

Provost Proposes Academic Reorganization to Address Budget Cuts: Seeks Faculty and AP Input

In a number of meetings with faculty, chairs, and deans on August 18, Provost Betty Capaldi revealed her proposals to President Michael Crow for reorganization of the academic wing of the university house. The university must deliver on nearly \$30 million in budget cuts from the state, and the provost's proposals are designed to address roughly \$6 million of that. These proposals now go to the Academic Assembly for its feedback. The administration is seeking constructive input regarding the soundness of the provost's proposals and suggestions concerning other options that could produce needed savings.

The stimulus for the change is two-fold. Most immediate is the state budget, which took away \$6.6 million this past fiscal year and \$22.65 million this year. While the university has continued to grow its revenues from non-state sources, those funds are typically more targeted and unavailable for the lines and operations funded with state money. A second stimulus is the recognition that in the first five-year development phase of considerable growth and reorganization, certain inefficiencies and duplications have arisen and other reorganization possibilities have been recognized that, in the words of the proposal, will "reduce administrative overhead, merge programs of similar content, promote natural collaborations, consolidate support services, create synergistically strong academic entities, and build new and innovative program connectivity."

Resisting a simple solution of across-the-board cuts, President Crow is attempting to secure the savings through this reorganization and other strategies involving university resources that can strengthen rather than weaken the university. Certain principles drive the reorganization. Foremost for the academic enterprise is that there will be no reduction in faculty lines. The reorganization is designed to secure savings by reducing administrative costs, hence the emphasis on merging units permitting, among other things, the disestablishment of two colleges. A second principle is that these proposed changes must be presented to the Academic Assembly through the University Senate consistent with principles of shared governance.

The University Academic Council, which is the executive board of the University Senate, has established several opportunities for soliciting faculty and AP responses to the proposal. The creation of this Academic Assembly Web site is intended to establish a more effective two-way communication between the Assembly and the University administration via the University Senate and the Academic Council. The site is designed to get good information to the Assembly and through the Blackboard forum and survey opportunities receive direct input from individual Assembly members. Other opportunities for faculty and AP input will occur at a special meeting after the Assembly breakfast on September 4. Check your e-mail from Provost Capaldi on or about August 22 for your invitation.

On September 8, the University Senate will address the proposal in a first read status, at which questions and comments will be solicited. A second read on the proposal will occur at the October 6 Senate meeting. In the interim, other open forums may be offered, as interest dictates. For a more complete list of ways to be engaged in the development of the reorganization plans, see the link below this article on the Assembly homepage. -----

----- George Watson UAC member as past-president of Downtown Phoenix campus

View a copy of the [Provost's Proposal](#).