

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Presiding Officer Robert Wilson called the General Faculty Meeting to order on February 9, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom.

Introductory Remarks
(Robert Wilson, Presiding Officer)

Robert Wilson, Presiding Officer – If you are a faculty member, you should be sitting on the side marked “faculty,” and the reason for that is that we will be taking a vote and only faculty members and librarians are allowed to vote. There are several motions on today’s agenda. The format of it is to start off having a short presentation by the Chancellor regarding the Reorganization Plan. The Chancellor’s statement will be followed by statements by John McCarthy, who is Chair of the Budget Planning Task Force. Jane Fountain, who is the Chair of the Task Force on Reorganization, is not able to be with us today, so she will not be making a statement. Ernest May, the Secretary of the Faculty Senate, will make a short statement. After all three of those people speak, I’ll open the floor up for a question and discussion period.

The second part of the meeting consists of motions that have been prepared by the Faculty Senate Rules Committee in conjunction with our Constitution and Bylaws, and our Constitution provides that a quorum for items on the agenda is “those people present.” There’s obviously a quorum for the agenda items that are contained on the agenda. Items that are not on the agenda require a different standard for a quorum and that is one half or a majority of the faculty and librarians. According to the MSP, we have a total 1,396, so a quorum for items not on the agenda would be 699, which it does not appear that there is such a quorum for that. I guess I will also ask you again to please show respect towards everyone here, be polite, and I think we’ll end up with a pretty good meeting. We’ll start off with a short statement or address by Chancellor Robert Holub.

I. Presentation of the Proposal to Reorganize the Schools and Colleges (Chancellor Holub)

Robert C. Holub, Chancellor – This is a continuation of a meeting, and I consider this to be a continuation of an ongoing discussion since November. I’ve had many discussions with many individuals and with groups of faculty members and groups of administrators over the past few months from all levels of the academic hierarchy. I paid attention, especially to what was said at the last meeting. I put out, as you know, last week, something that I assume was in accord with the wishes of the faculty and that is the appointment of a committee to examine reorganization, the more precise contours of a proposal which was requested, and also some more precision with regard to the costs and the savings. I look forward to continuing this discussion today. There are just a few more things that I wanted to say—I actually have five points.

The first is an update on the budget situation. The state budget, as you know, or at least the House One Budget was promulgated. There’s nothing really new here. The cuts were the ones that we expected, around \$25 million. That keeps us at about the \$46 million deficit that we talked about last time. In terms of the Federal Government, as you probably have heard, there is trouble in a number of parts of that Stimulus Bill from the side of the Senate. The House Bill was passed, but, on the Senate side, there have been significant cuts, especially in the area of higher education, specifically cuts to some of the agency funding, cuts to Pell Grants, cuts to some of the capital spending for higher education, and of course, the very important part for us, the state stabilization part, which was cut in half by the Senate.

I’ve spent most of today on the phone or off the phone or trying to get in touch with various people. I spoke with Congressman Neal. I spoke with Congressman Olver. I spoke with (State Representative) Ellen Story. Yesterday I talked to (Senator) Stan Rosenberg. I talked to Phil Johnston, who is the head of the Democratic Party here in the state and has a lot of connections with Democrats all across the country on the Democratic National Committee. And, the situation remains in flux. It’s not clear whether and how much of that funding will be restored. I’ve urged all parties involved to do whatever they can to make sure that this money does get restored. There are significant kinds of negotiations that will go on. The Conference Committee will be formed and probably report out by Friday. It’s possible that (Congressman) Richie Neal will be a member of that committee. He hasn’t been appointed yet. But, that Conference Committee will recommend something that will probably be the final bill, and how close it’s going to be to the House bill and how close it’s going to be to the Senate bill is going to be determined, then, over the next few days.

