

**SPECIAL REPORT**

**FROM**

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**CONCERNING**

**A PROPOSED CAMPUS REORGANIZATION PLAN**

**Presented at the**  
**686<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate**  
**May 14, 2009**

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Available at: [http://www.umass.edu/senate/prelim\\_report\\_chancellor.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/senate/prelim_report_chancellor.pdf)

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Section I: Proposed Campus Reorganization Plan with Motions

I want to thank the campus for its engagement in the process of reorganization. Over the past few months, I have received scores of emails from individuals, department faculties, department heads and chairs, and deans relating to reorganization. There are many views on what we should do, and not all of these views are reconcilable with each other. My job has been to come to a decision about what is the best path for the campus as a whole at the present time. Today, I want to share with you the process for moving forward.

While there are those who would oppose change, recent events dictate that we must act if we are to effectively deal with the economic crisis facing our Commonwealth and the nation. In recent news accounts, our local legislators are saying Massachusetts faces a multi-year economic downturn and a deficit of possibly more than \$3 billion. These times are truly difficult, and my concern is the \$46 million shortfall we face in the next fiscal year is not the last major fiscal crisis we will face.

In November, the campus embarked on the process of reorganizing college administration. The impetus for this process was mid-year reductions in the state allocation to the campus and the prospects of large reductions to our allocations in FY10 and in future years. Since that time, the news has gotten worse. The Budget Task Force was initially given the assignment of looking at the administrative savings resulting from college mergers, and subsequently this task was passed to a special Task Force on Reorganization, whose report I received on March 9. Between November and March, I personally held close to fifty meetings with individuals and groups to discuss various aspects of reorganization. Many others on campus have met to discuss this topic as well. I am pleased with the high level of engagement; it can only benefit all of us going forward.

In developing the plan I share today, I gained insights, direction, and advice not only from the Task Force on Reorganization, but also from the meetings and other communications. I have incorporated much of this information into this proposal. The Task Force report on reorganization will be posted on the Budget Planning Web site at [www.umass.edu/chancellor/budget.html](http://www.umass.edu/chancellor/budget.html).

At the outset, savings in administrative costs was a rationale for restructuring. The reductions in our state allocations are severe, and there is no end to the crisis in sight. Federal stimulus monies may help us to forestall some cuts, but all legislators with whom I have spoken advise me and other leaders of higher education to reduce budgets for the future and, in doing so, to make significant structural changes. At a recent hearing of the Ways and Means Committee that I attended, Paul Reville, the State Secretary of Education, stated that all of education must look to be more efficient and focused if it is to successfully weather this unprecedented storm.

We must reorganize to be more efficient, to reduce administrative costs, and to avoid the more deleterious option of slashing programs and departments.

As the reorganization discussion proceeded, it became evident that the campus needed to look not only at the necessity of saving money, but also at how it can position itself for the future. In this context, it became evident that unifying the life sciences would be a positive result. Another desirable result of reorganization is placing programs in proximity that have the possibility of improving our curriculum by creating new and exciting programs and courses for our students and prospective students. In the past months, it has also become apparent to me that if we are going to reach the position of national prominence we all desire, then we must have stronger professional schools. A characteristic of almost every AAU institution is strong professional schools involved in research. In most cases, these are medical schools, veterinary schools, schools of engineering, or schools of public health.

The reorganization I am sharing today realizes our goals in only a partial fashion. I believe we will need to proceed beyond the proposed structure, if we are going to compete with the top public research institutions in the country. In addition, depending on the financial crisis and its course over the next few years, we may have to revisit entities within colleges, propose consolidations of their operations, and thereby further eliminate administration, this time on the level of departments and programs, and perhaps eliminate instructional programs themselves. While none of us would choose this route, the financial picture may force these actions.

Our work is not yet finished, and I call on the campus to approach the current reorganization and future measures in the area of consolidation with an open mind and with sensitivity to the severe exigencies of our campus finances and our goal of becoming a top-echelon public research institution.

Following are details of the plan:

1. The establishment of a College of Natural Sciences effective in fall 2009. (The exact name can be left to the faculty in the college.) The departments in that college will be Environmental Sciences; Food Science; Microbiology; Natural Resources Conservation; Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences; Stockbridge School of Agriculture; Veterinary and Animal Sciences; Psychology; Astronomy; Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; Geosciences; Mathematics and Statistics; Physics; Polymer Science and Engineering; and the program in Environmental Sciences.

