

AABATF Recommendation Comments for Days 43 to 84: 12/07/11 - 01/17/12

feedback: Last week we received an email from the Provost, in this time of economic struggle, announcing that he has appointed 3 faculty to serve as his special assistants. The earlier call indicated this would include stipends, release time, and other forms of support. Note that the earlier call indicated only 1-2 would be appointed -- so the 3 is more than what was initially indicated. This is very discouraging on multiple levels. It is taking our tenured faculty OUT of the classroom. When are TT faculty are not being replaced, when we are losing more and more TT faculty to the market, why are we taking them out of the classroom for initiatives like these? It is using scarce university dollars at a time of great stress and uncertainty. Frankly, it looks as though the Provost is bolstering his staff while the colleges and schools look for ways to tighten up. Was faculty consultation used in this process? Were chairs consulted about the its impact on the classroom? What is not being said at the open fora is that a disproportionate amount of money is staying in the provost's office. The various acronym-named programs should be given a very hard look. I do not believe CSALT, TILT, etc. are valued by the faculty. This is the time to cut them.

feedback: The task force did a good job but probably did not go far enough in light of the additional \$5M cut announced yesterday.

Employers and granting agents care about departments and majors, not schools and colleges.

Ask any faculty where to cut, they say cut administration. The plan does that and the faculty complain. No faculty or students will be affected by where they are housed, life will go on but the budget will be improved.

The recs should be implemented forthwith. We will have to firmer about eliminating small majors in the future, for now it is just recommended.

feedback: Do not replace [REDACTED] and eliminate the CSALT program. These programs are not a priority in this budget crisis. Students and faculty should be the focus, not spritzing up your syllabus.

feedback: The College of Science and Mathematics at CSU Fresno is considered to be among the top ten in the nation, in terms of graduating the highest percentage of undergraduate that are accepted by other MS and PhD programs at other institutions (including Stanford and Harvard and medical schools). It is a proud icon of Fresno State in academic achievement.

I strongly suggest not to break up the UNIT of CSM. Look for college mergers, or bring other related departments in. Former Dean KP Wong organized and managed the college well (evidenced by the brand new Science II building, combination of large and small classes, sound financial management, etc). We need another dedicated dean to carry on the tradition of research-based high quality teaching and serving.

feedback: Thank you for posting all the anonymous feedback. The faculty in the College of Science and Mathematics are obviously distraught over the possibility of the dissolution of their college structure. This is understandable and a natural reaction to possible change.

They will however not gain much sympathy if they continue to behave as though they are more superior than other faculty at the University. By insulting other University programs and colleges, they do not realize that they are reducing their own value.

While some of our budget problems are self-inflicted and are internal to the University (and they should be solved), the real problems lie in the legislature.

feedback: It is a shame that this process only allows for anonymous posts....not really a "voice" if one cannot know the source. I propose we open this to allow folks to associate their name with responses, perhaps only redact specifics referenced in such comments. Anonymous commenting speaks of cowardice...not forwarding thinking dialogue. Imagine if this were the situation on the floor of the Senate. Perhaps our very own Academic Senate could propose such publicly?

Nevertheless, the logic of combining departments (such as Biology) with an applied sciences college (such as JCAST) in order to "foster collaboration" with departments (such as Plant Science) is interesting to say the least. Are there barriers to such collaboration now? Successful collaboration (or cohorts) has (have) historically been driven by common interests, values, and recognition of a diverse expertise, not by mandate etc.

