

Plan for Academic Enrichment
Phase II
February 2008

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Individual Comments
(By Date)

Faculty
11/8/07

I would like to invite the faculty, administration and the Corporation to consider the consequences of continued lack of investment in the core physical sciences at Brown. With one exception (Computer Science), there has been little or no expansion of core disciplinary science here. This lack of investment is not only manifested by the lack of expansion of faculty positions, but also by the shrinking of graduate programs in Physical Sciences, as well as the total neglect of infrastructure issues which affect the ability of science faculty to obtain and maintain grant support. Such grant support, through indirect cost recovery, benefits the entire campus. When money is left on the table, as happens in almost every Science Department at Brown now due to lack of essential administrative and infrastructure support, it affects everyone.

The apparent investment choices of a University will ultimately influence its students' view of what is academically important.

For years, we have heard that Brown is not a choice destination for science oriented students. This is not due to lack of interest or merit among the science faculty. Instead, Brown shows our students, with poorly heated/ventilated classrooms, ill equipped or antiquated labs, how little we value science on this campus.

In short, the plan for academic enrichment has failed to embrace a plan to revitalize and enrich the Physical Science Departments. I think this is an intellectual and economic mistake.

Faculty
11/12/07

I am so overscheduled I don't have time to get to these meetings. I'm not alone. Has there been any attempt to suggest that the academic program would be enriched if the faculty weren't under-supported and told they must be all to everyone? We need more staff support and also a real acknowledgment from the administration that we simply can't serve all the constituencies the PR says we will: supporting individual undergrad research, plus directing grad research, teaching a full load, plus engaging in interdisciplinary workshops with colleagues, plus carrying on vibrant research activity and public activities (conferences etc) as a scholar. We are constantly asked to be a "university-college" but this increasingly is taking its toll on the health and happiness of the faculty

Alumna
11/16/07

The Diversity Plan adopted 5 years ago was truly BOLD and I am frankly incredibly impressed with the inroads that the diversity efforts led by Brenda Allen in this area have achieved. As recently as two years ago, I wondered if we could get even close to our goals for this area. And here we are...need blind admissions for North American applicants, faculty recruitment "hires of opportunity" reached, the largest number of black admittance in twenty years, an impressive number of students who are the first in their family to attend college, inroads to changing the diversity of the medical school and graduate programs, success from the Admissions Talent Quest initiative...measureable and visible results...I am especially happy to see diversity in the curriculum also securing steady footing with creative, cross curriculum offerings which reveal real ongoing partnerships between departments within Brown as well as with organizations in the community (Woods Hole, RISD) President Simmons had the courage to steer the University in a self study (Slavery and Justice Report) of its original roots and some tangible outcomes and healthy discussion which obviously brought conversation, public response and strength to even our sister institutions (Yale's removal of its discriminatory painting). But of course the "job" is never done...need blind admissions must be offered to every Brown student with need regardless of origin (international, transfer student, graduate student) as well as SUPPORT for students who are admitted for their talent but need "care and feeding" during their tenure at the institution...and of course the real results of how well we are doing on this SUPPORT for our more diverse population. I am happy to see the framework to further define this support and to measure the impact of the success of it by tracking students at Brown (support) during Brown (drop out rate etc) and after Brown. As the years post PAE, we need to ensure an institutionalized measurement system which is broad based and realistic, with objective as well as subjective pieces that catch "snapshots" of student and post graduate experiences as well as "documentary" footage over a lifetime. I also think that we need to communicate to the council constituencies more often in this "reporting" manner because I had no sense of the depth of the inroads and success to date (and I made all but one of our Council meetings the past few years). The institution has hiked a long way since the beginning of PAE but there is more work to be done and more mileage to place underfoot.

Thanks for the opportunity to participate these past few years and to comment herein.

Staff
11/28/07

This response is informational, rather than a comment on any specific aspect of the PAE. Although I have worked as an image processor in the Brown Planetary Group of Geological Sciences for 20 years, I am new in the position as manager of the Northeast Planetary Data Center. The PAE has provided me a basic guide from which to conceive new public ventures, as well as internal modifications.

