

11-5-2010

## Faculty Senate Minutes - November 5, 2010

USM Faculty Senate

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**The University of Southern Mississippi**  
**Faculty Senate**  
**Minutes for November 5, 2010**  
**Ogletree House, Hattiesburg Campus**

Members Present and Represented (by proxy): M.A. Adams, H. Annulis, J. Bass (Miller), D. Beckett, J. Brannock, A. Branton, D. Bristol, B. Burgess, J. Burnett (Shin), C. Chatham, S. Clark, R. Conville, D. Daves, A. Davis, J. Ding (Horner), D. Fletcher, B. George, C. Goggin, A. Haley, T. Hartsell, S. Hauer, N. Howell, D. Lunsford, M. Lux, D. Masterson, C. McCormick, S. Oshrin, R. Pandey, S. Piland, C. Rakocinski, D. Redalje, T. Rehner, S. Reischman, A. Sevier, K. Shelley, J.H. Shin, D. Tingstrom, J. Wolfe.

Members Absent: L. Downey, K. Masters, C. Meyers, A. Young.

1.0 Call to order (2:20 pm)

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Sen. Haley wanted to add a discussion of the \$1000 award for vandalism. He also wanted to add a discussion regarding the retention awards. It was added under new business. Motion to approve the agenda by Dave Daves. Seconded. Motion carried.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

No discussion. Motion to approve the minutes by Jennifer Brannock. Seconded. Motion carried.

4.0 Guest Presentations and Reports –  
4.2 Provost Lyman

Dr. Lyman discussed the appeal process for program elimination. The process started two weeks ago and meets every Tuesday and Thursday evening. Nine appeals have been heard as of November 5. There is a lot of additional information coming from the programs. Each program has 45 minutes to present information about why the program should not be eliminated. After the presentation, the dean of the college where the program resides makes a statement of support or nonsupport and offers an alternate cut, if applicable. Everyone leaves the room after this to allow the panel to discuss the appeal but not vote. This portion of the proceedings is off the record. Voting is being deferred until after all appeals have been heard. The proceedings have been very orderly and civil. The first stage of the appeals should be complete by December 16.

Sen. Beckett stated that Dr. Lyman states at the onset of the appeal the remarks made by the UPC. He also remarked that the appellants are present when the dean offers a statement of support or nonsupport.

Sen. Conville asked about the retention awards. \$10,000 was awarded to the department in each college with the highest rate of returning students and the highest increase over the previous year. He commented this can upset morale at the university with the current budgetary climate. He also stated that it appeared that the data used considered graduates as non-returning students. He requested that the data be revisited to determine accuracy.

Dr. Lyman stated that the information came from Michelle Arrington, but earlier information was provided by Brett Kemker. He's not aware if it damages morale or not. The intention of the awards is to emphasize the value of retention. He agrees that the measures need to be evaluated, but these awards definitely got people talking about retention.

Sen. Conville commented that anything that increases competition between departments at this time may not be a good idea. We need to focus on focus on individual students without having to compete against each other.

Sen. Haley said that if the goal is to incentivize, then the departments should be given notice of such awards.

Sen. Rakocinski asked if retention was measured against interdepartmental absolutes or against levels of previous retention levels. Dr. Lyman stated that it was a combination of the two.

Sen. Redalje pointed out that he data was faulty and that students who graduated were considered to be dropouts. Sen. Haley remarked that it may be inadvisable to distribute this award if the data is incorrect.

Sen. Beckett asked about the football coach receiving a \$35,000 raise to \$685,000 a year. He stated that with him making ten times what most faculty members make, it does not make most USM employees feel that they we are all in the same situation. Russ Willis agrees that this is an understandable point of view. He remarked that lawyers had been negotiating that raise for six months. Dr. Lyman did point out that USM won the Holbrook Award for the highest graduation rate of male athletes. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

Sen. Fletcher asked if there are going to be mid-year budget cuts. Willis stated that he has not heard anything about that.

Willis stated that part of our E&G budget is called the education enhancement fund which is tied directly to tax revenue. They hold back and give us what they think we are going to get. Projections have held up every month this fiscal year. Last year this fund was behind what the IHL had projected. This is an indicator of the financial situation of the state.

Sen. Oshrin asked if there had been progress for saving money for retirements/furloughs. Willis stated that the hiring freeze will assist with retirements. He said that we have spent less money at this point in the fiscal year than last year which shows that the hiring freeze is making a difference. The proposal for the retirement incentive is on the November IHL agenda. Willis sees furloughs as being the very last option. He said that 200 people are eligible for the incentive. The person's salary will either be held for a year, or a person will have to be hired at a decreased salary.

Sen. Branton asked if this incentive only applies to those in PERS. Willis said that the legislation states that it can only be PERS, but we will have to see what the IHL says.

Sen. Bristol asked how many people have showed interest in retiring. Willis stated that a lot of people have asked about it, and he feels that we will have 100 people take advantage of the incentive. The deadline for submission is March 15.