I would suggest those wishing to collaborate, do so based on these commonalities. Good science does not need a "centralized" office, college, or center...just good scientists. The rest will (and has) fall into place. . .

feedback: It is clear from several of the posted comments, so far, that we as a university community continue to act in a territorial way and play the politics of mobilizing one-another, students, and alumni to serve our personal agenda. We are not running a campaign to line up opposition or support. We should have one common goal, which is to solve the immediate problem and come out of this exercise even stronger. This cannot happen without an open mind and trust in our ability to act as a whole. I can understand the anxiety of facing the unknown and making a change, but this is part of transforming if we want to continue to prosper in spite of the increasing challenges facing us. With that said, I offer the following comments and observations:

- 1) Relative to the STEM idea, I would like to say that STEM is not an academic area for study and research. It is an umbrella phrase that encompasses many socioeconomic endeavors needed for an industrialized society, including preparing its workforce from school through university education. Therefore, "STEM" is not a suitable title for a higher education unit that grants degrees in specific related disciplines. It can be a good title for an organization that promotes activities related to STEM such that the new generation gets excited about the related disciplines.
- 2) To deal with the concern of grant money, keep faculty/researchers motivated, and to maximize funding opportunities, I suggest creating a self-supporting STEM center where externally funded research takes place. This can overcome concerns relative to the image of a non-science college title. Grants can be submitted under the center's title and faculty can collaborate within the center on multidisciplinary projects. This can be the research arm of the overarching college which carries one of the traditional titles.
- 3) There are several inefficiencies in the system which can be reduced and save money in addition to minimizing frustration among faculty and students. I would venture by suggesting to stream-line the RTP process, peer evaluation process, and the course evaluation process. A more effective accountability system is needed. Also, graduate/undergraduate cross listing of courses can save resources and enhance interaction between undergraduate and graduate students. This would strengthen research activities and motivate undergraduate students to pursue graduate education.

4) Many of the posted comments brought up several opportunities for savings in personnel and less urgent activities, which seem to make sense.

feedback: Scientists use the scientific method to understand the natural world. Psychologists study that subset of the natural world that deals with behavior, broadly construed: the function of the human brain and its behavioral consequences, the constraints and natural laws that define behavior as a natural phenomenon, the development of behavior over time, the interrelationship between multiple behaving independent organisms, and the parameters that delineate normal from disordered behavior.

Psychologists at CSUF have grants from federal science agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Our Psychology faculty teach courses whose curricula include significant amounts of neurobiology, anatomy, biochemistry, optics/acoustics, computational science and artificial intelligence.

Saying Psychology should be paired with departments in the School of Ed, or that Biology should go to Ag, is like saying that Music should be paired with the communicative disorders depts, because they can "create new synergies" based on their common interests in "voices" and "sounds". It is, quite simply, preposterous.

feedback: The research efforts of Psychology students (and all other College of Science and Mathematics students) are heavily supported by the infrastructure of the College. The collective sacrifice and decision making of the faculty of the CSM makes such support possible, and is instrumental in shaping our mission as a College which heavily emphasizes interaction and active learning in education about Science.

There is no question that these funds have helped the vast majority of interested students to attain their goals of getting into grad school.

There is also no question that these supported undergraduate and graduate research programs have been instrumental in providing pilot data for grant proposals submitted to extramural sources. Indeed, many of the granting mechanisms at NSF and NIH require the inclusion of narratives detailing *specific* and *demonstrated* institutional support for research infrastructure. Coming from an institution like Fresno State already puts us at a disadvantage with respect to this issue - primarily because the academic community does not know of the significant research programs instituted here. Killing the College of Science and Mathematics will put our researchers at a CLEAR and EXPLICIT disadvantage when competing with other institutions for grant funds for two reasons:

1) There will no longer be a guarantee of support for research efforts that are not valued by the various Colleges/Schools to which former CSM departments will be distributed. Having a CSM allows us to value and nurture these research efforts because of our collective understanding of the needs of this University with respect to research infrastructure.

2) The public perception of our University's priorities in Science and Math will ASSUREDLY be harmed, directly and indirectly; directly, because grant reviewers and agencies will have an explicit example of Fresno State's disregard for Science issues; and, indirectly, because the lack of public exposure to our research programs (as outlined in #1 above) will result in a persistent and broad misconception of our ability to conduct high-impact, cutting-edge research at a Master's level regional public University.

feedback: The only thing worse than the task force recommendations is censorship.

feedback: Has the budget task force thought about possibly changing the office hours when students are not in session from 7:30-4pm? Maybe allowing for less time open and less usage of the campus facilities.

feedback: FYI, psychology is a social science. It's not correct me merely call a discipline a science. So I support it's reorganization into either the school of education or the college of social science.

feedback: After hearing and reading what most people think of this plan, it's clear that it's astonishingly unpopular. Nobody really likes change, but people are protesting this with vehemence unlike anything I have ever seen; it's phenomenal. Nothing this unpopular should have ever seen the light of day. The task force was faced with an incredibly daunting task, and they tried their best, but their best is angering and upsetting scores of faculty, staff, and students to the point of obscenity.