The Brown/NASA Northeast Planetary Data Center is addressing the community collaboration component of the PAE.

From the PAE:

"COLLABORATE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND BENEFIT

One of Brown's great strengths is that it exists in a vital urban environment. That is also one of our greatest challenges. It is impossible for Brown to move forward without interacting with our neighbors on the east side and in the city and state, and our ability to take advantage of possible synergies and work out conflicts in a cooperative and forward-thinking way will have a significant impact our success with these initiatives."

The Brown/NASA Northeast Data Center is developing collaboration with the Museum of Natural History and Planetarium at Roger Williams Park in the City of Providence. The Center is acting as a resource for planetary science information and imagery. In the past year, the Data Center has provided materials for several shows, including "Get Extreme", an exhibition dealing with astrobiology, and from September through November of 2007 sponsored and helped stage "A New Perspective on Mars" with the cooperation of NASA Rhode Island Space Grant Consortium and the German Space Agency. Graduate students from the Planetary Group at Brown acted as informed docents for this 3-D exhibit of Martian imagery, sharing their expertise and knowledge.

http://www.geo.brown.edu/BrownNASADataCenter/new_mars/announcement.html

An upcoming show will deal with renewed international interest in the Moon and lunar science. These shows expose the Rhode Island community to the broad range of planetary research at Brown and elsewhere, and provide information that is not widely available outside specialized research groups at Brown. The exhibitions have attracted thousands of visitors, and act as a venue for teacher workshops and public school instruction.

Faculty

11/30/07

More funds should be sought and made available for expanding and housing the library's print collections. The PAE very rightly emphasizes Brown's standing and ambitions as a research university. An excellent library is a self-evident necessity for research and study - and our library, frankly, is a resource in need of significant improvement. As a distinguished new faculty member recently commented, ³People come to Brown in spite of the library rather than because of it.²

Obviously, online resources are essential as well; I applaud and support the library's acquisition of them. But print media cannot be neglected if we are to maintain and enhance the quality of research at Brown. Moreover, needless to say, books and journals (at least in many disciplines) are ludicrously inexpensive when compared to the costs of other research tools and facilities.

The allocation of library space is also at issue. In historical and humanistic disciplines, at least, print resources may retain their scholarly value and interest for generations. They do require shelf space, but it is far more conducive to efficient work to have them physically available (not off-site) when needed. Of course it is good to provide study spaces for students, but we need to think seriously about how to retain library space to accord with the main function of the library.

Improving the library's print holdings has received very little attention in the PAE and very little increase in budgetary support, in comparison with other research-related initiatives. At this time of re-examining the goals of the Plan for Academic Enrichment, I urge that we acknowledge and correct this gap.

Faculty
12/3/07

To whom it may concern:

The Chair of the FEC has invited us to give feedback on the PAE: while I generally applaud some of the new initiatives, I am very much concerned that there is too much emphasis on 'new'. The assumption 'new = good' is, in fact, quite problematic. It is often the case that 'old' or traditional research methods are still there because they have survived the test (many years after former 'new initiatives' have disappeared). I am therefore concerned about the allocation of, among other things, money. On the one hand, there seems to be lots of money for new initiatives, on the other, the Rockefeller Library is seriously underfunded, as the recent effort to cut journals showed yet again. In the humanities, in particular, the budget increase over the years didn't even match the inflation (while the sciences kept receiving more money because prices skyrocketed). As a result, Brown's holdings in the humanities are seriously lagging behind those of its so-called peer institutions, and not just those. (The other day I discovered that we didn't have a fundamental book, but the University of Iowa, e.g., did! And this was not the first time that I made such a discovery.) The recent plunge of the dollar will make things even worse for those fields (like mine: Classics) which depend to a considerable degree on books from Europe.

I could go on with this and give you more examples and arguments, but you no doubt get the idea. My suggestion is, in short: every extra dollar for 'new initiatives' should be matched by, at least, an extra dollar for 'old initiatives' (such as printed books and journals). It is NOT the case that all these can and will eventually be replaced by electronic sources, certainly not in historical disciplines, where printed materials will dominate research for the foreseeable future.

