

TO: Jon Sticklen, Chairperson
Executive Committee of Academic Council

FROM: University Committee on Academic Policy (Folu
Ogundimu, Chair)

SUBJECT: Report of the Committee on College Reorganization

DATE: February 2, 2005

We write to provide feedback in response to ECAC referral of 12:10:04 concerning the request for consultation by President Simon and Acting Provost Hudzik in respect of their initial commentary on the Final Report of the Committee on College Reorganization (CCR). The specific charge to UCAP is per Memorandum 11:30:04 by President L.A.K. Simon and Acting Provost J.K. Hudzik and vote of the Academic Council. The charge was formulated by the executive council as:

- 1) Develop advice and commentary on the "principles" and the "concrete elements" set forth in the final report of the CCR.
- 2) Develop especially comments on the inherent tensions amongst the principles and ways in which those tensions might be mitigated. Examples of "tensions" are:
 - a) What balance should MSU strive for between the common good of liberal education and the specific goals of individual colleges? How should the balance between the institutional good and that of any particular individual, program or unit be examined?
 - b) How might the principles be ordered and what are the consequences?

- c) What does reciprocity among units mean?
- d) What are the responsibilities of the units, as well as the University, for transparency?
- e) How might the balance between academic and administrative principles and elements be accomplished?
- f) What are the practical expectations upon which faculty "self-determination" rests in a context of multiple constituencies and the future of the entire University?
- g) Clarify the "concrete elements" procedures and processes to be further considered.

At the request of UCAP and others a meeting to clarify the charge was held with Acting Provost Hudzik on 01:07:05. A summary of this meeting was communicated to the membership of UCAP and the note forms part of the deliberative process of the committee in formulating its response. Furthermore, UCAP members consulted the following resources as part of their deliberation:

- Memorandum 11:30:04, "Initial Commentary...
- Report 11:08:04, "CCR Final Report...
- Report 02:17:04, "Realizing the Vision...
- Report 11:17:03 - 12:17:03, "Summary of Focus Conversations on the Future of Liberal Arts..."

After careful and thoughtful consideration of the specific charge referred by ECAC and the request contained in the Initial Commentary, UCAP makes the following observations:

- 1) UCAP agrees that liberal arts and science education is an important goal that should be pursued at Michigan State University. It reaffirms the view that improving liberal education extends to all colleges beyond any focus on re-organization.
- 2) UCAP is hesitant to offer commentary on the "principles" and "concrete elements" included in the CCR Final Report because it is uncertain that

college reorganization is the answer to re-invigorating the humanities and pursuing the goal of liberal arts at MSU. UCAP applauds the CCR for enumerating useful abstractions and norms that should govern re-organization but we are uncertain about whether less radical solutions than reorganization might better address problems posed by the CCR. Importantly, UCAP believes there is a gap between thinking on reorganization and the strategic objective of improving liberal arts education. UCAP wonders if there might not be other ways to frame the problem and formulate a strategy for solution.

- 3) UCAP is of the view that discussions about specific programmatic changes at MSU, including the proposed new residential college, improving student writing and quantitative skills, and the future of integrative studies should be separated from the conversation about CCR and treated as independent initiatives. UCAP believes the principles and elements in the CCR do not in their current form provide useful guidance for decisions about possible reorganization proposals.
- 4) UCAP observes specifically that three of the principles address overall issues of the mission and goals of MSU and reflect the overall goal for considering college reorganization. They are:
 - **Commitment to liberal education as a common good**
 - **Viability of the humanities**
 - **Connectivity among faculty in research, teaching, and outreach.**

Whereas the principles are important and deserve priority, UCAP believes that any proposal for major reorganization of colleges and units must acknowledge that the three principles and goals are not the only ones that should play a role. Because they evolved from the focused examination of reorganization in the context of liberal arts and science, their importance should be weighed alongside other important missions and constraints of the university.

- 5) UCAP observes that another cluster of principles and elements address features of organizational structure that reinforces mission and goals. They are:
- **Coherent identity of college-level units**
 - **Minimal barriers to connectivity**
 - **Strong leadership in the liberal arts and sciences**
- 6) In the interest of completeness, UCAP notes that other principles and elements, including faculty self-determination, reciprocity among units, transparency in the budgetary process, support for visual arts, and support for international programs were mentioned in the CCR and the Initial Commentary. We reserve commentary at this time on the merit or otherwise of these principles and elements or of those enumerated in Item #5 above because of the ambiguity we identified earlier about the purpose of CCR. It is not clear whether the CCR report is meant to provide guidelines for improving liberal arts or as a more general set of guidelines for any reorganization that might occur in the future.
- 7) UCAP acknowledges there has been considerable dialogue and opportunity for faculty and governance committees to engage in this conversation over the past year. Whereas all the doubt about motive for reorganization may not be dispelled, we believe the deliberative process has been helpful in alleviating some fears and clarifying some assumptions. Further, the experience reinforces the need for instituting clear processes for evaluation and review before reorganization is implemented.

ACTION ITEM

Submitted for UCAP Membership E-Vote By: Folu Ogundimu

Motion to Approve Proposed By: Kurt Dewhurst

Motion Seconded By: Steve Dilley