This college helps the campus to accomplish one of its goals: it brings together most of the life sciences under one administrative structure. It better positions us to compete nationally and internationally, enhances our ability to attract and retain the best faculty, and facilitates research collaboration across the science disciplines. I also look forward to improved curriculum in the area of the life sciences and possible further consolidations as soon as possible. I have charged Deans Steve Goodwin and Jim Kurose with developing the implementation plan. The appointment of the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences will be determined by the Provost.

With the constellation of departments in this college, we still fall short of another campus goal: the strengthening of engineering and public health. I would therefore ask specifically that Polymer Science and Computer Science enter into discussions with the College of Engineering with the goal of maximizing their cooperation. These discussions should include the possibility of a merger of those units into Engineering and the advantages that would accrue to the departments, the college, and the campus. I have asked Dean Mike Malone and department leaders Shaw Ling Hsu and Andrew Barto to lead this effort. I would like a report on these activities no later than the spring semester of 2010.

With regard to Public Health and Health Sciences, I ask that individuals and departments pursuing research and teaching relevant to an expansive notion of PHHS meet to discuss how we might strengthen ties between the new science college and PHHS, including the incorporation of departments or programs into PHHS. I have asked Dean Marjorie Aelion to lead this effort and examination, and have charged her with preparing this critical analysis, also by spring 2010.

2. The proposal for creation of a College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences has been accompanied by much angst from some quarters. Before proceeding with the creation of such a structure, I recognize several issues that must be addressed if we are going to be successful and have therefore asked for further study on this issue.

Repeatedly I have heard that the creation of a new structure could not be accomplished in a four-month period. We will proceed as follows: the Provost will appoint an interim dean in SBS for one year and assign that person and Dean Joel Martin of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts the task of working together to review thoroughly the concerns that have been raised about such a structure, including such issues as college committees, advising, administrative structure, research support, and curricular requirements. By the end of the 2009-10 academic year, the two deans will report to me on the feasibility of a merger of the two colleges and the steps that would be required to make such a merger successful, as well as the appropriate mechanisms and structures to facilitate scholarly and curricular collaboration.

I have heard often about fears regarding the separation of the "north side" of the campus from the "south side" of the campus. While the creation of a new structure would not represent a step toward the elimination of this separation, neither would it contribute to the separation that already exists in the present college structure. On the positive side, it would create a college large enough to effectively represent the interests of the significant number of faculty members outside the natural sciences and the

professional schools. I charge the deans with examining this issue and fully discussing the pros and cons of such an arrangement in this context.

In a related note, this fear of establishing two sides of campus appears to be connected in the minds of many individuals with funding and the perception of disparities in funding. While we have sought further study on the merger of these colleges, I believe we can take some action on this front now. To address the perceived inequity in funding, we are proceeding to establish a special fund for travel and research expenses aimed specifically at faculty on campus who have limited opportunities for external funding to support their research and scholarship. The Office of Research will administer these monies on a competitive basis. In addition, the Office of Research, in cooperation with college administrations will establish a minimum startup award for any faculty member coming to the Amherst campus. I will also be asking the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement to address the concerns of faculty members in HFA and SBS and to develop methods for promoting research and scholarship among humanists and social scientists. Finally, I will be asking the new Provost to examine carefully the funding of operating budgets across the campus and to make certain that a larger amount of Research Trust Funds (RTF) in one college does not result in greater general administrative support for daily activities connected with instruction. I am not convinced that we have paid insufficient attention to some of these areas in the past, but I am convinced that we must eliminate the perception of a rich and a poor side of campus if we are to reach our collective goals.

3. The School of Nursing will retain its autonomy and have a Dean from among the current School of Nursing faculty but will be administered through the College of Public Health and Health Sciences. I have heard from many with concerns about accreditation, and I understand these must be taken seriously and dealt with directly. Communication Disorders will move from PHHS to the School of Education. We will continue to work with PHHS and Nursing on accreditation issues and seek to strengthen it as a research and teaching unit on campus. I do believe there are benefits to the teaching and research missions of these organizations.
4. Resource Economics will be included in the Isenberg School of Management. Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning will be included in HFA, where the Dean will determine the appropriate structure for its integration. These departmental moves will create better linkages between faculty engaged in related fields, and will help build the teaching and research strengths of all units.