I would urge any of you who are natives of Maine or Pennsylvania to get in touch with people there since there's a chance of persuading those Senators. Any of you who have any colleagues in higher education in Maine or in Pennsylvania and would like to get in touch with them and urge them to get in touch with their congressional delegation to try to do something about this, that would be appreciated. Those seem to be the points to move this in a direction that'll be more favorable for higher education and more favorable for this campus. With regard to one other element—update on the budget—fees will be discussed on Thursday morning at the Trustees Administration and Finance meeting, and then recommended further on the 27th of February when the Board of Trustees will vote on what comes out of that Administration and Finance meeting. We are hopeful that we will get the kind of increase that we need in order to avoid draconian cuts that we'd have to make in the absence of a fee increase.

The second point has to do with the perspective on the reorganization. I think there are many ways to look at what I'm proposing in terms of reorganization. One way, I've discussed, is in terms of faculty positions and how many faculty positions things are worth. But, another way is to see it, certainly, as something that positions the campus for moving forward. I think there's a lot more positive to be said for it, intellectually, than I've said publically. But, I think there's a great deal that one can do with this, and I've had a lot of positive response from different sectors of the campus with regard to the possibilities in terms of both research and instruction. One other thing that we can look at is this reorganization as a kind of a shift in priorities in administration, away from bureaucratic processes and toward support for faculty and students in the administration. I've already told you that in the Provost's and Chancellor's Offices, we're going to eliminate a certain amount of money in order to shift priorities in that direction. But, in keeping with this view, I want to announce that soon, very soon, I'll be forming a working group that will examine support services for academic units with the goal of increasing the efficiencies of these units, reducing their complexity, decreasing the time involved with them in the academic units. These are central, administrative units. This is something else that a number of people have suggested to me. I think it's a good idea. I think that our work processes are not what they should be. What we need to do, therefore, is make sure that they are in accord with high standards and, at the same time, that they have the main function of serving the campus and serving the academic parts of the campus. That's something that will be forthcoming very soon.

A third thing I wanted to mention has to do with my commitment to the campus. I moved my family here last August, and my intention is to stay for the long haul. Some of you know I have three small children. I expect them to go to school here, to graduate from the high schools here. I believe in this campus. I believe in its values. Most of all, I believe in the potential of this campus to achieve something really great and better than it has been—to improve and to move in the directions that I've outlined for you a number of times. My decisions are based solely on one criterion, and that's what I believe is the best for a campus as a whole. I just wanted to make that clear.

Number four—we had a chance to look at the COACHE Survey. This is a survey that is taken of junior faculty. Harvard School of Education, I believe, does this survey. I had a chance to talk to someone who is involved with the COACHE Survey. Some of the deans, I believe, also spoke with this individual. There are two areas in which junior faculty, especially, found deficiencies, and one is in research support, especially in departmental and college areas such as things like time off during the junior years for research and support for travel, things of that nature—and also in facilities. Now, there's often been a juxtaposition of people and buildings, but I find this opposition to be one that is not very productive and is often very facile. Buildings that we build on campus are for people, and it's necessary to have good facilities to attract and to retain productive and satisfied faculty members and to train and instruct students. We've responded, of course, to calls to curtail moving some money from operating budgets to capital budgets. I think there's a legitimate question about how long we can continue to do this and whether it is ultimately of benefit to the institution to think in these terms. Certainly, if you look at what the junior faculty have to say, there's some question—and certainly, you live in these facilities. But, in going around to these facilities, I see myself that there's a tremendous need, and these decisions are very difficult. But, I don't think it's all on one side or all on the other side.

Finally, let me repeat what I've said with other words on many occasions. We can either pull together during this time of financial crisis, or we can allow ourselves to be pulled apart. Nothing I will do is going to please every individual on the campus. We're in this situation together. Through no fault of our own, this situation was created. And, all of us from our varying perspectives, I believe, have legitimate views on the best ways to proceed and on the items that should receive relative priority. Let's not doubt the goodwill or the intentions of anyone. I certainly don't. There's no right or wrong when we're dealing with these issues. There are matters of different perspectives on what's the best thing to do for the campus, for individual units, for individual members of the faculty. So, in keeping with the spirit of togetherness, I would also ask you to keep

these discussions internal to the campus. I think we're stronger when we have a unified voice. The appearance of discord, disharmony, distrust—this can only harm us and make things more difficult to secure the kind of support and the kind of revenues that we need to move this institution forward. So, that's all I have to say. Thank you.

