

MEMO

TO: Provost Nancy Barrett

FROM: Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs

RE: Proposed merger of New College with College of Arts & Sciences

CC:

The Faculty Senate Committee for Academic Affairs has very carefully reviewed your memo of 6 March 1997 regarding the proposed merger of New College with the College of Arts & Sciences. The "*Principles and Procedures for Merger or Discontinuance of Academic Units*" document states that we should receive a rationale for the proposed merger and a summary of responses received from affected faculty. We in turn are to identify "overlooked consequences" and/or suggest alternatives.

To help us identify overlooked consequences, we asked (in a 25 February memo from Faculty Senate President Amy Ward) for specific kinds of information to be included in your merger proposal, much of which you were able to provide. However, there was no impact assessment describing how a newly constituted New College may function in Arts & Sciences, and how Arts & Sciences may accommodate New College. We understand that the involuntary nature of this proposed merger may have prevented such an impact assessment, but nonetheless, there are fundamental outstanding issues that must be explored concretely before we can properly assess the proposal.

In an attempt to clarify issues and make a preliminary impact assessment ourselves, we met separately with you (19 March), New College faculty member Dr. Ed Passerini (21 March) and Dean Yarbrough (25 March). We also invited Dr. Richard Diehl to these meetings, since he chairs the recently convened Arts & Sciences committee which is assessing the possible impact of such a merger. Numerous additional meetings and conversations with New College faculty and students and with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee were also held.

In our 19 March meeting with you, our most pressing concerns were:

1. to clarify whether a merger is proposed or a merger leading to a discontinuance;
 - you were very clear that this is a merger proposal and that the existing faculty positions would persist (subject to the usual caveats regarding fiscal climate, change of leadership, etc.)
2. to point out the lack of an Arts & Sciences impact assessment;
 - you had little information available because the parties involved had not had sufficiently concrete discussions
3. to elicit your thoughts on how New College might function within Arts & Sciences;
 - you suggested several possible scenarios for how the curricular freedom of New College

might be accommodated within Arts & Sciences

4. to emphasize the absence of any discussion of New College's proposed alternatives to your proposal
(the lack of such discussion, coupled with the wording of President Sorensen's February 4 memo to the Board of Trustees [i.e. his persistent use of "will," rather than "would"], encourages a sense of the merger being a *fait accompli*, rather than a proposal)

In our subsequent meetings with Dr. Passerini and Dean Yarbrough, it became clear that the key principals need to meet as soon as possible to work out how New College would operate within Arts & Sciences. The current state of negotiations is too preliminary for us to be able to assess the consequences. In particular, some of the key issues to be clarified include:

1. would future students experience any new constraints on the formation of their "depth studies?"
2. how many hours would students be able to take outside of Arts & Sciences?
3. how many students would be able to enroll in the program in the future?
4. what would be the constraints, if any, on course development?
5. what would be the criteria for faculty promotion, tenure & raises?
6. would the program's admission standards continue to be self-determined?
7. what would happen to the endowment of New College?
8. would there continue to be a curricular relationship with the External Degree Program?
9. what would be the financial impact upon Arts & Sciences?

We believe these unresolved issues are fundamental. We urge that the principal parties engage in more concrete discussions of the mechanics and consequences of the proposed merger.

We look forward to receiving more detailed information on how New College would function within Arts & Sciences. Without this information, we cannot properly evaluate the consequences of this merger proposal. We trust this merger will not go forward until the Senate receives this necessary information for its mandated consideration under the "*Principles and Procedures for Merger or Discontinuance of Academic Units.*"

Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs:

Raymond White (co-chair)
Peggy Jessee (co-chair)
Pat Bauch
Pat Cotter
Selwyn Hollingsworth
Judith Kirkpatrick
Sharon O'Dair
Frank Page
Jim Richardson
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