Sen. Beckett asked if the \$500,000 grant received from student affairs was used for the retention awards. Willis stated that the money came from reserve funds.

## 5.0 Officer Reports

### 5.1 President (Davis)

#### 5.1.1 Communications (Meetings and Resolution Results)

Dr. Saunders responded to resolutions submitted by the Faculty Welfare Committee regarding dismissed employees. The resolution can be found at <http://www.usm.edu/fsenate/resolutions/Welfare%20Dismissed%20Employess%202010-2011.pdf>. The Executive Cabinet reviewed the resolution and decided the following regarding new services to dismissed employees:

1. Career Services will provide support for dismissed employees for up to one year.
2. Counseling service – Cannot accommodate this under the current staffing situation, but they are looking into the possibility of a part-time counselor to support an Employee Assistance Program.
3. The free classes offered to dismissed staff cannot be extended to their spouses or partners.

Sen. Davis stated that she spoke to the president of the Faculty Senate at the University of Mississippi. They have offered their assistance to help through the dismissals and appeal process.

## 5.2 Secretary

### 5.2.1 Documents and Records

Sen. Brannock provided an overview of the materials found on the Faculty Senate webpage and on the Senate's CampusHub presence. The Faculty Senate page includes membership (1998-2011), meeting dates and audio, officers (1998-2011), committees (1998-2011), minutes (1998-2011), reports (2000-2009), resolutions (1997-2011), and the current constitution and bylaws.

CampusHub contains much of the same information, in addition to working documents.

## 6.0 Committee Reports

### 6.1 Academic and Governance (Masters/Redalje/Shelley) – 15

#### 6.1.1 Reports

##### 6.1.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Piland attended the athletics committee. He believes that it may be quite limited on its scope. The Faculty Senate may want to reconsider involvement in this committee. He recommends that we invite Richard Giannani to speak to the Senate.

##### 6.1.1.2 Faculty Handbook (Lux)

Sen. Lux stated that the Faculty Handbook committee has not met yet. They are waiting on the final appointments to the committee. Sen. Beckett asked if she plans on bringing faculty handbook business to the Senate. She said that she would. He also remarked that the chair of the committee should not be elected by the body but should come from the faculty, not the deans.

#### 6.1.2 Charges and Current Issues

##### 6.1.2.1 Recommendations (Appeals; Internal Hiring; Strategic Planning; Retention Awards)

Sen. Redalje reported that they are working on a document to institutionalize the University Priorities Committee.

## 6.2 Budget (University) and RCM Model (Adams/Clark) – 15

### 6.2.1 Reports

#### 6.2.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Adams met with Tim Rehner and Bill Powell to look over the university budget. A great deal of the data can be pulled out of the budget. She discusses the need to move towards strategic eliminations of programs in future, if required. Perhaps colleges need to develop a mission plan.

The University has not decided on the formula for the RCM model at this point. It may be beneficial to look at departments going back three years to see how they would exist in an RCM environment.

Russ Willis stated that it took the University of Indiana at Bloomington three years to tweak their RCM formula. Sen. Adams remarked that we need to determine a way to exist in RCM without the fighting that may occur between departments.

## 6.2.2 Charges and Current Issues

### 6.2.2.1 Recommendations (Athletics; RCM; Institutional Comparison; Retirements)

Sen. Beckett mentioned that business majors are required to take philosophy classes. The College of Business is now going to offer a business ethics course. He is concerned that departments are going to start hiring faculty to teach specific courses, so that the money stays in their department when the university moves to RCM.

Sen. Redalje asked at what level will RCM be implemented. Willis stated that it has not been decided at this time, but that he anticipates that it will be at the college level.

Sen. Bristol asked where the Gulf Coast Campus would be evaluated. Willis said that that will be a big decision. The University of Indiana at Bloomington considered other campuses as standalone RCM units.

Sen. Daves asked who is going to make these decisions. Willis stated that it will ultimately be up to a committee to determine formulas, run models, and vet them. They will hold the departments harmless for a year or two until they determine the correct formula.

Sen. Conville noticed that the colleges who use RCM are larger than USM or private universities. He asked if we are looking at schools of similar size to USM. Willis stated that he did not know yet, but that many schools similar to USM are looking into it.

Sen. Redalje asked that if the coast is considered an RCM unit, will the coast be considered as one unit or will it be divided into the Gulf Coast Research Lab, Stennis, and Coast Campus. Willis said that it will be complicated for this very reason.

## 6.3 Constitution, Bylaws, and Elections (Burgess/Annulis) – 2

### 6.3.1 Reports

#### 6.3.1.1 Activities (Committee Meeting January 2011)

Sen. Burgess reported that the committee is working on revising the bylaws for elections.

## 6.4 Evaluation and Assessment (Fletcher/Reischman) – 10

### 6.4.1 Reports

#### 6.4.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Fletcher reported that he met with the Academic & Governance Committee to make certain that their activities are not redundant.

Sen. Reischman reported that the General Education Committee has widely distributed information on the periodic review of the general education curriculum to all chairs and directors.