Faculty
12/5/07

The PAE is tremendous--my morale and that of my colleagues has vastly improved since President Ruth Simmons came and this Plan for Academic Enrichment was implemented.

That being said, there are many glitches. The call for comments is timely, and welcome--

1) BioMed needs a stronger University alliance.

* **Chair turnover is slow:** Academic renewal needs turnover at the chair level. Some chairs have not turned over for 10-15 years and the same chair is in place despite the changes. And BioMed should use University policy for re-appointment of chairs in academic departments, such as Pathology, MMI, and Community Health.

* BioMed relationship to the University needs to be strengthened in other ways as well, with more reward for academic activities and less for receipt of funding -- rigorous scholarly research, whether it be popular (funded) or individualistic (harder to obtain funding), needs to be recognized and rewarded. We may have gone too far into the money realm--academia, and Brown in particular, have a **mission of thoughtfulness that is not served by chasing funding** whose agenda is often decided outside the academy by funding agencies and commercialization.

*** Dean of the Faculty must provide more support and advice for tenure and tenure-track BioMed** faculty struggling to understand faculty rules and meet their contractual responsibilities and avoid excessive assignments by chairs. The lack of turnover in chairs has led to abuses and demands for faculty to exceed their contracts in ways that will ultimately undermine our enterprise. Without input from University Hall, tenured faculty, particularly those in junior levels, are at risk.

2) Infrastructural needs

*** Office of sponsored research needs to increase faculty support**, whether through direct assistance to individual faculty on a person-to-person basis, or establishment of instructions for accounting, justifying expenses, etc. The paperwork is over-whelming us, and must cost Brown a bunch, too.

Streamline the paperwork

Provide faculty support in terms of real people doing the Xeroxing, typing and other tasks that do not need a PhD to accomplish!

Save faculty time and promote funding success.

*** Provide adequate administrative assistance at the department level**

Example: My department has doubled in faculty size in the past 5 years. We are teaching twice as many courses. We have more than tripled our funding.

And-sadly, we have the same number of admin assistants--a grand total of one (1). I watched a new recruit slumped at his desk typing his own budget into a grant proposal. The department manager is a love, stays late, comes in most weekends. Both of them are working too hard. This is unfair to all, including Brown.

3) Post-doctoral and transitional positions

We need to think about how Brown could promote the transitional period between PhD and faculty positions.

*** Post docs in BioMedical research are the life blood.** We need to include a plan for post-docs in our graduate program initiatives. We cannot grow a successful graduate program in BioMed without post-docs.

*** Transitional time in humanities:** Instructors and lecturers in the humanities can be transitional times for emerging scholars to acquire the skills necessary for faculty appointments. Too often at Brown these positions are occupied by spouses or failed faculty-wanna-bees. We need to use these positions to provide transitional period for excellence. This will require a bold new approach to faculty development in the humanities. And an attention to the married couple with real positions for both spouses.

4) Diversity

Some strides have been made in recruiting under-represented minorities, but we are still far behind. There are very, very few Native Americans at Brown. We do not have a strong program to reach out to Tribal colleges to train and recruit into all levels of our academic initiative. We also need to pay attention to our culture of exclusivity, especially as it impacts our academic offerings.

Native Americans have particular areas of excellence and expertise. These areas are poorly represented at Brown--one area is caring for the earth/climate change/global warming and its effect on

plants, animals, and the sea. When we build this initiative, we need to look to native peoples for their invaluable insight, their commitment and their expertise.

Hope this is helpful. Please let me know if more detail is needed--

Faculty
12/6/07

To the Administration:

It is indisputable that Mathematics and Applied Mathematics are two of the strongest departments of the university. Yet I have not seen much evidence of "Academic Enrichment" in either department. Almost all of the new and highly touted resources have gone to other programs at Brown. Particularly striking are the following.

- 1) A DECREASE in graduate support last year!
- 2) Very little increase, if any, in faculty hiring.

Is it university policy to weaken our strongest departments in order to sustain those that are less strong?

