



**Associated Students of the
University of Montana**

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Members of the Faculty Senate,

Attached is an executive summary that our Business Manager Chase Greenfield has put together regarding the 1977 program prioritization process and its results, last time our University underwent a major academic program prioritization process in 1977, what that looked like, and the results.

This report paints in bright colors some lessons that we can draw from the unsuccessful 1977 process. Among those, what stands out to me is the necessity for a collaborative approach from shared governance and the setting of clear targets and agreements on the front end of any process that we undertake to address a budget situation of similar scale and immediacy.

From my reading of the current budget situation at UM and the Legislature, the timeline difficulties that were faced in '77, and the speed with which changes are being pursued on campus, I think it would be wise to proceed forthwith with a collaborative plan for carrying out an academic program prioritization process that is shared governance-led.

ASUM has had a group Senators and myself working since October to research models of the academic program prioritization process, and it is my understanding that UFA & Faculty Senate are putting together just such a work group. We have a group students who are willing and ready to join with faculty to guide this process in a deliberate and strategic manner, and I hope that the attached report might serve as a helpful first step.

Thank you,

Sam Forstag
President
ASUM, Associated Students of the University of Montana
MAS, Montana Associated Students



Background and Committee Formation

The year of 1977 found UM in a similar situation to the present day. The University faced a substantial loss of students (900 FTE over 5 years), growing faculty numbers (not the same today), and a cut from the Montana State Legislature of 1977. The big question is the same question we face today: how will we balance the budget?

The answer in both 1977 and 2016-17 (so far) has been “opportunistic” cuts, which meant many programs were boiled down to unsustainable levels and others retained faculty who otherwise would have retired. With a looming legislative mandate, then President Richard Bowers was faced with two options: raise all student fees by 20% or cut programs and their faculty. Bowers elected to take the latter, seemingly more realistic route and called together the “Academic Program Review Committee” to examine all academic programs and make “recommendations”. Bowers aimed to reduce the student to faculty ration to 19:1, which equated to approximately 50 FTE faculty reductions.

Committee Membership and Action Plan

The Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) was chaired by Academic Vice President Donald Habbe, who acted as an ex-officio member. There were nine voting members: six faculty and three students. Much of the committee’s work occurred *over summer*, as Bowers had set the beginning of November as the deadline for the committee’s report. The APRC mobilized 12 vertical task forces to analyze the academic programs and report back to the APRC.

- There were four “horizontal task-forces” focused on the following areas: research/creative activity, service, data, and program trends.
- The remaining 12 were “vertical task forces” that looked into the following areas:
 - Humanities (A): Journalism, English, Foreign Languages, History
 - Humanities (B): Humanities, Native American Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies
 - Biological Sciences: Botany, Zoology, Microbiology
 - Physical Sciences (A): Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science,
 - Physical Sciences (B): Geology and Chemistry
 - Social and Behavioral Sciences (A): Anthropology, Geography, Psychology, and Health and Physical Education.
 - Social and Behavioral Sciences (B): Economics, Home Economics, Political Science, Sociology.
 - Social and Behavioral Sciences (C): Social Work, Interpersonal Communication, Communication Sciences and Disorders.
 - Forestry and Pharmacy
 - Law and Business Administration
 - Fine Arts
 - Education

Before the decisions had been made, it was planned that the department chairs and deans would have the ability to appeal to “a separate hearing body” during the first two weeks of November. The entirety of the process was open to the public.

APRC Criteria

- 1) Student Credit Hour Development
- 2) Weighted Student Credit Hour Development (1.0 for Lower Division, 1.5 for U.D., and 3.0 for Graduate)
- 3) Full-Time Equivalent Students
- 4) Weighted Full-Time Equivalent Students (weight scale not included?)
- 5) Declared Student Majors
- 6) Degrees Conferred
- 7) FTE Teaching Faculty
- 8) Expenditures
- 9) Student to Faculty Ratios
- 10) Student Credit Hours per FTE Faculty (#1/#7)
- 11) Weighted Student Credit Hours per FTE Faculty (#2/#7)
- 12) Weighted Student to Faculty Ratios (#4/#7)
- 13) FTE Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)
- 14) Student Credit Hours per FTE Including GTAs
- 15) Weighted Student Credit Hours per FTE Including GTAs
- 16) Student to Faculty ratios Including GTAs
- 17) Weighted Student to Faculty Ratios Including GTAs

APRC/Process Criticisms

Some critiques of the Academic Program Review Committee were that the deadline was too short and that the decision period (summer) was inappropriate. Additionally, Professor Albert Borgmann noted that the level of scrutiny across the task forces would inevitably vary, and would therefore produce only skewed results. Borgmann believed that there could not be a “peaceful and satisfactory pruning of the faculty”, and suggested that alternatives such as early retirement and encouraging all departments not to keep faculty just to keep their lines open. Borgmann qualified his arguments, stating that the Academic Program Review was NECESSARY, but the “final reduction program” should be a negotiation with an understanding that we need to reduce our faculty numbers. Borgmann also suggested that the process timeline be extended considerably (3-4 years).

The APRC also found their timeline and criteria were inadequate, and urged President Bowers not to make cuts until a System-wide prioritization process could occur. They argued that there were 10 areas that needed to be examined before more programs could be slated for cuts: Interdependencies; Quality; Rigor; Balance (Teaching, Research, and Service); Marketability; Centrality; Necessity for existence of a program; Indispensability of autonomy; Duplication; Relationship to University System mission, role and scope.


Outcomes

Ultimately, President Bowers found that the committee could not finalize recommendations beyond a 23.5 FTE (faculty) cut without additional time. (The appeals process reduced that number to 21.5 FTE). Bowers decided to ignore the review process and the following recommendations were approved by the Board of Regents:

1. Reduce FTE faculty by 60.64 from the base number of positions in 1977-78
2. Cancel temporarily all sabbatical leaves except where prior commitments have been made to individual faculty members.
3. Reduce the summer session budget by \$40,000.
4. Impose a one-year moratorium on promotions and merit salary increases, not to preclude less-than normal increases.
5. Create a reserve of approximately \$90,000 by temporarily freezing all administrative salaries.

I would like to end with a letter from the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, written in 1977 after the Board Meeting:

http://www.umt.edu/asum//asum_senate/program_prioritization/ecos_letter_1977. I encourage you all to read this letter that your predecessors and keep its message in mind as we continue to work towards a better University of Montana.



Chase M. Greenfield

ASUM Business Manager (2016-2017)

