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Report of the Advisory Committee on the Proposed College of Health Sciences

This report does not attempt to offer a substantive evaluation of the merits or demerits of the proposed college. Our approach has instead been procedural, focusing on the steps by which the proposal has been developed and presented to the Provost for possible submission to the IHL Board in July. Our approach has moreover been historical; that is, rather than surveying other institutions for their guidelines and policies concerning academic reorganization, we have based our recommendations on the university's established commitment, endorsed by its faculty and administration, to principles of shared governance. According to those principles, a process that includes wide-ranging faculty consultation and good-faith interaction between faculty and administrators permits careful, fully informed, and thereby effective decision-making. This report reflects the further judgment, also based on historical experience at the University of Mississippi, that in our existing structure of standing committees we already possess the means to realize these goals.

Consultation Prior to Significant Academic Reorganization

The creation of a new school or college within the university is a significant academic reorganization that is likely to have a broad and lasting impact on the academic program of the University. Any such change deserves and requires comprehensive study and wide internal consultation before being implemented. It will affect faculty in other academic units in a variety of ways; many are likely to have relevant information, insights, suggestions, and analytical comments to offer. Drawing on such faculty input is an essential part of the decision-making process for a significant academic reorganization. This is a clear example of shared governance in the administration of academic affairs, in accordance with the Policy on the Role of the Faculty in the Administration of Academic Affairs submitted to SACS after approval by the Senate of the Faculty at its November 11, 1999 meeting.

In this instance consultation consists of two parts: identifying the groups to be consulted; and furnishing enough detailed information to these groups to make consultation effective and meaningful.

Groups to be Consulted

Existing university policy establishes the following groups that should be included in the consultation process concerning any significant academic reorganization. (It is possible that other groups should be included as well.) Each group should be provided detailed information about the proposed reorganization at the outset of the process and should be given sufficient time to provide thoughtful comment and recommendation.

1. The faculty of the academic units immediately involved in the reorganization and affected by it.
2. Undergraduate Council
3. Graduate Council
4. Council of Academic Administrators
5. Research Board
6. External Academic Affairs Committee
7. University Planning Council
8. Senate of the Faculty (here comment and recommendation are optional in light of the involvement of the other groups)

A method should be established that allows each group to forward its comments and/or recommendations to other groups, possibly via e-mail or Internet, so that all groups possess the fullest possible mix of information throughout the consultation process.

Information Needed for Consultation

Immediately prior to its May 4, 2000 meeting, the Senate of the Faculty was furnished with a 1-page proposal for the new college and a 2-page letter of support for the proposal from the chairpersons of the five departments involved in its development. Neither item contains enough detailed information about the proposed reorganization to permit effective faculty consultation. In the absence of such information, discussion in the Senate turned to speculation.

This report makes no attempt to catalog exhaustively what information should be included in the proposal for a new College of Health Sciences. At the very least, however, the following items suggest themselves:

1. An overview of organizational patterns and trends among comparable universities.
2. A mission statement for the proposed college, including a statement of its relationship to the University mission. How will this mission be accomplished more effectively under the proposed alignment of departments than under the present one?
3. A set of realistic quantitative and qualitative goals for the proposed college.
4. A budget projection covering at least four years of expenses associated with the proposed college, including administrative positions (dean, associate dean[s]), staff positions, space requirements, and so on. This projection should identify the sources of all funds needed to support the administration of the new school and further specify the extent to which money will be needed from sources outside the existing budgets of the five departments involved.
5. Information concerning human and physical resources, including:
 - A. the site for the proposed college; necessary or planned renovations; other space requirements;
 - B. the number and type of faculty;
 - C. the effect on, and transition plans for, faculty promotion and tenure;
 - D. the number and type of students: graduate and/or undergraduate credit hours; graduate degree programs to be offered; undergraduate majors and minors to be offered; and
 - E. effect on, and transition plans for, graduate students and student majors.
6. Issues related to accreditation at the department, program, and/or college level.
7. Information concerning the role of the proposed college in distance learning, continuing education, and other external affairs of the university.

Recommendation: Moratorium on proposal for new college of Health Sciences

At this time it is premature to make a decision to create a new College of Health Sciences or to submit to the IHL Board a proposal for the creation of a new college. Specifically, no proposal should go to the IHL Board at its July 2000 meeting. At this point sufficient information has not been distributed to allow meaningful faculty consultation. No decision should be made within the university until thorough and good faith consultation has occurred as set out above.

This report was submitted by the Task Force on the proposal to create a new school appointed by the Executive

Committee of the Senate in spring 2000. Tom Horton, chair; John Bradley, Scotty Hargrove, Jean Shaw, Charles Taylor, Jay Watson, and Marvin Wilson. It was accepted by the Executive Committee and forwarded to the Provost as the recommendation of the Senate Executive Committee.