A. Update from John McCarthy, Chair, Budget Planning Task Force

Senator John McCarthy, Chair of the Budget Planning Task Force – The Budget Planning Task Force was created by the Chancellor in mid-November to advise him on how to address the University's budget deficit. The voting membership of the Task Force includes 13 faculty, four staff, and three representatives of student government—the student trustee, the President of the SGA and the President of the GSS. We also have five members of the central administration who are non-voting members. We have two subcommittees, one on revenue and one on expenditures. We met for the first time on November 17, and I've been looking at my calendar, and I see that if I take all the meetings of the Task Force and its subcommittees, we've had about 20 meetings since then. We've received very extensive budgetary information for the central administration. We've had visits from a lot of people who have information that we need. We've received dozens of written comments and suggestions from present and former members of the University community. No, I'm not going to review all of the activities of the Budget Planning Task Force right now, though I will be doing that at a future Senate meeting. Instead, I'll talk specifically about reorganization—and briefly—since that's the topic of this meeting.

The Chancellor's original charge to the Task Force included a paragraph that dealt with reorganization. What he said—and I'm quoting now—was: "I would also ask the Task Force to look at areas in which we can achieve administrative savings, especially since we are currently searching for several administrative positions. Are there colleges that can be merged successfully to achieve savings? What should we be doing to be certain we are successfully administered, yet posed for the future, within the constraints of budget reductions?"

Now, although this was our charge, we didn't actually talk about reorganization during November and December. That's because we were too busy dealing with a couple of other issues that were more time bound than that. One of them is enrollment management, specifically questions like the mix of out-of-state and in-state students, which has important revenue implications. That's something that had to be settled before the end of the December. The same goes for discussions about fees because, as the Chancellor mentioned, the Board of Trustees subcommittee on Administration and Finance is considering this matter on Thursday, but the groundwork had to be laid long before that. We didn't really talk about reorganization until we met for the first time in this calendar year on January 6, and we've been talking about it ever since. We've received really enormous amounts of written comment on reorganization from the chairs of NSM (College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics), SBS (College of Social and Behavioral Sciences), HFA (College of Humanities and Fine Arts), from the Dean of NSM, from the NSM distinguished faculty, from the School of Nursing's Leadership Council and from various individuals, including a former provost. We've also received visits in person from Jane Fountain, who is the Chair of the new task force, and from the Dean of NRE (College of Natural Resources and the Environment) and from the Chair of Psychology. As we've tried to process all of this information—there's a great deal of it—it's become clear to me that reorganization was threatening to take up all of our time. Furthermore, as specific reorganization scenarios have emerged, it's also become apparent that the membership of the Budget Planning Task Force isn't really an ideal match for this task. For example, four of the faculty members—in fact, five members, including a staff member—of the Budget Planning Task Force come from the Isenberg School (of Management), yet the Isenberg School is one of the units that is perhaps least impacted by the reorganization. Yet, we have no one on the Task Force from NRE, which is a unit that's significantly impacted by reorganization. That's one of the reasons we asked Dean Goodwin to meet with us. For this reason, I was very happy to see the creation of a new task force chaired by Jane Fountain. We'd found that she gave us very valuable advice, and we are glad now to sort of hand over the task to her and her committee.

B. Message from Ernest May, Secretary, Faculty Senate

Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate – We'd hoped to have a message from Jane (Fountain) but that hasn't happened, since she's out of town with a research obligation. Having received the Chancellor's proposal, I just want to talk about what the Faculty Senate is doing with that. As

probably most of you know, the Faculty Senate consists of 50 Senators, but it also has councils and committees which engage 500-600 members of the campus community. Last Friday, we sent out an email to all councils and committees—all 24 of them—requesting or offering to receive their comments by March 6, which is the same date Jane Fountain’s Task Force is supposed to have at least a preliminary report. But, then we also charged six councils to write at least a brief report from their particular perspective. So, the Academic Priorities Council is to respond, at least in the area of the “academic vision:” overall, does this reorganization position the campus for increased success now and as we emerge from the recession? The Program and Budget Council has been charged to look at the costs as well as the savings that may be imbedded in the plan. The Graduate Council has been asked to look at the impact on graduate education, if any. The Undergraduate Education Council has been asked to look at the impact on undergraduate education, if any. And, the Research Council is to look at the question of whether the reorganization positions us in a good way for increased success in research now and later. The Outreach Council has a similar charge with respect to outreach.

