

# Report to the College Senate from the Academic Plan Committee 12-12-03

The Academic Plan Committee has considered, with due deliberation, the proposed Academic Plan that has been prepared and presented by the administration. The committee has consulted with the provost, the faculty deans, and the associate vice president for undergraduate education, and has solicited subsequent responses from department chairs and program directors. After extended discussion about the proposed plan, we submitted a report to the Senate for its November 14 meeting. After considering our report, the provost responded to our questions and met with the committee on December 2.

The committee has agreed that the development of such an Academic Plan is, indeed, an appropriate and beneficial planning vehicle, particularly in a lean fiscal climate. The report addresses the need for forward thinking, albeit with lofty goals, and conservation of resources.

The concept of reorganization is not, however, to be taken lightly. Most committee members have voiced concerns about various parts of the plan, as proposed. The committee believes profoundly that any changes proposed must be studied and assessed before any reorganization can occur. If changes are made without assessment of current practices and appropriate consultation, they will not be welcomed, understood, or supported by this committee.

The committee has suggested the following changes to the plan, which are being presented in the following document. There is great concern that the changes as originally proposed would be done without appropriate consultation, and the committee has tried to include safeguards for the involved departments and programs.

**After much deliberation, the Academic Plan Committee puts forward the following motion: That the College Senate accept the committee's report and the following committee revision of the draft of the Academic Plan submitted by the provost.**

## **ACADEMIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS**

1. BUILD A DIVERSE, INTELLECTUALLY VITAL FACULTY AND STAFF
  - 1.1 Reinvest in and increase full-time faculty and staff.
    - Benchmark Buffalo State faculty numbers with peer institutions.
    - Implement a multiyear plan to increase full-time faculty.
    - Implement a multiyear plan to fill staff positions.

- Evaluate ethnic and gender diversity in departments, and institute appropriate targeted searches.
- 1.2 Manage the deployment of adjunct faculty.
- Define criteria for allocation of adjunct faculty.
  - Implement in fall 2004 an orientation program for new adjunct faculty.
  - Establish regular evaluation of adjunct faculty commencing fall 2005.
  - Increase adjunct faculty fee-per-course stipends.
- 1.3 Enhance and expand faculty and staff development to ensure quality student learning.
- Implement a comprehensive faculty and staff development plan commencing fall 2004.
  - Expand support for the scholarship of teaching and learning.
  - Improve the quality of faculty and staff work life.
2. DELIVER A CURRICULUM THAT WILL DISTINGUISH BUFFALO STATE AS A NATIONAL LEADER IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION
- 2.1 Revise the general education program to create a distinctive experience with common student learning outcomes as the foundation for the undergraduate degree.
- Seek recommendations during the review process, and provide appropriate follow-up to the College Senate.
- 2.2 Achieve 100 percent accreditation of eligible programs.
- Ascertain the practicality of achieving accreditation for eligible programs.
  - Establish a timetable to attain accreditation for programs that were identified as appropriate by fall 2008.
- 2.3 Support a five-year cycle for academic program review and renewal.
- Confirm and continue with five-year academic program review schedule, and dedicate resources to support deans' action plans.
  - Implement by fall 2005 a campus review cycle for academic minors.
- 2.4 Characterize academic distinctiveness.
- Pilot distinctiveness templates in spring 2004.
  - Implement distinctiveness campaign based on pilot data and a cost-benefit analysis regarding funding resources.

2.5 Align curriculum with comprehensive institutional goals, workforce needs, and institutional capacity to deliver a quality instructional program.

- Continue curriculum audit and act on proposed curriculum additions, deletions, and changes in consultation with deans and department chairs.
- Eliminate duplication in the curriculum and delete courses not offered as recommended by deans in consultation with department chairs.
- Establish schedule for implementation of new degree programs to ensure curriculum viability and relevance.
- Advance collaborative development of common courses.
- Strengthen the academic community's involvement in public engagement by expanding faculty, staff, and student involvement beyond the boundaries of the campus.

2.6 Meet enrollment objectives by identifying new markets, leveraging technology, and using creative delivery models to offer courses and services.

- Establish by fall 2004 short-term and long-term enrollment and retention goals, including targets for academic programs.
- Identify and implement priorities to employ technology as an advanced learning tool and to support learning productivity.
- Expand evening and weekend degree programs with emphasis on new markets, expanding services, and offering quality programs, commencing fall 2004.
- Resolve course availability issues to facilitate student completion of program requirements and to improve graduation rates.