Faculty
12/7/07

I was surprised to see a call for more "Pre-eminent professors" in the President's report this past Tuesday. My own view is that the "superstar" strategy has not been successful for Brown on several points. While it MAY have added to the University's reputation and/or research funds (I know of no evidence for or against this), it has not added to the faculty in ways that increase the overall number of course offerings proportionately, nor has it increase the possibilities for 1:1 work with students (research, independent studies, etc.). Moreover, it has reinforced perceptions among the "core faculty" (the bulk that have been here through tenure) that they are considered second-class citizens of lesser value to the University. Colleagues commonly tell me of superstar hires who rarely come to campus, do no advising, teach only graduate or enrollment-limited UG seminars, and are barely visible within their departments. I am not asserting that this is the norm among our new hires, but it is definitely a common impression among "the rest of us." People had hoped that adding to the faculty would improve conditions for all of us, e.g., by reducing the average course-load to 3 for those areas where it is 4, a possibility the President has referenced several times but that seems not to be among the priorities. As Ruth Colwill said in her remarks, Brown has been an "overachiever," and this includes faculty performance. We have developed many pre-eminent professors in-house, and even those of us who cannot claim that status have managed to develop a body of work and group of alumnae whose prizes and achievements would be the envy of most schools. Before we bring in more senior, highly accomplished scholars, I would urge that we give priority to recruiting the top junior scholars, helping them develop professionally, and supporting the work of the faculty as a whole.

On a separate note, I would like to comment on the up-coming vacancy of the Dean of Medicine position. My understanding has been that one of the main issues remains the relationship with Lifespan as well as the local hospitals. In that regard, I think it would be a mistake to appoint anyone with strong links with those organizations either as Interim or Dean. We must have someone in that position who keeps

Brown's interests first and foremost, especially as we proceed to develop our Davol Sq. area and a new Med School site. A national search may be the best way to ensure this, as it removes the possibility that local ties complicate our negotiations. While this is not directly about the PAE, the choice of someone to fill the post will be critical to our future objectives. Thanks for considering these remarks.

Faculty
12/10/07

Interdisciplinary Programs and the Plan for Academic Enrichment

Last year I initiated a discussion with the directors of six other interdisciplinary programs and centers in the humanities and social sciences—Development Studies, Environmental Studies, International Relations, Race and Ethnicity, Sexuality and Society, and Gender Studies (that have merged into Gender and Sexuality Studies). We discussed forming a coalition in order to meet with the Provost to address some of the overarching issues that we all faced. Since many of us were also engaged in the discussions of the Internationalization Committee, the general consensus was to wait until the committee had completed its deliberations before we organized a meeting with the administration. In the meantime, the Taskforce on Undergraduate Education was formed, and it, no doubt will address some of the concerns outlined below. Nevertheless, I wanted to address the issue of Brown's Interdisciplinary Programs directly as they relate to the Plan for Academic Enrichment. Although I cannot speak on behalf of any of the other interdisciplinary concentrations, programs, and centers, I believe that I have identified many important questions that need serious consideration.

The Plan for Academic Enrichment emphasizes the rich array of course options for students. As is commonly the case at Brown, most students explore a range of fields and disciplines before choosing a concentration, which is usually based in a traditional discipline, housed in an established department with tenured faculty, staff, and resources. Over the years Brown also has developed a series of excellent interdisciplinary concentrations that challenge students to integrate diverse approaches to a given subject or area of the world. Most of these interdisciplinary programs had no faculty lines and limited resources.

Because Brown has so many concentrations, there are some in the University who have a “sink or swim” attitude. If the program is small, if it is not attached to a Department that has faculty lines, if there are few concentrators, if it cannot survive on its own wit and resources, it shouldn't survive. For me the question is: Are viable small interdisciplinary programs—or in the case of International Studies large interdisciplinary program—not larger or more dynamic because they do not meet students' needs? Or are they outstanding programs that cannot grow because they lack university resources and support?

I would like to offer my experience as the Director of the Center for Latin American Studies as an example of how this dilemma plays out at Brown. I choose this example because I can speak about it in depth and because I think it illustrates some of the issues that we should consider when assessing the Plan for Academic Enrichment. I realize that each interdisciplinary program has a unique history and a special set of problems, but I think we all share a common set of challenges.

