

Academic Program Prioritization

Provost's Recommendations

March 23, 2009

Overview:

I want to begin by thanking the Task Force and the university community for working so hard on this project. Prioritizing academic programs allows us to compare programs against a common set of criteria linked to the mission, vision and values of the University. It provides the University with the information to develop a mid-term plan for investing in academic programs that clearly links resource allocation to strategic planning.

The report highlights the many strong programs we have at Humboldt State University. Faculty and staff are clearly working very hard to provide our students with an outstanding education. It is impressive to see all that they do. The report also shows, what I believe we all knew, that we are trying to do too much. We have far more programs than we can support given the resources and the size of the University. This is particularly true for the number of options we offer within our degree programs. Options require specialized courses and unless they have enough interest to attract sufficient numbers of students they become too expensive to offer. Options also require a larger, more specialized and therefore more expensive faculty. Even very strong programs like Biology and Natural Resource Planning and Interpretation suffer from overextension.

As a campus, we need to focus on doing fewer things and doing them well. This does not mean that we cannot develop new programs but it does mean that we have to do so strategically and that overall we need to reduce the number of programs that we offer. The Task Force's report offers a roadmap for beginning that process.

The Task Force's final report contains its recommendations and the program responses. For programs in Category II, the Task Force recommended that the University continue to support them "at or near their current resource allocation." I agree that these programs need to be maintained and ask deans to develop their resource allocation plans accordingly. However, it is important to understand that being in this or any other category does not automatically excuse programs from efforts currently underway to benchmark them with comparable programs.

For programs in Category III, the Task Force recommended that they be carefully examined with an aim of curricular reorganization or resource reduction. I ask that the deans and these programs undertake such an examination. It should include a careful analysis, recommendations based on that analysis and actions, either taken or planned. This examination should begin this spring and to be completed, at the

latest, by the end of October 2009. In some cases, the Task Force made similar recommendations for programs in Category II, often because they were linked with programs in Category III. I ask that the deans work with these programs as well.

The Task Force recommended that programs in Category V be revisited in three years because they have been recently restructured or developed and it is too early for them to be reviewed. I agree with the three-year time line but ask the deans, during that time, to work with the departments to develop benchmarks, program goals and a schedule that allows yearly review of these programs.

The Task Force recommended that programs in Category I be reviewed for augmentation and that programs in Category IV be reviewed for restructuring or elimination. For these programs, I have asked the deans to review the final report and provide written recommendations. My recommendations for these programs are based on the Task Force recommendations, the deans' recommendations and the departmental reports and responses.

For programs in categories I and IV, the Academic Senate and I have agreed on a process for moving forward. I make recommendations to an ad hoc Academic Planning Committee (APC) that will then organize program committees to consider these recommendations. The following recommendations address all the programs in Category IV and selected programs in Category I. The programs in Category I were selected on the basis of potential growth, cost and departmental capacity.

Recommendations:

Athletic Training Education Program: The Task Force and the Dean recommend that this option, within the Kinesiology major, be eliminated. The program report shows that there is high demand for the program but it graduates few students. The program has a long history of inadequate internship opportunities that makes it particularly expensive. I recommend that this program be eliminated. The APC should set up a committee to evaluate this recommendation. I recommend that that committee include a representative from Athletics.

Biology: I ask that the Department work with the Dean to develop a strategic plan for how to enhance and, at the same time, focus the Department's efforts. This plan needs to build on its and the College's strengths, align with the vision of the University and critically evaluate the number of options offered. The Task Force recommends critically evaluating the number of options and eliminating those that are low enrolled. The Dean believes the options should be restructured to offer fewer, more flexible pathways for students. He also recommends developing a degree program in Marine Sciences. I agree with the Dean. The Department needs to develop a clear hiring plan that shows the number of faculty, including permanent and temporary coverage of its program. The plan needs to include an analysis of how the Department will achieve and maintain an appropriate SFR. The plan also needs to include benchmarks for judging the success of investing in the

program. Once the Department and the Dean agree on a plan, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of the semester.

Biometrics: I recommend that faculty teaching in this program work with the Dean to develop a plan to restructure this program. The plan needs to include benchmarks, with a timeline and numbers of students, for judging success in the program. Once that plan is developed, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of the semester.