Sen. Fletcher reported that he spoke with Sen. Oshrin about the administrative evaluations. Fletcher believes that upcoming evaluations will be administered online. May use an online survey tool for voting this year. The evaluations may be distributed through the departments rather than through the deans. There was debate about whether going online would increase or decrease the response rate.

## 6.5 Materials and Resources (Branton/Lux)

Sen. Branton reported that most of the committee's work has been via email. The Libraries has created a friends of the library group. She hopes that it will generate some activities that will benefit the library.

It was stated that the university ran out of money to finish the university website. Sen. Branton remarked that they will look into the current status of the website.

Sen. Branton stated that they are looking into alternatives for Turnitin. It has been renewed for this year, but open sources programs are being explored due to prices doubling next year. Sen. Haley stated that his department uses Turnitin a lot and that it has been very useful. Sen. Daves asked why the rate is doubling. Sen. Branton remarked that it was due to enhancements.

Sen. George said that the new computers coming from iTech are being loaded with Windows XP which is no longer supported by Windows. He wonders why the systems are not be loaded with the newer operating systems.

There was discussion about the cost of computers on campus and how we are limited to certain vendors. Sen. Burgess stated that the computers may be more expensive because the computers have an extended warranty.

#### 6.6 Research and Scholarship (Downey/Masterson)

Sen. Masterson reported that the committee met last month and prioritized Dr. Denis Weisenberg's Top 10 list. In the prioritization, the committee moved items that benefitted the entire university to the top with the more expensive things lower on the list.

#### 6.7 University Awards

##### 6.7.1 Reports

##### 5.7.2 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Brannock reported that the committee had met to discuss the HEADWAE Award. The committee recommended Steve Yuen as the recipient of the award.

The Grand Marshal-Distinguished Professor award committee will meet later in the month with the Excellence Awards to follow later.

#### 6.8 University Relations (Conville/Sevier) – 5

##### 6.8.1 Reports

##### 6.8.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

##### 6.8.1.2 Gulf Coast Faculty Council (Davis)

##### 6.8.1.3 Alumni Affairs (Scheduled Meeting)

##### 6.8.1.4 Committee on Committees (Haley)

##### 6.8.1.5 Student Affairs

##### 6.8.1.6 Legislative Affairs (Schedule Meeting; Annual Legislative Forum)

##### 6.8.1.7 University Foundation/Gifts (Scheduled Meeting)

Sen. Conville reported that the committee had met with Jerry DeFatta and Bob Pierce with meetings with Joe Paul and others to follow. They are trying to talk to those around campus who have knowledge and the ability to connect them with constituencies.

Legislative Forum is coming up on December 8 from 3:00-5:00 in the Cochran Center. Two Mississippi senators and three representatives will be present. Elected Forrest and Lamar County officials will also be invited.

- 6.9 University Welfare (Burnett/Haley)
  - 6.9.1 Reports
    - 6.9.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)
    - 6.9.1.2 University Health Initiatives
  - 6.9.2 Charges and Current Issues
    - 6.9.2.1 Recommendations (Resolution Review)

Sen. Haley discussed the resolution about benefits for dismissed employees. He discussed the elements that the Executive Cabinet had addressed (see 5.1.1). The committee is continuing to pursue health issues and will meet about the topic next week.

Sen. Bristol asked if the gulf coast campus can be included in the work of the welfare committee. He said that he cannot recall a resolution including the coast. Sen. Haley agreed to work on that. Sen. Rehner stated that in the past there have been discussions about assisting the coast.

- 7.0 New Business
  - 7.1 Academic Programs – University Priorities Committee (Rehner)
    - 7.1.1 Meetings and Outcomes
    - 7.1.2 Discussion

Sen. Rehner spoke to the Faculty Senate as a co-chair of the UPC. He stated that the UPC did not make the cuts. The Executive Cabinet made the cuts. He remarked that the evaluations were based only on the initiative report submitted by each area. All reports were read and processed in the same way. The reports were not divided into piles for the coast and Hattiesburg.

Sen. Rehner summarized a report on the strengths, weaknesses, concerns, and observations of the UPC. (See Appendix A)

Sen. Bristol stated that the Gulf Coast History department was Tier 4. He heard complaints at the Gulf Coast Faculty Council. He thinks that the UPC lacked input from the Gulf Coast faculty because they were not consulted on many of the initiative reports. It seemed that coast programs were consistently ranked lower by the UPC and the college councils.

Sen. Rehner stated that the UPC did not look at how the initiatives were written or disseminated. The UPC was unable to deal with initiatives where reports were never circulated to the departments.

Sen. Beckett stated that there were representatives from the coast on the UPC. One criterion was the size of the program. This is where coast initiatives could have been hurt. The recommendations from the UPC had very little to do with the final proposed eliminations.

Sen. Bristol said that some small non-degree departments were not evaluated. Sen. Rehner stated that if they are just teaching core classes then they were not evaluated.

