited from considerable campus-wide discussion, I sent a message to them this week asking if each member would convey to me, in preparation for this meeting, their single most important concern regarding the Reorganization Plan and its proposed implementation as they now see it. Here is the essence of what they said:

Concerning the incorporation of Computer Science and Polymer Science with Engineering, how will we recognize the academic program needs as a professional school—the accreditation standards—with the programs of the other departments? If the stated goal is to increase effectiveness and reduce costs, how will this be realized? Will the proposed changes actually improve the education experience for undergraduate students?

Among my colleagues, there is general opposition to any plan to merge HFA and SBS without clearly defined benefits which at the present time have not been identified or even suggested. As a corollary, our fear is that an interim dean will be appointed for the College of Natural Sciences. Many decisions will need to be made as the new college is formed, and a permanent dean is needed to lead the charge. Associated with that, my chief concern is that reorganization will be demoralizing to both faculty and administration. We need to make sure that we are doing everything possible to retain the morale of both and in particular that of our excellent HFA dean.

Please allow me to relinquish the Chair of Academic Matters for just a moment and add a personal word. When we founded the General Education curriculum in 1986, we insisted that it provide interdisciplinary education opportunities for faculty to participate and for students to enroll in. A decade later, the Task Force of General Education, after a three-year study, stressed the centrality of interdisciplinary thinking in undergraduate education. Today, I strongly endorse what the General Education Council has said. This curriculum occupies one third of our students work, and General

Education must be a part of planning during any reorganization. Developing students' ability so that they can cross disciplines is a central value and core value of General Education. We ask that any plan for reorganization provide clear and explicit administrative support and coordinating structures for a curriculum that challenges disciplinary divisions.

*Richard Bogartz, Representative of the Academic Priorities Council*

The Academic Priorities Council considered the academic vision of the Chancellor's Reorganization Proposal and how it positions the campus for success. We sought input from the campus using a series of meetings with deans, department heads, chairs and faculty. On behalf of the Academic Priorities Council, I thank all of these people who gave their time and thoughts. I also thank Kathy Debevec, the Chair of the APC, who single-handedly organized the meetings and simultaneously conducted the meetings, kept extensive notes, and then later wrote the Council's report from which most of my remarks are taken.

The organizational structure we create should support faculty research and teaching across disciplines, provide students with a quality education experience and facilitate taking advantage of strategic opportunities both within and across disciplines for external funding and investment. It should also build our national and international reputation. We need to create a structure that allows departments and colleges to build on their core strengths, maintain their identity and preserve processes that have developed to support their faculty and students. The structure should encourage efficient use of resources, break down barriers inhibiting multidisciplinary research and study, allow units to take advantage of synergies and foster a sense of community and shared purpose. Based upon the feedback we received, the goals and mission of the University, and our academic priorities, the APC offers the following recommendations and rationale: the APC supports the modification of the Chancellor's proposal that builds on the Life Sciences Initiative by combining departments in NSM and NRE but maintains SBS and HFA as separate. Two structures seemed acceptable. One was considered preferable to the other. The preferred structure is the College of Arts and Sciences. The CAS would include three divisions managed by divisional associate deans and four colleges outside the CAS. The three divisions in a CAS would be a combined NSM and NRE division, SBS and HFA. The schools and colleges outside CAS would include the College of Engineering, the Isenberg School of Management with Resource Economics, the School of Education and the College of Public Health and Health Sciences which would include the School of Nursing. Some were concerned that this structure requires an additional administrative level; however, it was viewed as potentially superior in encouraging cross-disciplinary uses of resources and collaboration to meet the needs of the General Education curriculum.

A second acceptable structure is a seven college model that includes: a combined NSM and NRE College, SBS, HFA, Isenberg School of Management with Resource Economics, the College of Public Health and Health Sciences which includes the School of Nursing, the College of Engineering and 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 structure includes: the sciences would be together, 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, for example, the Life Sciences, clean energy and the environment. Combining the sciences will facilitate grant administration, curriculum development and support management and advising. Both structures address the "two cultures" issue. A CAS promotes interdisciplinary research and teaching efforts among divisions. The science curriculum and the General Education curriculum would be better managed. We recommend collaboration across disciplines in servicing the General Education curriculum. The CAS would allow for an integrative, potentially interdisciplinary experience for many students. The CAS structure will facilitate cooperation between divisions, both curricular and funding. Both structures preserve successful initiatives, established and 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 interruptions to 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: a huge science division could make personnel committees, tenure and promotion processes difficult. Processes would need to be worked out so that these functions are manageable. An exact list of departments within each division needs to be worked out. We suggest the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement should be outward rather than inwardly 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.

In addition, many discussants were frustrated at having to discuss the academic vision in a plan that was not then before us in any detail and without a hint at a budget. We literally did not know what we were talking about and part of the time we were wondering whether we were supposed to look into the academic vision of the plan or we were supposed to come up with an academic vision. Some APC members and visitors opined that the so-called plan had lurched from the initial idea of pleasing the legislature and trustees by using reorganization to show we were doing our part to the notion that there might be some money to be saved which is a notion many disagreed with. It has now become a highly questionable plan which involves combining groups such as HFA and SBS and Computer Science and Engineering that did not mutually want to be combined. Some were of the opinion that we were wasting our time because the Chancellor was going to do what he wanted to do no matter what conclusions we came to. I personally found the sheep-like position of some particularly troubling. It was also troubling to think that we might be operating in a system where regardless of how many fine minds concluded we should go one way, a single mind could decide otherwise and perhaps make it stick.