

A UNIVERSITY AT RISK

A Special Report submitted jointly to

The Faculty Senate by

The Academic Priorities Council

and

The Research Council

to be presented

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on

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PART I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For close to three years now, the University has faced a serious budget crisis. The Administration and faculty have tried to cope with repeated budget cuts and budget reversions. Some cuts have been across the board, others have been more selective. Some units have been virtually terminated; others have been significantly reduced. The sense of crisis has caused some faculty, particularly those most productive in research, scholarly and creative activities, to lose confidence in the University's ability to protect quality.

The budget crisis and the repeated cuts have taken their toll; class size has increased, the quality of instruction has gone down. There are fewer small classes and seminars. Library hours, services and acquisitions have been reduced. Campus and building maintenance has deteriorated. Departments have attrited. Research and travel funds have dwindled. Other consequences have been a dramatic drop in faculty morale. It is widely believed that the faculty exodus which has begun, will accelerate in the year ahead, and that the loss of gifted scholars will have long lasting negative consequences.

It now appears that what has happened so far is likely to be but a microscopic version of what is likely to happen in the future. As of this writing, state revenue estimates have been reduced again. State aid to cities and towns is about to be slashed. It seems, therefore, that the University will face at least a "\$10 million problem" next year, which will have to be absorbed by cuts in all areas of the budget, including personnel. The administration has estimated that this might lead to involuntary terminations for up to 200 members of the University community. It is unlikely that attrition, savings from resignations and retirements or non re-appointments will make more than a very modest contribution to the short-fall, as these have already been anticipated for the most part.

The University faces at least two alternatives; it can "roll over and play dead" and absorb the punches as they are delivered.

Alternatively it can develop and embrace a clearer and crisper definition of its mission, develop some goals and adopt a method to cope with the crisis. We are all agreed that the University must not only endure—it must prevail.

A Short Statement on Mission

The Mission Statement of the University, approved by the University Trustees in March 1989, states, in part, that

. . . the University of Massachusetts at Amherst is the most comprehensive campus of the state system, the public land-grant university, and a premier research institution.

[Consequently] "the University has particular responsibilities for research and graduate education, and must provide a qualitatively different undergraduate education from that offered by [other units in the system]."

As it copes with the crisis, the campus must try to avoid making short run decisions which will have negative long term consequences. In the long run, the University will again lay claim to a distinguished place among public institutions in the Northeast.

Goals

The first goal must be to protect the heart of the research mission of the Campus. We believe that the best way of achieving this goal is to identify and protect the strongest research departments on campus.

The second very important goal is to protect a group of programs who make an outstanding contribution to the undergraduate teaching mission of the campus. Legislators support public higher education because they view the system as a place where young people can obtain a first class education at bargain basement prices. By teaching a large number of students, we gain more political support, from the students themselves and from their families.

The third goal must be to avoid terminating programs that are central to the idea of the University.

In sum, we must retain a group of programs strong enough to allow the reclaiming of public support as quickly as possible, and the rebuilding of the institution, after the worst of the budget crisis is over.

In making its decisions, the Administration must recognize that judgments should be made about quality quite apart from the quantitative data that can be more easily measured. There is a distinction between information and data. It is important that thought and judgment be an active part of the process, and that decisions should not be taken solely on the basis of quantitative data.

PART II

In the past few months, the Academic Priorities Council developed, and the Senate adopted a Termination Procedure and a Reduction procedure. Neither have worked as expected. In the past few weeks, a subcommittee of the Research Council developed A Statement of Missions and Values for the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Likewise, the Program and Budget Council developed a Report Relating to Possible Budget Reductions.

Acting under instructions from the Rules Committee, the Academic Priorities Council, the Research Council and the Program and Budget Council have developed the present special report, which is designed to provide faculty input as the campus attempts to deal with the current budget crisis.

Goals:

1. To preserve and protect the quality research departments of the institution (Group A).
2. To preserve and protect the departments which provide a disproportionately high amount of teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level (Group B).
3. To preserve and protect those departments deemed central to the institution (Group C).

Group A shall be identified by two criteria:

Productivity and Quality of Research, Creative and Professional Activities

The quality of scholarship cannot be easily quantified. Assessments of research quality are subjective and even anecdotal in nature. Judgments made in these dimensions are not amenable to any simple, formulaic approach. Nonetheless, such judgments must be made.

While the number of articles, books, creative works, shows, performances or tours is not in itself a foolproof indicator of quality, it is generally true that a large number of articles, works, etc. may indicate substantial productivity. Similarly, the higher the percentage of faculty who are active in these ways, the more active and productive a program can be said to be. The lack of such activity over an extended period of time, e.g., five years, is clearly a negative statement about the scholarly achievement of a program. Of course, it is necessary to consider how a program may have changed in terms of faculty losses or recruitment. Graduate and post-doctoral education is so closely tied to research quality and productivity that graduate student theses, dissertations, and other scholarly works, the demand for graduates of a program, the career successes of program graduates, the quality of applicants for degree programs and for post-doctoral positions are all important measures of research quality and productivity. Finally, success in obtaining exterior research funding is another indicator of quality although it is recognized that measurements of research funding are appropriate only for certain programs.

