

**SPECIAL REPORT**

of the

**ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL, ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL,  
GRADUATE COUNCIL AND PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL**

concerning

**THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF  
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**

Presented at the  
630<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
April 22, 2004

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

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**ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL**

The Academic Matters Council has reviewed the proposed Consolidation of the Departments of Journalism and Communication. Our review was done with two primary criteria in mind: (1) potential impact on the viability and quality of existing academic programs, and (2) possible consequences for the future competitiveness and vitality of programs and scholarship in areas affected by the consolidation.

In reviewing the rationale and structure of the consolidations related to the new Department, the Council believes that existing academic programs will not be adversely affected. It would appear that this consolidation might offer opportunities to strengthen existing programs through increasing the critical mass of faculty in the new Department and possibly stimulating new interdisciplinary options for students.

At its meeting on April 7, 2004, the Academic Matters Council voted to approve the consolidation of the Departments of Journalism and Communication.

**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL REPORT**

**New Department of Communication**  
**from the existing Departments of Journalism and Communication**

**The Decision**

In response to the request of the Rules Committee that the APC consider Provost Seymour's proposal to form a new Department of Communication from the existing departments of Journalism and Communication, the APC voted unanimously to approve the proposal.

**The Rational**

In response to invitations issued to all faculty in the affected departments, three Journalism and Communication faculty members attended the February 23, 2004 meeting of the APC. They unanimously voiced support for this consolidation, while also noting that it involved the re-location of the Journalism faculty out of the College of Fine Arts and Humanities and into the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

No negative impact on academic programs involved in the proposed consolidation of Journalism and Communication is apparent. On the contrary, the faculty who communicated with the APC about the consolidation expressed support for it and voiced the belief that the change definitely would be beneficial for academic programs in both departments. The faculty noted that discussions were already underway concerning areas of common interest and new such areas were being discovered.

**GRADUATE COUNCIL REPORT**

At its meeting on March 11, the Graduate Council discussed all four consolidation proposals in the Provost's January 7, 2004, memo to Ernest May. The following action was taken on Proposal #3:

**Proposal #3 – Consolidation of Journalism and Communication**

Since Journalism has no graduate programs, the Council felt this proposal was not relevant to the Council's business. However, rather than taking no action, a motion was passed unanimously to "approve Proposal #3 without objection."

**PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL REPORT**

April 2, 2004

**New Department of Communication by consolidating  
Journalism Department with the Department of Communication**

Dean Janet Rifkin, Professor Norman Sims, and Professor Carolyn Anderson jointly presented an overview of the strategy and operations of the proposed consolidation. The major contextual feature is movement of the Journalism Department from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts into the Department of Communication in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Throughout the presentation, the benefits of a streamlined and potentially high draw undergraduate department were highlighted while the resource levels to manage the uptake in undergraduate load were also noted.

One benefit is to maintain the B.A. in Journalism, a major with strong undergraduate demand, in the face of severe budget cutbacks. Additional benefits include the potential to attract undergraduate majors to the university, the useful role of cross listing courses, the parallels between the new program and existing programs elsewhere in the country, and a shared departmental vision. Also mentioned were interdisciplinary teaching and advising, the pooling of resources derived from the department's anticipated Gen Ed enrollment, efficiencies in level and direction of resources under the new arrangement, and the creative collaboration among scholars.

The proposed consolidation will affect approximately 450 Journalism and 700 Communication majors. With a combined faculty of 23, no changes in either of the departments would be needed. The integrity of the undergraduate teaching mission will continue because no programs will be eliminated. It has been assured that operational concerns will receive attention and resources. A unified Journalism/Communication department will have the highest demand from entering undergraduates at the university and will distinguish UMass regionally as the only flagship public university in the Northeast that offers a field of study in these combined areas.

Support levels for part-time faculty were emphasized as critical in operating the proposed department at the current size. Resources appear sufficient to support the proposed program at a level of high quality. The cost of advising the new load of incoming and continuing students in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences was also stressed as a challenging area for future resource allocation. Greater visibility to potential majors remained an open question. We were somewhat concerned about the funding of part-time faculty on which the Journalism Department has depended to meet its large instructional load. We were assured that funding for these teaching resources came directly from the Provost's Office and thus would be available at some level to

**the new combined department. Otherwise, we did not find any substantial new costs or risks associated with the merger. The program resonates with the announced mission of the university to build upon its existing talent while expanding the supply side of attractive courses, programs, and professors.**

**The Program & Budget Council voted unanimously (one recused) to approve the consolidation of Journalism and Communication.**

**MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Consolidation of the Departments of Journalism and  
37-04 Communication, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 04-033.**