

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL
pertaining to
REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Presented at the 520th
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I. Background

The Provost's "*Report of the Academic Program Review*" (The APR Report) was submitted to the Academic Priorities Council (APC) through the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate is asked to deliberate and make recommendations regarding the Report to the Provost by March 1, 1996.

As noted by the Provost's cover letter to Colleagues (undated) accompanying The APR Report, early in 1995 the Board of Trustees mandated that the administration on each campus perform an Academic Program Review in which "each campus should categorize its academic programs into three groups: those to receive more resources in the future, those to receive stable resources, and those to receive fewer resources." Four criteria were to be used in making resource allocation decisions, namely: cost, demand, quality and centrality. Similar resource plans were prepared by all campuses using individually constructed indicator measures for the same four criteria. The Amherst campus resource reduction decisions were generally outlined for the Trustees at their meeting in December 1995 by the Chancellor. A Trustee motion (T95-131) authorizes the President, through the Chancellors, to implement the outcomes of the review process on each campus. Implementation at Amherst has been deferred until the campus has held appropriate discussions and the Faculty Senate has made recommendations, at least until March 1, 1996.

II. Introduction

The APC met three times during the past four weeks. Representatives of programs slated for resource reduction in The APR Report and members of the Rules Committee were invited to attend the first of these meetings that was held on January 17, 1996.

We recognize that the Trustee mandated activity and its product, The APR Report, are distinct from the ongoing "strategic planning" process on campus. Furthermore, we support the Provost's efforts to consider in her deliberations the documents produced during strategic planning as well as summaries prepared by Programs in response to the Department Profiles.

Nonetheless, the APR exercise is an intrusive one during an ongoing strategic planning process that was undertaken at the behest of the Trustees themselves. The time required to develop indicator measures for the four mandated criteria and to collect and correct the data for Department Profiles left no time for discussion of the proposed actions with the affected departments prior to the release of the APR Report. Had there been such time allotted, many of the modifications to the proposed actions that we suggest might have been amicably agreed upon. Also, the listing of resource reduction actions in a public document accomplishes little, but adds hurtful consequences to the APR process. Constituencies beyond the campus view programs simply as "on" or "not on" the list and often make subsequent choices with that impression in mind. Stating that the programs listed still fit the mission of a comprehensive flagship land grant campus, which they do, or that their faculties and staffs are of a caliber equal to those in other departments, which they are, cannot undo the genuine feelings of shock and bewilderment among those affected. Much of the bewilderment arises from the emphasis placed

on the Department Profiles themselves during the Fall of 1995 combined with the inadequacy of the measures as guideposts for choices. The responses of affected departments and others raise important concerns about the program evaluation process, implications of program size and the philosophy of leadership. These should be revisited by the campus community after the immediate task of responding to the APR Report is completed.

There is an opportunity to make productive use of the APR exercise by employing it as a catalyst for appropriate "strategic implementations" that are expected to result from campus planning. We, therefore, emphasize that resource actions taken on the basis of The APR Report must be consistent with the likely configuration of campus resources that will result from that longer term planning process in which the role of the faculty and campus administration is more highly vested. We also emphasize that some actions proposed on the basis of The APR Report cannot productively proceed without their reconsideration and possible integration within the process and procedures of long-term strategic planning.

III. Analysis of the Report of the Academic Program Review

[FORMAT NOTE: The actions proposed in the APR Report are displayed in *italics* in this section. Numbers are assigned for clarity of presentation and do not correspond to the format of the APR Report. Recommendations from the APC for modification of those actions, if any, appear in boldface with the letter "A" after the number corresponding to the action.]

The significance of School/College strategic planning can be seen in the fact that several productive actions called for in The APR Report are either already underway or are scheduled to begin as a result of strategic planning processes. Some other proposals in the report were not generated in departmental plans but are considered by the APC to be consistent with the directions and process of strategic planning. These actions stated in the APR Report are:

1. *a consolidation of Art History with Art;*
2. *a consolidation of Statistics campus-wide through the USTAT proposal;*
3. *the transfer of Microbiology to CFNR;*
4. *the merger of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research with Mechanical Engineering;*
5. *a suspension of action on the approval process for a Ph.D. program in Hotel, Restaurant and Travel Administration.*

The remaining actions listed in The APR Report should not be implemented without further review and comment at the level of the School or College in the strategic planning process. The meeting of the APC with various representatives of the affected departments and follow-up discussions have suggested several ways in which the Provost's proposals might be modified to be consistent with the strategic planning process.

The APR Report proposes that:

6. *the Labor Relations and Research Center (LRRC) develop relationship with other department(s) to strengthen graduate program.*

Our analysis suggests that the LRRC should be reviewed alongside similar interdisciplinary programs and not dissimilar units in the context of The APR Report. The LRRC has, in fact, established strong ties with other existing graduate programs. The APC's recommendation is to:

6A. Refer recommendations to continue to strengthen Labor Relations & Research Center relationships with other departments and graduate programs to the units involved.

Two proposals in the APR Report are ambiguous with respect to attrition, namely:

7. *Plant and Soil Sciences - reduce size of faculty;*
8. *Marketing - modest reduction in faculty.*

The APR Report states that these will be gradual and selective, but identifies no end points. Because of this ambiguity, it is impossible to support these actions. Therefore, we recommend that the strategic planning process be used to:

7A. Determine whether further attrition in Plant and Soil Sciences is appropriate;
8A. Determine whether further attrition in Marketing is appropriate.