The assessment of research productivity shall take into account, but not be limited to the counting of the number of books and monographs, journal articles, chapters in books and proceedings, papers (for national and international conferences) per FTE faculty and the percent of the faculty publishing over the most recent five year period.

Creative and artistic productivity shall also be measured by counting the number of artistic performances and creative works per FTE faculty over the most recent five year period.

Reputation and Uniqueness

The reputation of an academic program is dependent in part on the individual reputations of the program's faculty. Additionally, research areas often add a special luster to a program's reputation because of excitement of the research in progress.

Additionally, it may happen that a program is the only one of its kind—or one of only a handful in the state, region or nation. For this reason it may have a special claim to be given protected status.

The external reputation of a program shall be assessed on the basis of such variables as the individual reputations of its faculty, ranking done by external agencies, and programs reviews conducted by the Regents of Higher Education.

The uniqueness of a program shall be assessed as appropriate.

Group B shall be identified by the examination of instructional productivity and quality for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Separate measures are particularly important for graduate programs because of the time-intensive nature of graduate instruction and research interaction with graduate students. It is also important to assess teaching productivity with respect to both the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty and the total instructional resources (TIR) which includes teaching assistants and teaching associates. The fifth criterion in this section is especially important for programs whose offerings are directed to a significant degree to nonmajors.

The long-term trends of the demand for the course offerings of a program shall be determined from an analysis over a period of five years of course enrollments/FTE and majors/FTE.

The instructional productivity of a program shall be determined by measuring the FTEIS/FTE and FTEIS/TIR ratios. The number of Full-Time Equivalent Instructed Students (FTEIS) shall be calculated by dividing total credits by a nationally accepted credit load for "full-time" students.

The number of undergraduate degrees per FTE faculty member.

The number of graduate degrees per FTE faculty member.

The instructional service productivity of a program shall be determined by measuring the FTEIS/FTE ratio for nonmajors.

The reputation of instructional programs as indicated by such criteria as National rankings.

Group C shall consist of those departments which are deemed central to the University. The group shall include Programs whose presence on the campus is seen to be institutionally central to the continued existence of the institution.

Centrality is a subjective criterion. It is often reflected in statements such as, "We're not a university without . . ." The presence of intellectually central departments helps to define a great university, but centrality should also be assessed within the context of the missions of the university.

The following criteria shall be used to identify them.

A judgment shall be made as to whether a program is central to the intellectual life of the University.

A judgment shall be made as to whether a program is central to one or more missions of the University.

The economic impact of a program on the local, state, regional, or national economies shall also be considered.

A judgment shall be made as to whether a program contributes to the cultural diversity of the campus—its staff, faculty and students.

PART III GUIDELINES

Once the protected departments have been identified, the remaining programs shall be expected to bear the brunt of any reductions needed to close the budget gap.

If the campus should incur a \$10 million budget cut, as has been predicted, we would expect reductions to be allocated approximately as follows:

A. Non-instructional reductions

1. Administration/Support Services \$1,500,000

It may be possible to minimize the impact through the consolidation of certain system-wide administrative functions.

2. Library/UCS \$ 500,000

Given current staff shortages, cuts should be made predominantly in non-personnel accounts, including acquisitions if necessary.

B. Instructional Reductions

1. Graduate Teaching Assistantships \$2,000,000

A large part of the savings may be achieved through program reduction and/or termination.

Consideration should be given to the temporary suspension of doctoral and/or masters programs if they are not (a) self-supporting through tuition and fees, (b) of exceptional quality, or (c) supported by grants and contracts.

Consideration should be given to suspending certain expensive parts of the undergraduate curriculum.

2. Academic Program Termination and/or Reduction \$6,000,000

Up to an additional \$6,000,000 will be obtained by the termination and/or reduction of academic programs.

We recommend that such program terminations and/or reductions be made according to the criteria previously enumerated in Part II.

We further recommend that such cuts shall be made with the following concerns in mind:

- a. **Tenured faculty should be retained except in the most dire circumstances. The University, if it is to recover, must maintain its national reputation as an institution of academic and intellectual integrity and security. A critical ingredient in maintaining this reputation is adherence to the principle of tenure.**
- b. **Faculty to be terminated should be given a year's advance notice.**
- c. **Faculty (and staff) to be terminated should be offered early retirement incentives where possible, and offered other support.**
- d. **Extreme care should be taken in matching outside offers.**

Implementation

The Chancellor and/or the Executive Vice Chancellor shall make basic decisions concerning budget reductions, after consultations with deans, department chairs and heads.

Faculty advice shall be provided directly to the Administration by the Academic Priorities Council, which is composed of representatives of all the schools and faculties at the University.

For the purposes of providing advice on strategic planning of academic issues, the APC shall establish a committee, which shall consist of all members of the APC and four additional members, two to be appointed by the chairs of the Research Council and the Program and Budget Council.

This proposed enlargement of the APC is designed to provide for significant input from the two key councils of the Senate which have the greatest interest in the issues that will need to be resolved in the coming weeks.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate endorse the recommendations, priorities and procedures set forth in "A University at Risk" (Sen. Doc. No. 91-057).
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