Business Administration: I ask that the Department work with the Dean to develop a strategic plan for the how to expand and strengthen the undergraduate program. This plan needs to articulate a vision for the program that aligns with the vision of the University and to show how the program is going to distinguish itself. This plan needs to evaluate the quality and viability of the MBA program. I believe that the resources currently spent on the MBA would be better invested in the undergraduate program. The MBA should be suspended. The Department needs to develop a hiring plan that shows the number of faculty, including permanent and temporary, needed for coverage of its program. The plan needs to show how the Department is going to partner with the local and regional business communities and its alumni in order to support the program. The plan needs to include how it is going to help assure success for under represented students and address the feasibility and, if feasible, timing of AACSB accreditation. The plan needs to include benchmarks for judging the success of investing in the program. Once the Department and the Dean agree upon a plan, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.

Chemistry low-enrolled options in Chemical Technology and Environmental Toxicology: The Task Force recommends evaluating both options for elimination. The Dean recommends eliminating Chemical Technology and suspending Environmental Toxicology in order to explore partnerships with other programs. The Department argues that few resources are required for Chemical Technology and that Environmental Toxicology fits well with the vision of the University, will likely grow and helps the Department recruit. I recommend that Chemical Technology be eliminated as an option. While Environmental Toxicology fits well with the vision of the University, it would benefit from cooperation with more departments and a plan for attracting more students. Until that happens, the program should be suspended. The APC should review these recommendations.

Computer Information Systems and Computing Science: I do not believe we can sustain two separate majors in computing. It is unclear to me if we can sustain even one. The best course of action may be to develop options within Business, for CIS, and Math, for CS. I ask the departments to work with the Dean to develop a convincing plan for computing at Humboldt State University that includes at most one major. My understanding is that this discussion is already underway. This plan must include benchmarks for judging the success of any restructuring effort,

including a timeline and numbers of students for a viable program. Once this plan is developed, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. If a convincing plan, agreed upon by both the participating departments and the Dean, is not forthcoming by the end of the semester, I recommend that both majors be considered for elimination.

College Faculty Preparation Program: The Task Force recommends careful scrutiny and possible elimination. This program requires cooperation with College of The Redwoods and a home department other than the Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. The Dean of Research and Graduate Studies needs to do a detailed analysis including associated costs, the feasibility of finding a home department and the minimum number of students necessary to make the program viable. Based on that analysis, I will decide what to recommend to the APC.

Criminology: I recommend that the appropriate faculty and the Dean for Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences develop a curriculum and implementation plan for creating a Criminology degree. This plan must show how the degree advances the University Vision. It should provide a timeline for curriculum development, faculty resources and administrative support. It must include benchmarks for judging program success, including a timeline and the number of majors needed for continued investment in the program. Once the Department and the Dean agree upon a plan, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.

Environmental Systems – Low-enrolled Graduate Options: The Task Force recommends a critical evaluation of the Engineering and Geology options with the intent to eliminate both. The Dean recommends eliminating Geology and restructuring the Engineering option into a professional program in line with the current push for such degrees in the system. The Engineering Department argues that few resources are dedicated to the program. The Geology Department argues that having the graduate program brings a number of advantages to the undergraduate program and that they are working on a plan to recruit more students. I recommend that the Engineering option be eliminated and that the Engineering Department works with the Dean to explore the feasibility of developing a professional master's program. The APC should review this recommendation. In the past, with larger enrollments, the Geology option has been viable. The Geology Department should work with the Dean and Enrollment Management to develop a plan to increase enrollment in the program. This plan needs to have benchmarks, with dates and numbers of graduate students, for judging whether or not the plan is successful. If the program cannot increase the number of graduate students within three years, it should be eliminated.

Industrial Technology: The Task Force recommends eliminating the program. The Dean recommends two other possibilities: either moving a faculty from Education, who trained in IT, to help restructure the program or reducing it to a minor program with two options. Given the ranking of the program, the Dean does not recommend

an investment of permanent faculty in the program at this time. Given the faculty needs in many programs prioritized higher than Industrial Technology, I recommend eliminating the degree program and exploring the extent to which parts of the program can reasonably be incorporated into other majors. Without a reasonable timeline for committing permanent faculty to the program, it is not reasonable to continue the program with temporary faculty or faculty whose primary expertise is not in the area. The APC should set up a committee to review this recommendation.