I was never personally in favor of the plan, but I also didn't think it was quite as bad as what many have made it out to be. I understand there's a budget crisis, and sacrifices must be made by all. However, the media is already having a field day reporting on how abhorrent most people think it is. It's only been proposed, and already it's giving us a foul stench. Can you imagine how bad it will get if this plan actually gets put into motion? The outcry will be tremendous. Even if the plan makes sense from a technical, budgetary standpoint, the public relations hit this university will take is not worth it. It will turn this university into a punchline and end up costing us more than it saves. There must be another, unexplored solution that's better than this one. Nothing that deals with budget cuts will ever truly be popular, but I find it difficult to believe that this proposed plan is our best solution.

PLEASE do not make the huge error of killing our College; the ramifications of this incredibly short-sighted move would be disastrous for science research and education at Fresno State, and in the Central Valley as a whole.

feedback: I don't think the task force is concentrating on the right things. Merging colleges and shifting departments shouldn't even be part of the equation right now. This university needs to trim the fat before it begins to even think about such severe re-shuffling of academic colleges and departments. I've seen a lot of good comments about cutting back on upper-level administration, whittling down the number of Deans in the university and cutting many "Associate" positions. After all, this university is supposed to be about providing education and research to help build a better future! Yet, students, staff and faculty have been the ones paying the highest price so far. I'm sure we could get a lot done without so many MPPs; in fact, maybe we could do even better. Cutting down on upper-level management stands to potentially save more money without the serious ramifications that drastic college restructuring has. If and when economic times get better, it's a lot easier to hire back upper-level management than it is to undo the academic shuffling that has been proposed.

feedback: Thanks for restoring this site and supporting freedom of speech.

How many new high level administrator positions have been added over the past few years--and at what current salaries--and with what recent raises. Who knows how to get that information? We need to see those figures compared with the shrinking faculty and academic department staff position numbers, and the salary schedules and raises (not) awarded to faculty and staff for the same years.

Perhaps a reduction in upper level positions and their compensation would help the budget as well as faculty and staff morale. I'm sure that the provost's office doesn't understand how demoralizing it is to see announcements of new VP appointments and interim appts., to hear of raises at the highest levels, to hear of new high level administrative appointments and positions being created, and to discover the extent of high salaries and even raises at that upper level while departments are seriously understaffed and department level employees (both support staff and faculty) are underpaid and stretched very thin. Most of us in the academic colleges have taken on significant extra duties and responsibilities over

the past few years, and we not only haven't been compensated, we have actually had previous assigned time rescinded. Some balance ought to be restored.

feedback: The primary purpose of the University is to provide education to the people of the Central Valley so they can develop their talent and creativity to ensure that they and their communities live well. This means that Academic Affairs is the core of the University. Historically and currently the unemployment rate in the Central Valley is twice that of the nation as a whole. The economy of this region has never functioned properly because it depends on resource extraction rather than on the development of human beings. The main challenge to University is to produce graduates who understand the cultural resources of the Central Valley and can participate in today's scientific and technical world. The University has to emphasize the arts, sciences and humanities.

