

FAC Report on Program Prioritization

Members of FAC 2005-06

William Clyburn, Bob English (Academic Affairs Liaison), Julia Fine, Robert Goldbort, Lawrence Kunes, Feng-Qi Lai, Karen Liu (FAC chair), Ysenka Peterson, Richard Schneirov, Steven Shure (Executive Committee Liaison), Linda Sperry (FAC secretary)

Part I. Context of Prioritization

FAC recommends that the Task Force on Program Prioritization take the following considerations into account.

First, the university community should address institutional culture as well as particular programs. The institutional culture is often afflicted with over-bureaucratization, overstaffing--particularly in the case of our administration--and inefficiencies. Addressing these problems may result in significant savings and help us to fund our programs of distinction.

Second, program prioritization must be done in the spirit of overall academic quality and long-term program cost-effectiveness rather than cost-cutting per se. The long-term interest of the university must be the focus of the Task Force rather than short-term concerns. To these ends, resources identified for reinvestment must be used on academic programs.

Third, it should be recognized that ISU has already been cutting programs. Since October 1999 we have cut 19 or 11.5% of 164 programs. FAC believes that any cutting of programs should be undertaken prudently and with great care and foresight. ISU is a comprehensive university and needs a variety of programs and courses to meet the needs of its diverse constituency. There is no urgency to cut one-quarter to one-third of all our programs by 2007, especially since the savings will be reinvested in academic programs and not be used to meet budget shortfalls. FAC is concerned that haste and carelessness in the cutting of programs may result in permanently harming the academic quality of Indiana State University.

Fourth, ISU has a responsibility to its employees. FAC recommends that the Task Force embrace the philosophy that there should be no elimination of tenured and tenure-track positions except in the context of attrition. (Please see Part III for further discussion.)

Part II. Recommendations Regarding the Number of Categories and Process for Prioritization

- A. FAC supports dividing existing programs into five groups, with the explicit assumption that there be equal numbers in each group:

Group A Programs due Enrichment
Group B Programs due Higher Level of Continued Support
Group C Programs due Neutral Level of Continued Support
Group D Programs due Lower Level of Continued Support
Group E Programs due Consolidation, Reduction, or in extreme circumstances
Phasing Out

Group A (Programs due Enrichment) are expected to be programs with strong potential, high demand, and high quality that may need assistance in development of strategic recruitment plans, additional faculty lines and staff support to increase student enrollment and other positive outcomes. Groups B, C, and D are expected to be stable programs with healthy enrollments that will continue to receive support from the University. Group E (Programs due Consolidation, Reduction, or in extreme circumstances Phasing Out) are expected to be programs that need realignment or consolidation in order to become parts of stronger programs with the potential to flourish.

- B. Every program will be required to submit a self-study (with a 10-page limit) to the Task Force. Program Prioritization Reports from CAAC, Graduate Council, and FAC should be used by the Task Force to determine which types of information programs should include in their program reviews.
- C. FAC supports reorganizing criteria from Dickeson (1999) into the following scheme with dimensions to be considered in order. At the conclusion of the review, programs will be placed into a group. One round of appeals will be permitted for programs. FAC recommends that the criteria be ordered in this manner to emphasize first, the future of this university, and second, more immediate concerns.
 - 1) Demand for the Program (Dickeson's Criteria 2, 3)
Demand for programs touches directly on the potential for future enrollments and academic worth; internal demand refers to support for other programs. Thus, there may not be a large demand for mathematics among majors, but the department is crucially necessary to provide service courses for students in other departments.
 - 2) Impact, Opportunity, and History (Dickeson's Criteria 9, 10, 1)
This set of criteria considers the larger impact of the program on the university, including both the existing impact and the potential for future growth. Criterion #9 asks us to examine the overall impact, justification, and essentiality of the program. Criterion #10 is potentially the most important, as it looks to the future and is pro-active; it asks us to consider opportunities that a program or proposed program may seize upon to enhance the university and its mission. Criterion #1 suggests that we consider the origins and purposes of the program and asks us to review whether or not the contexts of the program have changed significantly.

3) Revenue Considerations (Dickeson's Criteria 6, 7, 8)

Revenue considerations allow us to compare the revenue produced by the program with the costs incurred in operating the program and assess its "productivity" and cost-effectiveness.

4) Quality of Program (Dickeson's Criteria 4, 5)

This set of criteria allows us take account of the quality of program inputs, processes, and outputs. *It should be recognized that it is difficult to measure quality outcomes.* Moreover, the present quality of inputs and processes may be the result of past under-funding and overwork. If a program is deemed essential to the university, additional resources can be invested to upgrade its quality.

Part III. Concern for Affected Faculty

The Faculty Affairs Committee strongly recommends that NO tenured or tenure track faculty member or special purpose faculty member lose his or her position as a result of program cuts. If cuts must be made, they should be made by attrition.

Indiana State University adheres to AAUP policies with regard to tenure and other professional standards. Since 1925, AAUP has established a policy, which indicates that a college or university can legitimately terminate faculty appointments, including appointments with tenure, on grounds of financial exigency, which is defined as a crisis threatening "the survival of the institution." However, a resort to financial exigency should occur only as a final resort. In such a circumstance, faculty should be fully involved in the decision-making leading to the layoffs, and those affected should be given the opportunity for a full hearing. In the case at hand, because any funds saved from program cuts are to be reinvested in the academic operations of the university, financial exigency cannot be used as a rationale to eliminate regular faculty members.

AAUP Regulation 4(d) states that "Recommended Institutional Regulations" permits "the termination of an appointment because of a formal discontinuance of a program or department of instruction based essentially on educational considerations." Such considerations, however, must be based on "long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuance" and should not be made in response to "cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment." The AAUP warns against an "open-ended" interpretation of "reorganization"; the mere assertion of "educational reorganization" cannot be taken as an adequate rationale for termination. As with financial exigency, faculty terminations justified by educational considerations should be resorted to only in extraordinary circumstances. The AAUP lists steps that should be considered before resort to faculty termination.

FAC strongly recommends administrative support for proper retraining of faculty who may need to be reassigned due to the merging or elimination of programs.

Source:

<http://www.aaup.org/statements/REPORTS/Financial.htm>