I came to Brown in January 2005 as an Associate Professor in Latin American history with my second book half written. I had just completed a term as the President of the Brazilian Studies Association, and I had extensive administrative experience outside of academia. The Dean of the Faculty asked me to assume the directorship of the Center for Latin American Studies in August 2005. I enthusiastically took up this challenge.

The Latin American Studies concentration was approved in 1973, the Program established in 1983, and the Center established in 1984. Without dismissing the excellent work of my predecessors, the Center

had a modest program with a modest budget. We have an average of thirteen or fourteen concentrators graduating every year. (In last year's graduating class, we had a Rhodes scholar, who co-concentrated in Bio-chemistry, and two Fulbright scholars). Due to some fundraising in the 1990s, we had one position (a rotating one-year visiting professorship of a scholar from Latin America), a dissertation fellowship, a small fund to expand library holdings, a small operating budget, and a half-time staff person. The Program organized a film and a modest lecture series. In the 1990s, the Program had created a consortium with Yale, University of Connecticut, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and received a three-year Department of Education Title VI grant to expand and enrich Latin American Studies at Brown. However, the grant was not renewed, largely because collaborations among the institutions were not viable. The Center had 55 affiliated faculty and professional staff and an Executive Committee of eighteen. Doug Cope, an Associate Professor of History, was the volunteer concentration advisor. The Director received a \$4,000 yearly stipend and *one* course release after a *three* year term.

When I took over the Directorship, I decided to apply for the Department of Education Title VI Area Resource Center grant. At the time, the University administration encouraged me to do this but offered no resources or support to help write the grant. The Office of the Vice President for Research had just hired a person to work with grant writers, but there were not obvious means to get support for writing the grant other than some university data collecting. At the same time that we were writing the grant--essentially a three month project that was another full time job for the Director--we expanded our film and lecture series, strengthened the concentration, and increased our visibility on campus. Nevertheless, we faced a serious problem: If we were to grow the concentration and double the number of students studying Latin America, we had no means to respond to student interests. We had no faculty line for a senior thesis seminar or an introductory course in Latin American Studies. Our Visiting Professor offered two senior seminars but no on-going continuity for the concentration. We had many potential donors, but no support that would free faculty to work with the Development Office to expand resources. We were not included in the University's Table of Needs or an item in the Plan for Academic Enrichment. In short, we were caught in a no-growth situation although it was clear that there was significant student and faculty interest in Latin America and the Caribbean on campus.

In spite of these obstacles, we wrote the Department of Education grant and received a four-year \$856,000 award to expand and enrich Latin American Studies at Brown. The results have been staggering. During the first year of the grant we organized over *sixty-five* events on Latin America and the Caribbean on campus, including two film series, two conferences, faculty colloquia, and more than forty seminars and lectures. We hired an Outreach Coordinator and began to build linkages with the Latino communities of Providence. We worked with the Watson Institute *Choice for the Twentieth-First Century* to develop curriculum that we could bring university knowledge into the K-12 classroom. We have 24 students enrolled in a Haitian Creole language class and are preparing to develop a Haitian Studies program at Brown. We have reinforced our position as a flagship institute for Brazilian Studies worldwide. We have initiated a Study Abroad Program in Cuba, and established Task Forces on Cuba, Haiti, the Southern Cone, the Andes, and Greater Mexico. We have received \$150,000 in donations for on-going endowment funds for the center. We have also identified an addition thirty-five faculty and professional—including sixteen in Bio-medicine—interested in working with the Center. In two years, the Center catapulted itself from being a small interdisciplinary program to a showcase international center of excellence. It has gained national recognition and is competitive in the field of Latin American Studies with our peer institutions.

However, we face many very serious challenges:

- (1) Since we only have **one line** attached to the Center, which is a rotating visiting professorship, we cannot guarantee on-going instructional experiences that build linkages between that year's

visiting scholar and our sophomores and juniors who will go on to concentrate in Latin American Studies and write a senior thesis.

