

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.