Discussion of some proposals in the report is likely to produce results consistent with strategic planning. The APR Report proposes:

9. *Entomology - consider consolidation with another department and stop admission to undergraduate major;*
10. *Plant pathology - consolidate with Microbiology and stop admission to undergraduate and graduate majors.*

Consideration of consolidation must recognize the importance of each discipline at the graduate level as well as the importance of the outreach activities of each. Consolidations that ensure the continuation of those components should be addressed through strategic planning. We urge that planning be used to:

9A. Identify a consolidation for Entomology that maintains the identity and thrust of graduate research and outreach efforts.
10A. Identify a consolidation for Plant Pathology, perhaps with Microbiology, that maintains the identity of the Plant Pathology graduate program, perhaps through efforts to establish a Plant Biotechnology graduate program, and preserves the undergraduate program as a track within the new department.

Two other actions proposed in The APR Report have not sufficiently involved those potentially affected to determine an optimal restructuring plan. Namely:

11. *Judaic and Near Eastern Studies - consolidate with History;*

12. Slavic Languages and Literatures - stop admission to all programs; close department; continue language instruction through CSLA

While Judaic and Near Eastern Studies may be a candidate for consolidation, the proposed consolidation with History is not viewed by the departments involved as optimal. The elimination of Slavic Languages and Literatures is not compatible with the role of the Amherst campus. A merger between Judaic and Near Eastern Studies and Slavic Languages and Literatures is of potential interest to the departments and might be preferable to the actions proposed in The APR Report. This discussion should be referred back to the strategic planning process at the appropriate levels. We recommend that those involved:

11A. Consider alternative consolidations that would preserve the identity and mission of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies;

12A. Consider consolidation as an alternative to elimination for Slavic Languages and Literatures.

The APR Report also states:

13. Nutrition - stop admissions to M.S. and Ph.D. programs and consider merger with Exercise Science.

The proposal to stop admissions to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in Nutrition is not consistent with unit or school plans. However, a proposal for consolidation of the Ph.D. program of Nutrition within an interdisciplinary Nutritional Sciences doctoral program was approved by the Trustees in 1991. This discussion, too, should be referred back to the strategic planning process at the appropriate levels. We recommend as follows:

13A. Do not stop admissions to Nutrition graduate programs. Maintain the M.S. program within the department and consolidate the Ph.D. program into an interdisciplinary Nutritional Sciences doctoral program. Defer consideration of a merger with Exercise Science.

Similarly, The APR Report proposes:

14. Consumer Studies - stop admission to the graduate program.

This action to stop admissions to the graduate program in Consumer Studies is also not fully consistent with unit plans. However, the development of an interdisciplinary graduate program, in which the department would play a leading role, might replace the existing degree program. It is important to maintain continuity in the Department's graduate program during such a development. We recommend that:

14A. Admissions to the Consumer Studies graduate program should not be stopped before implementation of an interdisciplinary graduate program.

The remaining actions proposed in The APR Report are opposed by the Programs

affected and/or differ from the strategic plans of the individual departments and their Schools or Colleges. In one case the APC understands that the recommended action has been withdrawn by the Provost based on clarification of the profile data. We concur and recommend:

15A. that the recommendation to stop admissions to Art Education be deleted.

The appropriate action regarding the remaining actions proposed in the APR Report is to return all of them to the planning process for further consideration. These should not be implemented as components of the Trustee APR until each has been discussed at the School or College level and, if necessary, submitted to governance procedures. It is paramount to the success of the strategic planning process, implemented at the behest of the Trustees, that the APR proposals be thus regarded within the context of strategic planning. It is essential to the collegial and successful implementation of such actions that they proceed through the faculty governance structure with due consideration.

The five APR Report actions in this category are:

- *Art - reduce or eliminate specializations if capital campaign cannot address facilities needs;*
- *Asian Languages and Literatures - opportunity for joint 5-campus or 5-college major in Japanese and/or Chinese;*
- *French & Italian - stop admission to Ph.D. in French;*
- *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology - consider association with Chemistry or Biology;*
- *Food Science - stop admission to undergraduate major unless enrollment increases.*

Seven “Notes” that are included in the APR Report are distinct from specific proposed actions. A summary of each of these Notes appears below. The “Notes” concern either the implementation of proposed actions or the ongoing campus strategic planning process, or both. This is especially true for the first Note concerning Language instruction, and so we have commented on that specific Note.

These APR Notes pertain to the department, program or School/College shown in italics and underlined below. The text of each Note is summarized:

Languages: a shift of all first and second year language instruction from the current departmental base into a program within the Center for the Study of Language Acquisition (CSLA).

- APC comment: No CSLA exists, nor has any proposal for its creation been presented except for one from the Linguistics Department for a research center for the study of first language acquisition. The inclusion of the CSLA in the APR does not follow from anything else in that document or in the strategic planning documents. Any consideration of the establishment of such a center needs to follow normal governance procedures and should emerge from consultation with the departments involved.

Journalism: the course of action proposed is closer study with the goal of maintaining strengths

that exist in the Department.

School of Education: it is anticipated that internal reorganization of the school into departments will lead to reallocations within the school

College of Engineering: continued investment in Engineering with the clear expectation that those investments will bear fruit in the years ahead.

School of Management: the AACSB re-accreditation noted some areas of concern related to levels of campus investment in the School.

Applied Management Programs: it is time for faculty in management and the applied management areas (of CFNR) to bring their programs into closer coordination.

Public Health: three new departments were established in 1995 and profile data did not exist for the new units. Therefore, the combined Public Health area within the School of Public Health and Health Sciences was considered as a single entity.

**MOVED: That the Faculty Senate endorse the Special Report of the Academic
26-96 Priorities Council pertaining to the Report of the Academic Program
 Review, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 96-026.**