Academic Affairs Annual Report
1996-1997

- **Computer Plan**
  - Senate convened task force to review university computer plan
  - the task force:
    - suggested that we *shop* for both hardware & admin software
    - suggested that we consider migrating all computing off mainframe to more cost-effective unix workstations
    - identified $4.5 million of savings in basic computing hardware alone
    - recommended that the plan be rethought . . . (see attached memo)
  - outcome
    - existing computer admin very resistant to our suggestions
    - competing admin software vendors were reluctantly brought in for review
    - new v.p. was brought in to administer university computing
    - new v.p. finds that:
      - regrettably, it is "now" (February 1997) too late for administrative mainframe --> unix migration
      - we have to upgrade before the "year 2000" problem hits
      - we could have done it in Aug/Sep 96 (when we proposed this)
      - academic computing will migrate to unix workstation
      - shopping & pressuring vendors nonetheless saves millions of $:
        - IBM mainframe cost was halved, saving $2 million
        - academic computing will go on Sun, rather than IBM workstation of original plan
          - the Sun provides twice the CPU power at half the price, saving $500,000
          - the new plan costs $5.7 million to do what the original plan did for $14 million, saving $8 million
        - net savings will be less than $8 million, since the new plan explicitly budgets things left out of original plan

- **Core Curriculum oversight**
  - CC Oversight Committee asked us to review CC Prologue & Goals
  - Action: tabled upon discovery that the Provost had convened a task force to review the Core Curriculum

- **Mergers/Discontinuance**
  - *"Slash & Burn" document prescribes that:*
    - Senate receives from the Dean/Provost:
      - a rationale for proposed merger
      - a summary of faculty responses to merger proposal
    - Senate responds with:
      - suggestions for alternatives
• a summary of overlooked consequences
  ▪ this assessment requires more info than explicitly provided above
  ▪ this considerably widens our scope, if we wish

○ Procedural concerns
  ▪ affected faculty should have the "Slash & Burn" document at the outset of any merger/discontinuance being considered
  ▪ faculty should take care to document any concerns in writing to Dean/Provost
  ▪ merger guidelines are not being followed assiduously
    ▪ faculty have been unsure where they are in process
    ▪ Provost has not been
      ▪ addressing proposed alternatives (SLIS & NC)
      ▪ providing a specific rationale (SLIS)
      ▪ involving faculty at key phases (NC)
  ▪ should Academic Affairs annotate "Slash & Burn" to make it easier to follow?
  ▪ President Amy Ward requested supplementary info from Provost for future mergers

○ SLIS - School of Library & Information Studies
  ▪ reviewed proposal to merge SLIS w/College of Communication
  ▪ iterated twice w/Provost on documentation
  ▪ residual concerns:
    ▪ rationale left in poorly documented state
    ▪ left this issue outstanding, since it was an amicable merger

○ New College
  ▪ reviewed proposal to merge NC w/College of Arts & Sciences
  ▪ Three memos attached:
    ▪ Provost -> Senate
    ▪ our response to Provost's proposal
    ▪ Provost's response to our response
  ▪ we need to respond to Provost's 14 April memo
  ▪ residual concerns
    ▪ New College faculty still (14 April) not included in high level discussions
    ▪ must respond a.s.a.p. to Provost memo of 14 April
    ▪ still no discussion of alternatives by Provost
    ▪ for new mergers, suggest Provost or Dean convene a Task Force to review alternatives

• Medical withdrawals
  ○ concern was expressed by HES Asst. Dean Boschung that medical withdrawals were being abused by students
  ○ Action: tabled upon discovery that this issue came before the senate previously:
    ▪ Student Affairs Committee found that
      ▪ few students are allegedly involved
      ▪ it is difficult to corroborate abuse
- so leave the issue alone
  - Student Affairs did discover that medical withdrawals cannot be retroactive, which inappropriately constrains withdrawals due to psychological problems

- **Entrepreneurial Summer School**
  - for at least 4-5 years, faculty have been clamoring for a more entrepreneurial summer school:
    - would like more faculty control over number of course offerings & salary
    - if summer courses are constrained to pay for themselves, why should there be external limits upon kind & number?
  - Action: tabled upon discovery that the Provost had convened a curriculum task force which will discuss this issue, as well

- **Plus/Minus grading system**
  - received request to abandon +/- system due to alleged discrimination against students with A- grades: they can never get 4.0, since A+ does not contain quality point
  - Action: initially tabled upon discovery that the Provost had convened a recruitment & retention task force which was discussing this (but see below)

- **Data Management Task Force memo review**
  - Action: none
    - technical issues out of our general expertise
    - general goals of consolidating & unifying university-wide data bases seems laudable

- **Review of Recruitment & Retention task force report**
  - Plus/Minus grading system
    - committee emphasizes that any proposed changes to grading system must be brought before the faculty & voted upon
    - reached consensus for retaining +/- system with a 4.0 cap
      - this addresses the "A- problem"
      - remaining drawback:
        - it's possible to have 4.0 GPA even w/ at least one B+ grade
  - issues to discuss with Randy Dahl:
    - +/- grading system
    - consolidation/centralization of scholarship bestowal
      - how about clearinghouse, rather than centralized control ?
      - how is Dahl in a better position to award departmental scholarships ?
    - withdrawal
    - incompletes
    - recruiting
      - what we do now not described in task force memo
      - do we direct mail candidates soon & often enough ??
  - a report to Provost should be sent by end of spring semester

- **Outstanding Issues**
○ Mergers
  ▪ respond to 14 April Provost memo on New College merger
  ▪ recommend that Task Forces be invoked to explore alternatives at the outset of any new merger initiative

○ Recruitment & retention task force report
  ▪ meet w/Randy Dahl (& Ann Webb ?) before spring semester over
    ▪ centralizing of scholarships idea should go to Financial Affairs committee
    ▪ include them in our meeting w/Dahl?
  ▪ send report to Provost by end of spring semester

○ Solicit update on Articulation/General Studies Agreement
  ▪ how does our new core layer on the State core ?
  ▪ can the professional schools accommodate both cores ?
  ▪ are textbooks prescribed at the State level ?
  ▪ resist the attempt to have 60 hours prescribed in GS

○ Entrepreneurial Summer School
  ▪ check on mandate of Provost's curriculum task force to make sure this will be discussed

○ Classroom teaching technology
  ▪ promote new University-wide committee to discuss/disseminate the use of new teaching technology in the classroom, distance learning, etc.