

Academic Priorities Work Group (APWG) Report #2

May 2010

Introduction

The Academic Priority Work Group is charged with the task of assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Missouri State's academic endeavors, identifying strategic choices facing the University and the priorities that should govern decision-making in the future. The parameters for this review and all other work groups should be the following:

- *Assume steady or slightly increased enrollment
- *Assume at least a 10 percent reduction in state appropriation beginning in Fiscal Year 2012, with possible further reductions
- *Assume legislative constraints on tuition will be maintained
- *Recommend academic priorities at the curricular and program levels
- *Recommend evaluative criteria to be used to assess existing and proposed programs
- *Recommend a transparent process for any internal reallocation and reorganization to achieve these priorities
- *Present initial report to Steering Committee by September 1, 2010, in a public forum that would permit sustained review, response, and follow up via Town Hall Meetings, email responses, etc.

Activities to Date

The APWG has adopted (and adapted) the outline of tasks identified by **Robert C. Dickeson** in his book: *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* (John Wiley and Sons, 2010). Additional sources influencing sections of the outline are noted.

- I. REAFFIRMING [AND REFINING] THE MISSION
- II. DEFINING WHAT CONSTITUTES A UNIT OF ANALYSIS
- III. SELECTING FROM POTENTIAL CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZATION

I. REAFFIRMING [AND REFINING] THE MISSION

The APWG views the Missouri State University Mission as having two major components – (A) that which we share with other contemporary universities, and (B) the public affairs mission, which is uniquely ours.

A. The Contemporary Mission of Higher Education¹

Developing Educated Persons

Using traditional pedagogical methods as well as expanded use of instructional technologies, "To develop educated persons" is the University's purpose. This has been the traditional mission of institutions of higher education. It is more important in the economy of the 21st century than ever.

New Ideas

¹ Adapted from David F. Shaffer and David J. Wright, *A New Paradigm for Economic Development*, Rockefeller Institute, March 2010, pages 2-3, www.rockinst.org and the University's *Long-Range Vision and Five Year Plan (2006-2010)*.

The University has a focus on creating new ideas—innovations—“the lifeblood for the knowledge-based economy” Along with other contemporary universities, we recognize that through the teaching, research and service of our faculty and intellectually engaged students, we can incubate significant new ideas leading to economic benefits to our local and regional economies.

Transfer of Knowledge

Business and economic development, through the transfer of knowledge by higher education institutions to employers, is central to the advancement of society with a diverse and thriving economy. This transfer can be accomplished in many ways including: providing students with business and economic knowledge and the capabilities and values to succeed and adapt in a technologically changing, dynamic, global economy; encouraging engagement in the scholarship of discovery, learning and service, and conveying the results to the broader business and scientific communities; and, seeking cooperative opportunities with business, industry and government to benefit students and the public at-large.

“Community Revitalization”

Through partnerships with community educational institutions, governmental entities, community agencies, businesses and health care organizations and otherwise, higher education institutions play an increasingly consequential role in their communities.

A. Reaffirming, Refining and Implementing the Public Affairs Mission

In the earliest years, there was a great reluctance to define *public affairs* – the feeling was that any description would limit the involvement and engagement of our faculty and students. We have come a long way since 1995, when the mission was first conferred. We are now moving from a concern about the **articulation** of our public affairs mission, to a focus on how best to **implement** the *public affairs* mission through various means, including outcomes based improvements to our curriculum and programs. We have developed initiatives in a variety of international and domestic policy efforts, and identified competencies that our graduates should possess. We now seek to distinguish ourselves from other universities, connect our efforts to national programs and projects in higher education (from AACU, AACU, etc.) and clarify learning outcomes for our students. We also hope to move toward greater interdisciplinarity, campus wide engagement and collaboration with the community in all our efforts.