Hopefully, the Provost Covino will allocate funds in Academic Affairs to maintain the University's main mission. He can only do a good job if he knows the approximate outline of the budget. Unfortunately, the administration has not released this outline, but using the University 2010-2011 budget book [1] we can produce numbers that are in the ballpark. The overall budget of the Fresno State campus of the California State University is \$220 million and that of Academic Affairs \$85 million. The administration says that Academic Affairs needs to cut 2 million dollars from its budget (about 2.3%). The University anticipated the December cut last summer and is already using a reduced budget [2]. You may ask why the Academic Affairs budget is so small compared to the overall budget. A general rule of thumb says that an employee costs an organization twice their salary. Academic Affairs numbers only contain the salary; the other costs are reported in a category called Centrally Monitored Funds which totals \$78 million. For example, Provost Covino's decision not to hire a new vice provost saves \$170,000 in Academic Affairs and about an equal amount in Centrally Monitored Funds (for a total somewhere around \$340,000).

Administrators should remind themselves that every year the general public and the students (through tuition and fees) provide the \$220 million that allows the University to function. This number dwarfs the contributions of private donations. Recent one time donations of \$10 and \$ 30 million resulted in two more named colleges. While private donations do help the University greatly they should not be allowed to influence budgetary decisions. The Task Force seems to treat named colleges differently from the unnamed ones even though the unnamed colleges are run more efficiently (see below).

In 2010-2011 the total number of full time equivalent students (FTES) was around 18 thousand and \$12 ¼ million (of the \$85 million) was earmarked for the office of the provost and upper level administration. This translated to an upper level administrative cost of \$673 per FTES. At the college level the numbers are

Arts and Humanities: \$138/FTES

Health and Human Services: \$310/FTES

Science and Mathematics: \$261/FTES

Social Sciences: \$84/FTES

Craig, Business: \$423/FTES

Jordan, Agricultural Sciences: \$587/FTES

Kremen, Education: \$688/FTES

Lyles, Engineering: \$377/FTES [3].

The University is not a business and efficiency by itself cannot be a measure of value. Never-the-less all academic departments are funded on an FTES basis. Why shouldn't cost per FTES at least be factored in when deciding funding levels for administration? Furthermore, why is the Task Force recommending college administrative changes only for those colleges that have low administrative costs? The changes proposed to Science and Mathematics; Arts and Humanities; and the Social Sciences make no sense budget wise and mission wise.

At the end of his meeting with Science and Mathematics Provost Covino asked for some suggestions for dealing with the budget. Here is a partial list of possible solutions

1. Increase revenue by \$2 million by using the Student Activity Fee for students instead of athletics.
2. Use the Provost's \$8 million discretionary funds to cover the deficit until the citizens of California have decided whether they want to increase taxes. This allows the citizens one more chance to decide if they would like to have a good educational system.
3. Implement a 2 percent cut for all of Academic Affairs.
4. Establish an FTES administrative cost cap, for example \$400/FTES, for both upper level and college level administration.

Provost Covino has said that he doesn't want a temporary solution. He should realize that it is much easier to destroy the University than it is to create it. Therefore, he should do his best to maintain as much of the vibrancy of the University as long as he can. I also recommend that the Task Force state clearly the primary mission of the University and do a much better job of providing a current financial picture of the University. You first have to know what your goals and resources are before you can allocate funds wisely.

[1] <http://www.csufresno.edu/budget/bb/2010-11/index.shtml>

[2] "Chief Financial Officer Cynthia Teniente-Matson said the campus wouldn't have to raise tuition or reduce classes or staff. Officials expected the cuts and set aside tuition revenue earlier this year to bridge the gap." <http://www.fresnobee.com/2011/12/13/2647880/community-colleges-face-102-million.html>

[3] FTES numbers are from the fall 2010 report "FTES by College, Department and Course Level", <http://www.csufresno.edu/oie/>, and the budget numbers are from ref. [1]. The raw numbers for the Colleges are

Arts and Humanities: \$540,000 for 3,932 FTES

Health and Human Services: \$790,000 for 2,549 FTES

Science and Mathematics: \$890,000 for 3,416 FTES

Social Sciences: \$890,000 for 3,245 FTES

Craig, Business: \$720,000 for 1,707 FTES

Jordan, Agricultural Sciences: \$644,000 for 1,097 FTES

Kremen, Education: \$840,000 for 1,226 FTES

Lyles, Engineering: \$240,000 for 643 FTES