- (2) Like all interdisciplinary programs, those faculty members who are affiliated with the Center and support the concentration have a **double duty**. They are expected to work with students in their departments, including a fair number of honor's theses, and also work with Latin American Studies concentrators. However, there is no recognition or "credit" in their home department for doing the work in the interdisciplinary field.
- (3) Our **undergraduate advisor** receives no compensation for his work as advisor. He directs a senior thesis seminar with no course release. In other words he has a permanent teaching overload, and his home department does not have to take that service into consideration when awarding merit salary increases.
- (4) **We are caught in a bind**. If we were to expand to thirty or forty concentrators—which is eminently possible—it would be impossible for us to offer academic support to those students. We have no budgetary resources for an introductory course in Latin American Studies, nor are departments likely to "lend" us a professor to teach that course.
- (5) Unfortunately, we were not a part of the discussion that created the University's Table of Needs, and, therefore, we cannot benefit from any of the growth embedded in the Plan for Academic Enrichment unless a given department happens to hire a professor who specializes in Latin America. Since the Center is not on the Table of Needs **we cannot expect any significant new resources to come into the Center**, unless we generate them ourselves, and we are severely restricted by the Provost's office from doing any independent fundraising that might meet our specific needs as it might collide with the current overall plan for university growth.
- (6) With no significant compensation or reward for academic entrepreneurial efforts, there is no reason why anyone would want to direct the Program.

All of this is to point to the following realities:

- Excellence based on volunteerism is doomed to failure. Expecting normal faculty to be the concentration advisor or direct a program without significant support and rewards is utopian. Ignoring this problem or simply relying on faculty members' willingness to do more will not solve this issue. We can always point to the faculty member who has directed a program or Center without any compensation or considerations and praise their achievements, but to take the attitude that "I did it without compensation, so you can to," is not a strategy for excellence. It will also not attract the best new faculty to Brown.
- Unless resources—lines, staff, increases budgets, authorizations to do fundraising, or an expansion of the Table of Needs—are directed toward interdisciplinary programs, they will remain stagnant, despite students' interest.
- Brown, which has a competitive advantage because it offers these creative programs, will continue to face on-going crises among these programs. (Yesterday it was Development Studies which got some modest relief because students lobbied for temporary changes. Today, it is Gender and Sexuality Studies that has dissolved its Executive Board for the foreseeable future. Tomorrow it will be International Studies, Latin American Studies, or or another interdisciplinary program.
- The result will be that Brown will offer the same or fewer interesting and innovating interdisciplinary academic programs than its peer institutions and lose in the competition for the best students and faculty.

I don't have any easy solutions for this problem because I am aware of the budget constraints on the university. Nevertheless, I think that one way that we can seriously assess this problem and begin to find

solutions would be to convene a series of meetings with directors of the interdisciplinary programs. I would suggest that they be divided by divisions with humanities and social sciences in one set of meetings and the sciences in another, as the issues that the different disciplines face are quite unique. These issues also need to be addressed in a direct dialogue with the Dean of the College, Dean of the Faculty and the Provost.

Globalization and internationalization have become commonplace and normative words to describe our reality in the early twenty-first century. I would argue that systematic inter-disciplinarity is also an essential component of any innovative educational experience.

I hope that these comments are of same value as we reflect on and access the Plan for Academic Enrichment.

Faculty
12/19/07

To the PAE Feedback committee:

I'm a believer in the PAE, and also in its review and reassessment. There's much that is admirable about the plan, and much that I'm not a good person to judge. My answers to the first few questions: yes, it's been successful, and yes, for the most parts the PAE goals and objectives reflect current priorities.

My comments here address only two aspects of the PAE, "Fostering Multidisciplinary Initiatives" and "Community Collaboration."