The Public Affairs Mission has both 1) **knowledge** and 2) **competency** requirements:

1) Public Affairs **Content Knowledge** reflects **Public Policy Issues**:

A) Global Policy Issues ²:

1. *Population* – shifts in the nature of the human family, including overall population level, rate of demographic growth, distribution of growth, age distribution, level of urbanization, and the profound asymmetries implicit in many of these demographic trends;
2. *Strategic resource management* – in the face of increasing population pressures and environmental sustainability limits, the challenge of meeting demand in food, water and energy;

² From Erik R. Peterson, “Introduction,” *Educating Globally Competent Citizens: A Toolkit for Teaching Seven Revolutions*, xiii-ix. Eds. Dennis R. Falk, Susan Moss, Martin Shapiro. Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 2010. Peterson takes his list from AACU’s Seven Revolutions Curricular Development Program of the American Democracy Project.

3. *Technology innovation and diffusion* – exploring which technologies will have the greatest influence on changing our lives, with a view to innovations in computation, robotics, biotech and nanotech, and a focus on convergence points between them;
4. *Information and knowledge creation and dissemination* – the remarkable opportunities and challenges associated with the exponential rise in the movement of data, information, and knowledge across the planet;
5. *Economic integration* – implications of the continuation of the massive cross-border movements of goods, services, labor, capital, and technology, and the volatility such integration engenders;
6. *Conflict* – the tremendous new complexities associated with addressing the erosion of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, traditional nuclear and radiological threats, the onset of new threats involving bioterrorism, the rising specter of cyber-warfare and the challenge of post conflict reconstruction;
7. *Governance* – in government, the private sector, and civil society, or in the research and education fields, or capacity to organize ourselves to seize opportunities and mitigate risks in the longer run

B). Domestic Policy Issues (not exhaustive)

1. Health Care
2. Education
3. Economic
4. Immigration
5. Terrorism
6. Environmental Stewardship
7. Conflict Resolution

2) Public Affairs Competencies

Missouri State University graduates should be skilled at **effective community engagement** and **ethical leadership**, and possess **cultural competence**.

i. DEFINING WHAT CONSTITUTES A UNIT OF ANALYSIS FOR PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION AND

ENUMERATING PROGRAMS: The *unit of analysis* is “any activity or collection of activities in student or academic affairs that consumes resources.”³ Every **degree program option, certificate, track, etc.** needs to be identified and listed, along with all **research, education and service initiatives** in Academic and Student Affairs.

ii. SELECTING FROM POTENTIAL CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZATION

Dickeson provides ten criteria for consideration:⁴

1. History, development and expectations of the program
2. External demand for the program
3. Internal demand for the program

³ Dickeson, R. (2010). *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services. Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance, Revised and Updated*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, John & Sons, Inc., 56.

⁴ Dickeson, R. (2010), 66.

4. Quality of program inputs and processes
5. Quality of program outcomes
6. Size, scope, and productivity of the program
7. Revenue and other resources generated by the program
8. Costs and other expenses associated with the program
9. Impact, justification, and overall essentiality of the program
10. Opportunity analysis of the program

Desired Outcomes of a Prioritization of Academic Programs

While the APWG has been asked to address program prioritization as a means of reducing costs, the paramount concern among the participants is that we take advantage of this unique opportunity to improve the quality and focus of our efforts – enabling us to identify and invest in programs for the future. As listed by Dickeson⁵, a prioritization of academic programs should achieve:

1. Continued excellence of programs
2. Further support of a learning community
3. Identification of funds for excellence and innovation
4. Ability to respond quickly and effectively to the learning needs of the community
5. Understanding of a clear, strategic sense of what we need to be as an institution
6. Development of a strategic balance
7. Reduction of budgetary dependence on year to year enrollment numbers
8. Enhanced sense of university community and the ongoing need for self examination
9. Enhanced community wide confidence that we are doing the right things and doing it well
10. More effective stewardship of the university
11. Enhanced sense of ownership in the institutions future by all campus constituencies.

⁵ Dickeson, R. (2010), 118.