Sen. Lunsford asked how the college committees were formed. He had heard that it was whoever was around in the summer. He asked if there is a list of the members on the college committees. Sen. Rehner said that the colleges determined the composition of the committees. He believes that the deans were tasked with forming the committees. Sen. Beckett stated that Science and Technology included department chairs and one additional person from each department.

Sen. Piland remarked that 85% of the reports from Human Performance and Recreation came back in Tier 1. The department is financially secure, so his department is wondering if there is a way for initiatives to received feedback from the UPC to determine how they need to improve. Sen. Shelley stated that the UPC members hope to be able to do that. Sen. Piland asked if innovative delivery methods were considered in evaluating and if additional consideration was

given to new initiatives. Sen. Rehner said that those were topics were included in the deliberations.

Sen. Rehner stated that departments put a lot of work into the reports, but that some had more information than others. He believes that the dean should have looked at the reports before they went to the UPC. With this process, some errors could have been caught prior to sending the UPC.

Sen. Rehner believes that either the administration or the UPC needs to be empowered to put pressure on departments that do not submit reports.

Sen. Bristol commented that a lot of careful thought went into the work of the UPC. He wondered if the administration understood the amount of work. Russ Willis stated that prioritizing the programs is different than balancing the budget which explains the differences between what was recommended by the UPC and what the cabinet recommended. The Executive Cabinet did take the process seriously, but there was a serious time constraint.

Sen. Beckett asked why Sen. Rehner and Bill Powell were not included in the room when the Cabinet went over the UPC report. They may have been able to answer questions. Willis stated that he was not a part of that conversation and did not know why they were not involved.

Sen. Haley asked what elements of the reports the departments need to pay special attention to in the future.

Sen. Rehner stated that recommendations need to be developed before we implement RCM. He hopes to be able to do this prior to the next meeting. In terms of the process, they did not know what the process was going to look like. Something needs to be added to the process for the time after the Provost and the President receive the rankings. Sen. Rehner commended the members of the committee stating that their work should make the faculty proud.

Sen. Fletcher asked if the UPC will meet before the next Faculty Senate meeting. He asked if non-UPC members can submit ideas. Sen. Rehner said that he would propose a meeting to Powell and that all ideas can be sent to Dr. Powell.

Sen. Fletcher asked if they are going to look at a time frame for the UPC process. Did the UPC look at any other possible assessment processes? Sen. Rehner stated that these are definitely issues that need to be looked at.

Sen. Rehner said that upper tiered initiatives should have a close connection with the USM strategic plan. He does realize that there are inequalities regarding resources between departments, initiatives, and colleges.

Sen. Haley discussed the \$1000 offer for leads to those who vandalized campus with “Impeach Saunders” written in chalk and spray paint. He thinks that \$1000 is disproportionate to the actions. More serious crimes reported in the Student Printz did not have a reward attached to them. He also believes that the administration is limiting political speech which Haley thinks we should encourage as an academic institution. There was a discussion about Faculty Senate drafting a letter to the Student Printz about the issue. Sen. Haley made a motion for the president of the faculty senate to send a letter to the Student Printz addressing the \$1000 reward. There was no second. Motion failed. It was determined that this should be brought up to the Executive Cabinet.

Sen. Conville makes a motion that the Academic and Governance Committee look into the retention awards. Seconded. Motion carried.

7.0 Adjournment

Sen. Piland moves to adjourn. Seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

# APPENDIX A

**University Priorities Committee  
Subcommittee on Academic Priorities (UPC-AP)  
Response to Faculty Senate Resolution of September 10, 2010**

Resolution from the Evaluation and Assessment Committee  
September 10, 2010

University-wide assessment and evaluation efforts with respect to University Priorities Committee (UPC) outcomes

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Whereas, we of the Faculty Senate were instrumental in the establishment of the University Priorities Committee (UPC) and believe that it is our responsibility to assess and improve the prioritization process, and . . .

Whereas, we of the Faculty Senate believe that it is imperative that current and future prioritization processes be integrated with University assessment and evaluation efforts, we . . .

Resolve that the UPC should provide a succinct process evaluation report as an archival resource including but not limited to:

1. Strengths of the process
2. Weaknesses of the process
3. Concerns
4. Observations for improvement

The UPC-AP respectfully submits the responses below to the Senate Resolution of September 10. The specifics of the UPC-AP process are available online at <http://www.usm.edu/upc/aps/procedures.php> and are attached at the end of this document.