That’s the process that we’re trying to go through. After this is completed, the Rules Committee will be responsible for aggregating all this information—the comments and the reports. And then, I think we need—as in the legislative process—to reconcile what we’ve learned with what the Task Force on Reorganization has learned, and to remain in contact with the Chancellor’s Office and the Chancellor, and try to put together both a rational response and a political response. I hope the two are the same, but they may not be. Then, we’ll have a final deliberation after spring break and presumably come to conclusion by the end of the semester.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Presiding Officer Wilson – Next, we’ll have a question and discussion period. If you would like to either make a comment or ask a question to any one of the panel members, please let me recognize you and come to the microphone and identify yourself. If there appears to be large numbers of people who’d like to ask questions or make comments, it would probably speed things up if you sort of line up behind one of the microphones to make it a little easier.

Senator Curt Conner, Chemical Engineering – In my more than thirty years at UMass, many changes have occurred. The number of students has increased. The number of faculty first slightly increased and then decreased by over 20 percent. The administration has increased exponentially both in number, supporting staff and percentage cost. I will now guarantee the administrative cost percentage, or at least in magnitude, are greater now than they were thirty years ago. New administrative and support staff have increased at all levels from our Dean’s Office to Provost to Chancellor, both vice and associate, at each one, and at newly created positions whether in Development, Outreach, diversity, gender, ethnicity or disadvantaged. As each fiefdom was created, there has been little concern to avoid duplication in effort or cost. At the same time, the increase in administration resulted in increasing complexity requirements associated with our responsibilities, most specifically, our proposing many research contracts. Those of us who conduct research and raise a significant fraction of our salaries in university overhead are subject to increasing administrative burdens from internal processing-memorandum of understanding, mutual disclosure agreements, intellectual property agreements, much caused by administrative zeal.

I, therefore, greatly welcome Chancellor Holub’s initiative to improve the University administration, to improve the efficiency of our administrative structure and eliminate redundancy. This can and should make our lives easier. For those of you who’ve demanded a total financial picture, claiming it is only \$1.5 million savings, please put this in perspective. Is twenty faculty positions that we have saved or retained due to reorganization of deanships alone? To those who are concerned about the painful fact that we need both a budget readjustment as well as reorganization, I say reorganization of the administration is needed independent of the budgetary crisis. We could wait to consider reorganization after the budgetary process has been solved, as argued by many. Or, one can realize that a portion of the budgetary crisis can be alleviated by reorganization alone, the equivalent of twenty faculty positions. The Chancellor has explicitly approached the financial problems with the first principal aim of retaining faculty lines. At the same time, he has consistently pushed for improvements for excellence in research and scholarship. I agree with Professor Hsu. Reorganization must also enhance our profile in the state, nationally and internationally. I’m convinced that Chancellor Holub is moving in these directions and will support him to these ends.

Professor Randall Phillis, Biology and President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors – I'd like to ask about the relationship between Strategic Planning and college reorganization. The Strategic Planning is something that the MSP had been calling for, for at least a year with the prior (Interim) Chancellor Thomas Cole to engage, and there were some preliminary events underway—and then continued to call for when Chancellor Holub first arrived. When Chancellor Holub arrived, the 250 Plan was questioned, and Chancellor Holub wondered whether or not we were just fascinated by the number 250 or whether we had actually engaged in strategic planning. And, he was unsettled about the idea of moving forward with the 250 Plan because it was not correlated with the Strategic Plan. Since then, we had actually managed to get the administration to consider at least 120 searches for the current academic year, and because of the budget catastrophe, we see where we are now. But, we have now a corresponding kind of dramatic change of the University. A hundred and twenty searches could easily have presented a dramatic change. A college reorganization of the type described by the Chancellor will most certainly present a dramatic change. However, it is unmet by a Strategic Plan. One of our efforts in trying to get strategic planning to occur on this campus was that it be an inclusive process—that for the faculty here to buy in to any particular kind of strategic plan, they must be involved in its creation and not just in the approval of a plan created behind closed doors. So, my question is: is the Chancellor ready to engage in a thorough strategic planning process where he invites the community of scholars here on campus to work on that plan with him to develop the best conceivable plan and then think about how that may or may not match with the college reorganization system?