Interdisciplinary Dance Studies: The Task Force questions the number of options in the program and the need for two Dance majors. The Dean agrees that only one Dance major is needed. He further recommends an examination of space, staffing and faculty resources. I recommend that the Department of Theatre, Film and Dance, the Program Leader for the Interdisciplinary Dance program and the Chair of Kinesiology work with the two Deans to develop a proposal for one dance program. This proposal should address the number of options, benchmarks for judging the success of the program and a hiring plan that describes utilization of permanent and temporary faculty. When completed the plan should be submitted to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.

Liberal Studies, Non-Teaching: This is an interdisciplinary program that is overseen by the Vice Provost and the University Curriculum Committee. The Task Force was concerned about the quality of the program and the lack of faculty involvement at the program level. The Vice Provost's and UCC's responses to the Task Force recommendation emphasize the need for the program to have a departmental home with advising and curricular oversight. Without that, the program should be eliminated. I ask the Vice Provost to work with the UCC to see if a home department can be found which will take responsibility for curriculum and advising. If a department cannot be found, I recommend that the program be eliminated and that the APC set up a committee to evaluate this recommendation.

Natural Resources – Planning and Interpretation: I ask the Department to work with the Dean to develop a strategic plan that invests in the program, focuses on its strengths and eliminates low-enrolled options. The Department needs to reorganize its options. In particular, it needs a plan that balances the enrollment problems in the GIS option with the broad interdisciplinary interest in that area. The Dean recommends a certificate program. That may be the right solution. Any solution must be viable in terms of attracting sufficient numbers of students to the program. The plan needs to develop a hiring plan that shows the number of faculty, including permanent and temporary coverage of its programs. It needs to include benchmarks for judging program success. Once the Department and Dean have agreed upon a plan, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.

Natural Resources – Low-enrolled Graduate Programs: I agree with the Dean that the programs in Range and Soils and Wastewater Utilization be eliminated. Enrollments have been very small for many years. The APC should evaluate this recommendation. Enrollment in the Watershed option has varied, due to faculty turnover according to the Department. However, the Dean is right about the difficulty of adding new faculty in these areas given other priorities. The Departmental response indicates that Watershed, in some form, must form the core for other, high priority programs. I recommend that the Watershed option be eliminated and that the affected departments work with the Dean to incorporate important Watershed components into other options. The APC should evaluate the recommendation.

Political Science – low enrolled minors: The Department offers three minors in California Studies, International Relations and Public Administration. The Dean indicates that the Department has agreed to eliminate or consolidate low-enrolled minors in the program. The Department should work with the Dean to develop a plan for eliminating or consolidating minor programs. Once this plan is developed it should be submitted to the APC for review and recommendation. The APC should review the recommendation and determine whether or not it needs to go to a review committee for consideration. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.

Physical Science: The Task Force notes that classes for the degree do not require additional recourses, because they are required for other programs, but questions whether or not the degree is justified given the options in Physics. The Dean recommends elimination. The Department argues that it allows students who do not satisfy other science degrees an avenue to graduate and that it is well suited for students seeking a single-subject credential for science teachers. While there are credentials at the secondary teaching level for both physics and chemistry, this degree program does not meet the standards necessary for admittance into those credential programs. My understanding is that the program would require significant restructuring in order to meet those requirements. I recommend that the program be suspended. The APC should set up a committee to evaluate this recommendation.

Rangeland Resource Science and Wildland Soils: The Task Force acknowledges the uniqueness of the degree but questions the viability of having two low-enrolled options. The Dean recommends that Rangeland Resource Science and Wildland Soils either reduce to one program that satisfies the OPM guidelines for both certifications or be reduced to a minor. Given the number of courses required for these programs and the long history of low-enrolled courses, I do not believe that these programs can attract enough students to be viable as degree programs. I recommend that they be eliminated in favor of a minor or a set of courses that support related majors. The APC should set up a committee to evaluate this recommendation.

Spanish – Latin American Studies Minor: One minor has been awarded in Latin American Studies from 2000/01 through 2007/08. The Dean indicates that the Department has agreed to eliminate this minor. I agree with this recommendation. The APC should review the recommendation and determine whether or not it needs to go to a review committee for consideration.