## 1. Strengths of the Process

The strengths of the UPC-AP process through the submission of its report in August were multidimensional. They include the following:

- From the beginning, a faculty-defined process
- A focus on prioritization focusing on nine criteria and utilizing a broad set of data (see [http://www.usm.edu/ir/secure/UPC\\_Chairs/](http://www.usm.edu/ir/secure/UPC_Chairs/) from a computer on a USM network).
- Opportunities for chairs, directors and deans to seek clarification of process issues.
- Development of an in-depth review of academic initiatives across the university.
  - Generation of and access to datasets that provided deep and in many instances new insights into academic endeavors.
  - Opportunities to provide input via reports at the department and initiative levels, with the encouragement of faculty involvement in the preparation of those reports.
    - Most departments/schools provided serious and informative reports (however, see below)
  - Development of increased departmental self awareness and of the need for the reorganization and clarification of academic initiatives
- Participation in that prioritization that included college committees and deans in addition to UPC-AP committee members.
  - Ten members of the faculty served on the UPC-AP, along with two administrators, two students and a representative of the Staff Council.
  - The college committees were completely comprised of faculty members (including some chairs)
  - The three reviewing bodies (UPC-AP, college committees and deans) were to independently rate initiatives
- The university community well represented within the UPC-AP
  - A conscientious, mutually respectful group of individuals that engaged in careful and lengthy deliberations with multiple levels of review.
  - Considerable ‘collective wisdom’ about the university brought to the work of the committee from representatives from across the university.
- The rating of initiatives based on priorities beyond a simple economic focus

## 2. Weaknesses of the Process

Weaknesses of the UPC-AP process include the following:

- Constraints of time
  - The scope of the process, while it entailed just under eight months, was of such enormity that more time might have contributed to an even more refined result
    - More time, for example, might have allowed for less dependence on review teams within UPC to provide initial rating recommendations
- Constraints of purpose
  - It became apparent to the committee as it increasingly engaged in its work that a prioritization process is not synonymous with a budget reduction process, though the former should certainly inform the latter.
- Constraints of personnel
  - While the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provided critical support to the process, release time for key committee members would have contributed to the work of the committee.
- Lack of serious participation in the process by certain departments, resulting in flawed, inadequate, and, in some few but notable instances, missing reports
  - The UPC-AP was not perceived by some to have final definitional authority
  - Deans should have reviewed departmental and initiative reports before submission to the UPC-AP
  - In some instances, departmental faculty were not involved with the preparation of the reports nor aware of what had been submitted on behalf of the department.
- Related to the previous point, a perceived lack of support by the upper administration to require engagement and compliance with UPC-AP processes
  - Incomplete or missing reports, though comparatively few, should not have been allowed.
- A need for the committee to have met with Provost on a regular basis
  - In hindsight, such meetings might have provided better insight for the work of the committee and for the understanding of the committee's report
- Few requests for clarification and feedback from the Executive Cabinet after the prioritization information report was submitted
  - UPC-AP information not serving as a primary 'rudder' for budget cut decisions
- The un-workability of the appeals process outlined in the Faculty Senate proposal for the UPC

## 3. Concerns

- The seemingly diminished influence of the work of the committee on the budget reduction decisions
- The degree of impact of the reduction decisions on academics
- Role of UPC going forward
  - Concerns that the process will be discontinued
  - If continued,
    - Degree of committee input on university priorities
    - Degree of committee leverage/authority to improve quality of programs, issues of which emerged as a result of the UPC-AP process

- Nature of committee responsibility to request amended/improved reports from those departments that responded inadequately last spring

#### **4. Observations for Improvement**

Most of the areas of improvement for the function of the UPC-AP are implied within the responses to *weaknesses* and *concerns*. Possibilities for improvement include the following:

- A process of this scope benefits from adequate time. The committee needs to continue and enhance its work, with a closer connection to strategic planning, especially if the committee is to inform any budget cuts beyond Fiscal Year 2012.
- More and more substantive interaction with the upper administration on work of the committee, with a concomitant commitment from the Cabinet for serious and informed consideration of committee recommendations.
- The development of a more standard process within college committees to avoid the occurrence of ratings cluster at the higher end of scales

Approved by the UPC-AP on October 29, 2010

## Attachment

### **UPC – Academic Priorities Processes August 2010**

It was with great sadness and many sleepless nights that the University Priorities Committee – Academic Priorities subcommittee submitted its prioritization listing to the Executive Cabinet. The priorities recommended therein could without question change the University of Southern Mississippi from what we know it to be. The members of the subcommittee that invested of themselves tirelessly over the last seven months have wrestled and struggled with the ever present awareness that the result of their work would significantly affect their colleagues sitting across from them in committee meetings, their colleagues on all the Southern Miss campuses, the professional staff with whom they work, and their students.

The prioritizing process was difficult, long and trying at best. Many sacrifices were made by each committee member. A categorization of initiatives into tiers has been presented to administration. And while the process to date has involved input from across campus, the most difficult days are yet ahead as the University implements budgetary reductions – drawing, we anticipate, on the final recommendations for prioritization from the UPC-AP.

At the outset of the work in January the charge to the members of the committee was to be “citizens of the university.” The representatives who served on this committee were absolutely, university citizens. Individuals were not agents of their departments or initiatives. Committee members were collegial, respectful and courageous. They were an impressive group of individuals that represented the university admirably. Their energy and discipline for completing the work on top of their regular jobs or during their summers was clearly motivated by individual and collective commitments to this great university.