Chancellor Holub – The answer is yes. I'll tell you where we are with the Strategic Plan and why the college reorganization isn't dependent on it. The Strategic Plan that we've been working on is one that is at a very high level. It doesn't say anything—you may be thinking of the strategic plan that maybe former chancellors have put forth. This is going to be a kind of a 20-page document, not a 100-page document. It won't have anything quite as specific, but will lead to, I hope, strategic plans for various units to accomplish the kind of goals they need to accomplish within the overall Strategic Plan. There isn't really an intimate connection between the overall Strategic Plan and the reorganization except insofar as it's my belief that this allows us—the reorganization, that is—to achieve those goals as well as we would without the reorganization or even better than we would in the reorganization. But right now, the Plan is being revised very slightly, and as I mentioned this morning to the Rules Committee, we will get it to the Rules Committee and out to the faculty for the kind of work that you are recommending—and that is for the kind of comment and change that a plan like that deserves. I felt it was better because we did run into this economic crisis. I might have done this a little bit differently if we hadn't, but I thought it was best to create a kind of a draft of the Strategic Plan, rather than to build up a strategic plan from the ground-up because that's a process, and I've been in those processes before—that usually takes two years or more in order to achieve this. There's also the Board of Trustees, which did want this Strategic Plan. I thought that we should try to get this to the Board of Trustees by June, but it will be out and promulgated in public very soon—certainly in the next couple of weeks is what I'm counting on.

Professor Diane Flaherty, Chair, Economics – There seems to be an inconsistency in the timelines of the various groups working on reorganization. The Faculty Senate is saying—which I think is the most realistic view—that it will take until the end of the semester to have anything in place about the reorganization, to evaluate carefully and in detail. And, yet the Task Force on Reorganization has a deadline of March 6. My question is: how do those two timelines fit? The Chancellor has said in his message to the campus community that he will not finalize any reorganization proposal until he hears from the Task Force on Reorganization as long as it works in a timely manner. Is the end-of-the-semester deadline that the Faculty Senate is proposing for its consideration of reorganization considered to be timely or not timely? That is—will anything be finalized before the Faculty Senate has had a chance to complete its deliberations?

Chancellor Holub – I suppose I have a slightly different view of organization on the campus. If we look back over the last 30-40 years, we'll find that there were many different organizations on this campus and on many college campuses. So, part of the task of not only the Task Force but also the Faculty Senate, is to look at the reorganization proposal but also to look at possibilities for reorganization that go beyond that—so, I'm looking forward to taking the input from both of those groups not matter how long it takes.

II. Motions

GF 09-01 Moved: That the Chancellor shall share his draft Strategic Plan with the Task Force on Reorganization and the Faculty, so that they can evaluate approaches to reorganization in light of that draft Strategic Plan.

This motion was seconded and adopted as amended.

GF 09-02: Moved: That the charge to the Task Force on Reorganization shall be free to consider alternate reorganization plans, including no reorganization at all.

This motion was seconded and adopted.

Senator Richard Bogartz, Psychology – Why is “the charge” free to do anything? Is that English?

Secretary May – That is a grammatical inconsistency, I agree.

Senator Bogartz – Could we change that motion, maybe?

Secretary May – I guess we probably want to amend that to just eliminate—

Presiding Officer Wilson – Since we’ve already voted on this, we’ll make a slight modification to the wording of it so that it is grammatically correct.

Secretary May – I think we can just eliminate “the charge to” and simply say: “That the Task Force on Reorganization shall be free to consider.”