2.7 Enhance graduate education.

- Submit for review graduate task force report (expected spring 2004) to all deans and chairs of departments with graduate programs, followed by comment and discussion among faculty. Return comments to provost and dean of graduate studies as soon as possible but at latest by end of spring semester 2004. Act on final recommendations.
- Have provost form a group of representative chairs to review both the relationship between the Graduate Office and departments, and the Graduate Office and other deans' offices. Forward recommendations to provost as soon as possible but at latest by end of spring 2004.
- Implement a three-year plan to increase stipends for, fund, and deploy graduate assistants. Employ graduate assistants within academic departments as much as possible.

- 2.8 Improve the infrastructure (facilities, technology, and services) to support instruction and student learning productivity.
- Establish by spring 2004 priorities for classroom improvements, facility renovations, master plan priorities, and external fund-raising.
  - Implement an Information Commons model in the library to streamline and comprehensively address student needs, particularly servicing evening students, effective fall 2004.
  - Implement processes for annual upgrade of instructional facilities and equipment.
3. ENGAGE STUDENTS TO CREATE A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS
- 3.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of current first-year programs.
- Identify relevant existing academic and student-support services by spring 2004.
  - Determine appropriate consultative means of assessment and a process to recommend changes and introduce new concepts by fall 2004.
  - Implement coordinated first-year experience based on assessment of existing and potential programs, and consultation, by fall 2005.
- 3.2 Strengthen expectations for student performance and engagement in learner-centered activities employing multiple instructional strategies.
- Strengthen partnering and identify new instructional roles for faculty and staff in support of student learning.
  - Expand student-centered learning using learning communities, freshman seminars, experiential and service learning, internships, accelerated learning, active learning, learning with peers, and like activities.
- 3.3 Coordinate and strengthen advisement.
- Implement recommendations responding to the spring 2003 report of the task force on advisement.
4. EXPAND SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATE A CULTURE OF “SCHOLARS IN THE CLASSROOM”
- 4.1 Provide comprehensive campus support systems essential to success in scholarly research and creative activities.

- Implement recommendations in response to the report (expected spring 2004) of the task force on research.
  - Implement multiyear plan for library to support campus scholarship.
- 4.2 Expand the number of students actively engaged in scholarship and creativity activity.
- Institutionalize the undergraduate research program.
  - Increase student research and creative efforts.
5. EMPLOY ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY TO GUIDE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
- 5.1 Expand, further develop, and certify student learning outcomes.
- Continue to develop assessment of general education and disciplinary majors.
  - Implement assessment protocols for graduate programs commencing spring 2005.
- 5.2 Implement processes for evaluating the effectiveness of all academic operations.
- Institute annual evaluation components to monitor progress toward excellence in service to students.
  - Commence in spring 2004 five-year review cycle for “centers.”
  - Commence in spring 2005 five-year review cycle for noninstructional units.
6. ESTABLISH AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS TO ENSURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND RESPONSIVENESS
- 6.1 Engage in a process of reorganization of academic departments and faculties based on need assessment, projected effectiveness of results, and ongoing consultation with faculty and staff. The goal will always be to help ensure quality of student learning and continued institutional effectiveness in delivering the curriculum. The following can be considered as talking points:
- Deliver quality learning experiences and excellence in service to students.
  - Ascertain the practicality of consolidating academic departments.
  - Create clusters of disciplines that foster interactions between departments and other campus units or centers.

- Address issues of the administrative structure in the Faculty of Applied Science and Education.
  - Position the academic community to expand involvement with economic development and community outreach.
  - Create opportunities for departments to be more interdependent and interdisciplinary.
  - Establish alignments that are more competitive in attracting students and external resources.
  - Increase efficiency in sharing of resources, including space, facilities, equipment, and personnel.
  - Establish interactions for creation and delivery of new academic programs.
  - Evaluate whether departments should be organized into “schools” rather than “faculties.”
  - Determine the ideal number of faculties (schools) for deployment of departments.
- Following appropriate consultation and consensus building, implement reorganization.
- 6.2 Engage in a process of reorganization of academic support areas based on need assessment, projected effectiveness of results, and ongoing consultation with faculty and staff. The goal will always be to help ensure institutional effectiveness in servicing students. The following elements can be considered as talking points:
- Reorganize academic and enrollment support areas.
  - Consolidate international and national exchange programs.
  - Establish post-implementation management for SABRE and Degree Navigator.
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- Following appropriate consultation and consensus building, implement reorganization.
- 6.3 Increase revenue production.
- Centralize noncredit offerings and fee-per-service activities in the Continuing Education Office.
  - Expand summer programs.
- 6.4 Strengthen leadership of department chairs and directors.
- Act on recommendations from reports (expected in academic year 2003–2004) of task forces addressing leadership for department chairs and program managers.