#### **Report Generation Process**

The charge for the subcommittee by President Saunders was to prioritize the academic efforts of this university. The process involved creating a process for collecting narrative/qualitative data from all the recognized academic initiatives across this incredibly complex university. The UPC-AP relied on a data informed process. Consistent quantitative data for all academic initiatives had to be created and distributed to all chairs and deans. The Office of Institutional Research was instrumental in generating new and reformulating existing datasets in order to provide consistent information for the entire academic enterprise of the university, with departments provided the opportunity to review the data for accuracy. Many of these datasets had never been readily available to anyone in the university and provided new insights into the academic endeavors of the institution. In addition to numerous institution-wide data reports, each department had a corresponding 25-page tabbed spreadsheet for a total of nearly 8,000 worksheets of data (the collective, university-wide data file for these worksheets was 3mb in size!)

The subcommittee utilized the concept of the academic ‘initiative’ as its basic unit for review. Most initiatives corresponded to academic degree plans, but the essential characteristic for an initiative was a 12 credit hours distinctiveness from other initiatives. Both licensure programs and degree offerings on the Coast were considered as initiatives for report submission and subsequent review. The processes for identifying initiatives, specifying the criteria for evaluation, generating the report formats and then evaluating the submitted reports and data were developed through numerous UPC-AP meetings over the course of the spring 2010 semester, along with a systematic procedure for prioritizing (please see below for details about the analysis process).

- Initiative Identification: As part of the data review in early March, chairs were asked to respond to a listing of potential initiatives, identifying those that were not included as well as providing

rationales for those that should not be considered initiatives. The next stage was for the deans and chairs together to provide further justification to the subcommittee for the inclusion or exclusion of initiatives, with the UPC-AP having the final determination. This process was completed, except for a few exceptions, by early April.

- Determination of Criteria for Prioritization Review: The subcommittee relied substantially on Robert Dickeson's work, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* (2010) in the selection of criteria for the evaluation of criteria; it also drew on similar prioritization work done at Humboldt State University and Drake University, among others. After considerable discussion and review, the subcommittee settled on the ten criteria included and described more fully in the report templates available at <http://www.usm.edu/upc/aps/criteria.php> :
  - Initiative history, mission, & goals
  - Consistency with University mission, vision, values, & goals
  - External demand
  - Internal demand
  - Size & scale of the initiative
  - Student engagement and retention
  - Initiative Quality
  - Cost analysis (see note below)
  - Impact, justification, uniqueness & overall essentiality
  - Opportunity analysis

For the evaluation of initiatives, subcommittee adopted a 1-5 rating scale and weighted the criteria differentially, as set out in the weighting document available at <http://www.usm.edu/upc/aps/criteria.php>.

- Concurrently with the selection of criteria, the two report templates were being developed, one for a contextualizing departmental report and one to be used for each initiative. The departmental level report was made available to departments on March 30, with the availability of the initiative level report following on April 12, except for Criterion VIII -Cost Analysis (see below). The departmental level report and the initiative reports for each department were due electronically to Institutional Research on May 3.

Throughout the semester and the processes outlined above, a number of information sessions were held with the chairs and directors of academic units to provide clarification and solicit feedback. Such sessions were held on March 4, March 11, March 25, and April 8, with an optional meeting on April 22.

The submitted reports and their supporting datasets and other documents were posted by department on a webpage within Institutional Research webspace that was accessible to the UPC-AP subcommittee, the college priorities committees, deans, Provost and the President. The reports and datasets were available for review on May 18, with rating due back from those reviewing bodies by June 18.

Note on Criterion VIII – Cost Analysis. At the outset of its work, most members of the UPC-AP thought that the inclusion of a criterion analyzing the cost of an initiative would be a critical component of the prioritization process. By the end of its work this summer, it became apparent that the process had actually been strengthened without the cost information. The other nine criteria provided more valuable insight as to the merit of an initiative and did so without the distraction of a cost analysis.

Still, work done towards providing a dataset for a cost analysis provided information that is both enlightening and useful for further work in determining the financial viability of initiatives. For example, whereas in the past tuition revenues for departments had relied on the ‘book value’ of the tuition for a student credit hour (e.g., \$213 for an undergraduate SCH in 2009-10), the actual net tuition received is

significantly different. Various factors come into play in determining a net tuition figure, including the following:

- The effect of the tuition plateau, whereby 19 undergraduate hours cost the same as 12 hours
- Distributions made to auxiliaries and other operations (e.g., Athletic Association, Health Services, University Libraries, the Union), which total approximately 14% of recognized tuition
- The effect of E&G funded scholarships, which result in a discounted tuition (e.g., the FY2011 budget for undergraduate academic scholarships alone is \$6.936 million, while an additional \$6.950 million is allocated to undergraduate non-resident waivers)

One analysis of net tuition for undergraduates suggested that the actual figure, rather than \$213 per credit hours for 2009-10, was closer to \$155 (and that figure is a somewhat generous estimate). Similar, though still preliminary, work done on graduate enrollment suggests that in some programs, students were paying close to the \$284 per credit hour rate, while in others the rate was less than \$16 per credit hour, once assistantship resident tuition scholarships and nonresident tuition waivers were factored in.