One additional issue that should be addressed is the proposal to create a College of Arts and Sciences (A&S). Various individuals and groups, including the Task Force on Reorganization, have contemplated the establishment of such a college. I am unconvinced that we should revert to this traditional structure for several reasons.

First, I do not believe we can avoid redundancy in A&S and in the central administration in many areas: research, undergraduate education, graduate education, and development. Worse than redundancy, this plan creates the real possibility of conflict between the college and central administration in these or other areas.

Also, if a divisional structure was introduced – and this structure is preferred by some constituencies on campus – we would be introducing another layer of administration. Divisional deans or associate deans would be doing essentially what the deans of HFA, NRE, NSM, and SBS are currently doing, while the dean of the new A&S would add a level of administration between these deans and the office of the Provost. Given the need to reduce administrative expenses in order to preserve our academic programs, such a move would be entirely counterproductive. One key point – it is not clear to me what the difference would be between the dean of the huge college and a provost. The dean would have responsibility for 600-650 members of the campus. In personnel cases, for example, what would be the value added by the extra level of administration at A&S? Almost all AAU institutions that have a CAS have professional schools with a large percentage of the faculty on the campus; at UMass Amherst the imbalance would be severe and in my view dysfunctional. Redundancy and conflict can easily result from such a structure, which will not serve us well as we face the challenges ahead.

Another important point that has been raised in many contexts is that department chairs have often pointed to fruitful exchanges at meetings of department chairs. If there were no divisional structures in a college of A&S, I count nearly forty departments that would be present at a meeting of the college (not counting directors of programs, centers, or institutes). Such a gathering is not likely to be intellectually productive for the participants or contribute in a productive fashion to the governing of the college. If there were divisional structures, the inherent advantage of the CAS is not readily apparent. If we depended on the establishment of centers and institutes to facilitate cross-disciplinary activity, we would not need a CAS to set up those structures.

For these reasons I have concluded that a College of Arts and Sciences is not the best fit for our campus.

The reorganization I have outlined touches every unit on the campus except for the College of Engineering, and I hope that the changes we are starting here will eventually affect that college as well. As I said, we are not in a position to resist necessary change due to the real crisis that grips our national and world economies.

There will be some members of the faculty who will be disappointed by the reorganization. I hope, however, that the majority will understand its necessity and take advantage of the possibilities inherent in the new structures. These are extraordinarily difficult times here in Massachusetts and around the world. In response to this economic crisis, our institution must do all we can to preserve the quality of education we provide our students and our service to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world. To do that effectively, we must minimize cuts to faculty lines and to academic departments – the core of our institution. While no solution is perfect, to fail to act would be disastrous for our university.

I believe the structure discussed here gives us a better chance to reach our potential once we come out of this economic crisis. As I have said many times since my arrival, I believe strongly that UMass Amherst has the opportunity to be one of our nation's best public research universities. While we face challenges, I continue to believe in our future together, and in the ability of the institution to deal with these challenges. I look forward to your continued engagement and support in building a great university.

**MOVED:  
55-09** That the Faculty Senate approve the establishment of the College of Natural Sciences, including the departments of Food Science; Microbiology; Natural Resources Conservation; Plant, Soil, and Insect Sciences; Stockbridge School of Agriculture; Veterinary and Animal Sciences; Astronomy; Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; Geosciences; Mathematics and Statistics; Physics; Polymer Science and Engineering; and the program in Environmental Sciences, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-050.

**MOVED:  
56-09B** That the Faculty Senate approve the transfer of the Department of Psychology from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences to the College of Natural Sciences, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-050, conditional upon the receipt by the Rules Committee, and email distribution to the Senate, of an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding by June 5, 2009.

**MOVED:  
57-09** That the Faculty Senate approve the transfer of the Department of Resource Economics from the College of Natural Resources and the Environment to the Isenberg School of Management, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-050.

**MOVED:  
58-09A** That the Faculty Senate approve the inclusion of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (currently in the College of Natural Resources and the Environment) in the College of Natural Sciences for a period of one year to allow the Department to assess the new administrative structures of the Colleges that will result from reorganization, to conduct planning meetings with allied departments, and to present a proposal for the permanent location of *the* department that will best support its research and educational missions.

**MOVED:  
59-09** That the Faculty Senate approve the closing of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the College of Natural Resources and the Environment, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-050.