GF 09-02: Moved: That the Task Force on Reorganization shall be free to consider alternate reorganization plans, including no reorganization at all.
(Revised)

(Adopted by unanimous consent.)

GF 09-03: Moved: That the Task Force on Reorganization consult with and seek advice from faculty of all ranks, librarians, staff and students; shall have access to all requested information; and shall provide for transparency in its deliberations.

Professor Phillis – I just have a comment about process and transparency. I’m very concerned about the very tight timeline with respect to the deliberations of this group and their ability to have their process visited by and commented on by the members of the University community. It will be very challenging to pull this off in the few short weeks before the preliminary report is due, apparently on March 6—or, I think that’s an upcoming question at the end. So, I just hope that this committee could provide a mechanism—and, perhaps a suggestion is that they have an open forum preliminary part of their meetings where people can come and share their ideas, because many of the issues at hand may well involve the lives of people on campus, and so where there could be comments or ideas shared—and then perhaps they could then go on about their formal committee deliberations. But, I just am concerned that all on campus can have a voice and share their concerns and ideas and comments about the plans at hand.

Professor Nikki Stoia, Music and Dance, Associate Dean of Advising for the College of Humanities and Fine Arts – Just a quick point of clarification, and it’s actually inherent in this statement, but I want to make sure it happens. In addition to consulting with “faculty of all ranks, librarians, staff, and students,” if we could perhaps add “academic deans” since college requirements and overall advising will be greatly impacted by a possible reorganization. And, it’s probably covered because most of the academic deans are faculty, but maybe just to be safe, if we could put that in there so they’d have an opportunity to be consulted or to show up at a meeting.

Presiding Officer Wilson – Would you like that to be considered a motion to amend by adding in the word “deans.”

Professor Stoia – “Academic deans,” yes.

Presiding Officer Wilson – There’s been a motion to amend that would change the main motion by adding—and correct me if I’m wrong—after the word “students,” adding “and academic deans.” Is that correct?

Professor Stoia – Maybe after “faculty of all ranks.”

Presiding Officer Wilson – The motion to amend is such that added to the main motion after “faculty from all ranks,” the words “academic deans.” That motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion on the motion to amend? If there is any discussion on the motion to amend, once that is completed, we’ll vote on the motion to amend. It will either become part of the main motion or will be defeated. Is there any discussion on this motion to amend?

Senator Steven Brewer, Biology – My only comment would be—are there any members of the campus community that are excluded, and if so, maybe we could have a more general statement that “all members of the campus community” are invited to participate rather than trying to decide whether or not we’ve mentioned each one.

Secretary May – Well, I think that they’re all covered—actually I think the academic deans are either faculty or they’re staff. I think we have covered the waterfront here. We’re happy to put in academic deans. I would hope that the academic deans would particularly provide input into the Undergraduate Education Council as well. But, that will be sought out, actually.

GF 09-03: Moved: That the Task Force on Reorganization consult with and seek advice from faculty of all ranks, academic deans, librarians, staff and students; shall have access to all requested information; and shall provide for transparency in its deliberations.

This motion was seconded and adopted as amended.

GF 09-04: Moved: That the Task Force on Reorganization shall provide a preliminary report by March 6, 2009, but shall take whatever additional time is required to produce a thorough and complete final report.

Senator Bogartz – Will provide a report to whom?

Secretary May – The Task Force on Reorganization is appointed by the Chancellor, and I believe it will provide its report to the Chancellor but will also be providing its report to the faculty. Unless the Chancellor has a different idea?

Chancellor Holub – No, that’s fine. The report, obviously, since I appointed this Task Force, would come to me, but I’m happy to share that report with faculty.

This motion was seconded and adopted.

III. Motion: To recess this session of the General Faculty Meeting to such a time and place as may be determined by the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate.

This motion was seconded and adopted.

The General Faculty Meeting stood recessed at 4:51 p.m. on February 9, 2009.

The proceedings of this meeting are available on audiotape in the Faculty Senate Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest D. May
Secretary of the General Faculty