### **UPC-AP Rating Process**

The three reviewing bodies (UPC-AP, college priorities committees, and deans) followed the same rating process. A score was assigned to each of nine criteria. Scores ranged from 1=Inadequate/Unsatisfactory/Peripheral to 5=Exceptional/Excellent/Essential and were entered into a locked Excel spreadsheet provided to each of the three reviewing bodies. Each criterion was given a weight of 1, 2, or 3 according to the UPC rating system, posted at <http://www.usm.edu/upc/aps/criteria.php>. These weightings were applied automatically via the Excel spreadsheet and an overall score generated.

Each dean and each college committee developed their respective processes by which to evaluate the initiative reports. The raw and weighted scores from the dean and college committees were submitted independently to Institutional Research.

The UPC-AP subcommittee conducted its review of the academic initiatives prior to receiving or viewing any of the dean and college committee ratings so as to conduct an independent assessment. The UPC process involved the use of five teams of three UPC members each, each team being responsible for approximately 60 separate initiative reports. No team member reviewed any initiative within his/her own department. Each team member individually reviewed the departmental and initiative reports and assigned scores before convening as a team to discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives. Discussion focused on each of the nine criteria separately. While variability across team members was anticipated, any substantial discrepancies prompted a second review of that initiative or criterion. The review of the department and initiative reports was supplemented by IR data for that initiative and, indeed, in cases in which initiatives did not provide reports or when certain criteria were not addressed, IR data were crucial in assigning a rating to that criterion.

Once the team members' ratings were submitted individually to IR, the average overall team rating was calculated. During multiple full UPC-AP meetings, each team presented its own report for each initiative; justification and rationale for the criterion scores were provided as well. Once all questions from non-team members were addressed, the committee as a whole voted whether or not to approve the team rating and whether a rating needed further review. Committee members were not present in the conference room when these ratings discussions focused on their respective home department.

*Analysis of the Data:* Subsequent to the UPC-AP review of the initiatives, IR generated a spreadsheet of initiative scores from each of UPC, deans, and college committees. There was a statistically significant relationship among the UPC, dean, and college scores for all colleges except in the College of Business.

An overall (summed) score was created according to the following weighting formula: UPC rating counted twice, dean and college committee each counted once.

In addition to the weighted sum, an average score was also calculated.

Statistical analyses revealed that the three bodies' scores on the initiatives were significantly different from each other, with deans *generally* rating initiatives within his/her own college higher than did other bodies. To compensate for the different groups applying the rating scale differently, each of the groups' raw scores were converted to z (standard) scores. Following the same weighting system (UPC X 2, Dean X 1, College X 1), an average z-score was calculated.

Analyses were also conducted to investigate whether within the UPC teams' ratings were different from each other. With few exceptions, there were no differences. Acknowledging the rare instances in which teams' ratings were different from each other (different teams reviewed different initiatives), no adjustments were made as it was not possible to determine if these differences resulted from different approaches to scoring or reflected actual differences in the initiatives assigned to teams.

In addition to the three raw scores, the summed weighted score, the three z-scores, and the average z-score for each initiative, rankings were also applied across all initiatives in the University. Each initiative was also assigned rankings within its own college: dean's rank, college committee's rank, and UPC-AP rank as well as an overall rank. Statistical analyses revealed that rankings from the three bodies were significantly correlated to each other.

UPC-AP also examined the data and determined that there were no statistically significant differences in the overall ratings or rankings based on college.

### *The Prioritizing Process*

In making decisions about initiative prioritizing, UPC-AP examined undergraduate initiatives separately from graduate initiatives and considered each college individually. Any initiative within a college falling in the bottom third according to overall ranking was identified. To this list, any other initiative receiving two (of three) negative z-scores were added. This procedure was followed for each of the remaining colleges, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. There were some instances where the UPC-AP utilized its collective professional judgment to moderate irregularities in the ratings. The resulting 10 lists (bottom third OR 2 negative z-scores) were merged, retaining rankings from the original university-wide list such that relative rankings (i.e., priorities) were not changed. *This process resulted in the identification of the 45% (approximately) of the initiatives having lowest (relative) priority.*

Every program identified by this process was discussed in a series of full UPC-AP meetings. In many/most cases, the scores and rankings were clear in that an initiative received relative low scores and therefore was ranked as a lower priority by all three reviewing bodies. For these initiatives, the UPC-AP noted the criteria along which the program received low marks as well as the number of students likely to be affected should the program be discontinued or reduced. In a limited number of cases there was one data source, either the college committee, the dean or UPC-AP, that differed from the two other scores. In those cases a closer examination of all the ratings, criteria, rankings, and z-scores was undertaken. The UPC-AP committee members' university/professional judgments contributed to the re-examination. The result of the re-examination was a ranking and agreement of the committee about the initiative's relative rank or score. For the remaining cases for which the three bodies were not in agreement, UPC-AP had to rely on professional judgment. For example, was there a high level of agreement between dean and college committee as compared to the UPC-AP review? Or, were UPC-AP and the college committee consistent in their rankings but somewhat different from that of the dean? In placing these initiatives in a

prioritized list, a closer examination of all the ratings, criteria, rankings, and z-scores as well as original initiative reports were included in the decision-making.

The result of this process yielded a prioritized list of every initiative across the University organized into five tiers. Initiatives in Tier I are those to which UPC-AP process assigned the lowest priority. The UPC-AP estimates that discontinuation/reduction of these initiatives will not result in the elimination of entire departments.

Tier II initiatives are second lowest priority and should be considered for discontinuation/reduction only after Tier I initiatives. If the Tier II initiatives were discontinued, the impact on departments would have to be determined.

Tier III initiatives are next priority and should only be considered for discontinuation/reduction after Tiers I and II. If Tiers I, II and III were discontinued, entire departments would be affected and departments would need to be eliminated, restructured, or combined with other departments.

Tier IV are all the remaining initiatives that were considered to be a low priority through the prioritizing process. The UPC-AP recommends that if budget reductions necessitated including Tier IV initiatives then each initiative's ordinal ranking would be maintained and would be included only as needed. If Tier IV initiatives along with all the initiatives in Tier I, II, and III were included, entire departments would be eliminated, restructured, or combined with other departments.

Tier V includes all other university initiatives. While Tier V initiatives were ranked and ordered in the prioritizing process, they would not be included in the recommended reductions for the university.

The prioritization listings from the UPC-AP were not influenced by program costs. Deliberations were not significantly influenced by enrollment, campus or college. Answers about whether an initiative was a priority (or non-priority) were determined based on the material submitted by the departments, the subsequent review by the deans, college committees and the UPC-AP committee, and the standardized rankings of all initiatives. Evidence that the committee did not use cost data was reflected in the fact that some non-priority initiatives that saved the university very little money were still defined as non-priorities. The number of initiatives defined as non-priorities within colleges were not equally distributed across all colleges.

### **Post Prioritization by the UPC**

Once the subcommittee concluded its prioritization process, additional suggested budgetary implications and comments on the impact to students and regular faculty were added to those listings for consideration by the Executive Cabinet. In some instances, budgetary implications were relatively clear and allowed for reference to the 2010-11 university budget book; in other instances, an estimated instructional cost was utilized. This latter cost estimate was based on information derived from fall 2009 initiative operations and has limitations depending on the nature of an initiative and its interdependence with other initiatives. As such, the instructional costs offer a starting point for deriving budgetary impact.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The UPC –AP process preserved what were priority initiatives (initiatives that were perceived by all levels submitting data as “stronger”). It became apparent during this process that some departments and initiatives had been historically better resourced than others. In fact, some non-priority initiatives were so defined because they had never been adequately supported with permanent faculty positions. Obviously the productivity level of the well-resourced units was substantially higher than what it was for units that

were under resourced. As this fiscal crisis wanes, resources need to be allocated to initiatives that have survived without equitable resources. Clearly, older initiatives that had managed to define faculty workloads, support teaching and research with larger numbers of GAs, and maintained a complex interdependent set of initiatives were better able to weather this budget reduction, as they have the reductions in the past.

A prioritizing process of this magnitude was not without limitations. Foremost was the time available to complete the work. This UPC process began in mid January and ended in mid August. Still, this seven-month process incorporated broad input from departments in the report generation phase and from the reviewing bodies in the rating phase of the process. The input received from deans, chairs and college committees almost always reflected honest, genuine efforts to present their departments or initiatives in the most positive way possible. The UPC-AP committee was grateful for the efforts and commitments of so many across campus. Unfortunately, there were cases where it was apparent to all the UPC reviewers that the individuals submitting documents complied only marginally with the requests for information and poorly represented their initiatives, faculty and college.

Secondly, a prioritizing process is not in and of itself a direct mechanism for addressing budget cuts. The prioritizing process is valuable in how it informs administration but it does not determine how or what administration includes in its budget reductions/eliminations. Rather, prioritization aims to identify what the university community sees as its primary and core functions. In some instances, then, the prioritizing yielded results that contribute only marginally to addressing the fiscal crisis, in some cases the prioritizing process could run in conflict with a need to balance costs and revenues.

In addition, this prioritization process drew on nine criteria, with total rating score for each initiative derived from the input of three reviewing entities (UPC-AP, college priorities committees, and deans). As a result, initiatives with varying strengths within these criteria would receive varying ratings for different criteria and could be placed in the same tier. In other words, the placement of an initiative in a tier depends on a composite rating, not on any single criterion.

The worst is yet to come. The next phase of budget reduction processes will negatively involve people that are our friends, colleagues and students. Budgets cuts, if fully reducing or discontinuing low priority initiatives within Tiers I-IV, would affect about 45% of the academic initiatives of this university and touch the lives of almost 20% of all students (n = 2950).

*Document subject to corrections*  
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