Brown has made a good start on "Fostering Multidisciplinary Initiatives," with several new centers and institutes, and with some strengthened connections to other institutions. It's my impression, though, that the integration of these new (and existing) centers with the departments still needs work. Interdisciplinary departments like urban studies and centers like the Joukowsky Institute have many but not all of the attributes of departments, and their relationships with departments is complicated, and doesn't always work well. Why can't these centers have faculty tenured in them? Might faculty who see their home base as an interdisciplinary center serve to bring the new work of those centers to departments? The mechanisms of how faculty work with centers could be re-thought, to bring out the interdisciplinary strengths of the Brown faculty. The first phase of the PAE established these new centers; in the second phase, it might be useful to consider how to better integrate them into the departments, and how to bring more faculty into the centers. This work would overlap with the PAE objective to increase the size of the faculty; centers might play more of a role in shaping these new hires.

"Community Collaboration": Connections between Brown and other local institutions, and especially between Brown and RISD, could be strengthened. The Brown/RISD connection seems to have devolved to a variety of separate programs. The joint degree is good, and important, but better connections at undergraduate, graduate, and research levels are also important, and should be revisited. Brown's connections with other local institutions, from the RI Historical Society to after-school arts programs to theater and dance groups, could be strengthened by inclusion in a revised PAE. Brown's made a good start with improved connections with the Providence School District; other institutions might also repay attention. These relationships would not only be good for university-community relations, but would also strengthen undergraduate and graduate teaching by providing real-world opportunities for students, and a wider range of service learning. Perhaps the revised PAE could include a new group, or directives for existing groups, to consider partnerships with local organizations as they do their work.

These are minor changes in the PAE, and in Brown's work. They'll not only help to strengthen Brown's academic work, but also to bring that strength to the community in ways that will improve faculty and student work at Brown.

Faculty
12/20/07

Dear Ruth,

Here are some brief comments on a large topic--the PAE.

1. The PAE is clearly doing good and significant work.

- a) In the last three years, we have recruited to Brown the top faculty (by "top faculty," I mean faculty who are being courted by our peer institutions and yet who also possess the Brown commitment to teaching).
- b) We have recruited the top graduate students (by "top graduate students," I mean students who were being courted by our peer institutions and who come to Brown with significant training and creativity).
- c) We have attracted the top undergraduate students--our applications are up and our admission rate is down.

So, the top faculty and students are coming to Brown (and are committed to Brown). This is probably the most significant measure of the success of the PAE. I realize that some bristle when it is said, "our students are getting better" or "we need to attract the best faculty." Some assume that this language implies that former Brown students and faculty with much longevity at Brown are second-rate, and only now are we achieving excellence. This interpretation is unfortunate because it should be clear that the PAE and the "enrichment" that it has brought to Brown builds on the University's long history and traditions of excellence. The academic virtues of an institution never start from scratch. The progress Brown has made in the last few years is, in large measure, a tribute to its history (and, of course, to the current President!).

2. Future focus of PAE.

- a) Investment in the faculty (supporting the current faculty and recruiting the best faculty in the world) should continue to be a priority.
- b) Investment in the graduate school (graduate student fellowships and other forms of research support) should also continue to be a priority.
- c) Investment in undergraduate education (again, fellowships, but also such initiatives as enhanced UTRAs and 1st year seminars, and so on).

I see these three forms of investment and goals as being at the heart of Brown's "enrichment." We never "arrive," that is to say, these goals and the investment they require are always out in front of us, leading us forward. Our standards must rise, accordingly. If tenure standards rise, for example, this does not imply that the current tenured faculty are suddenly deficient; it implies that we as an institution are responding appropriately to the world around us and are continually striving to improve--to enhance our traditions of excellence.

3. Additional PAE goals

- a) Invest in the construction and renovation of our classrooms.
- b) Invest in the construction and renovation of our student housing.

We can no longer assume the Cartesian mind-body dualism: excellent scholar-teachers and students explore the universe while being housed in scruffy conditions. Our physical space should reflect the high level of our inquiry and exploration. Indeed, it should have the effect of elevating our reflection and inquiry.

I realize that these comments are broad. Yet I thought broad reflection on a detailed PAE might be helpful. So let me close on an even broader note: some might object to Brown comparing itself to other institutions. But such comparisons-and in some cases, looking to emulate in specific ways-can be quite helpful. I suspect Harvard hasn't done enough of this-and it shows. Brown should keep one eye on its own traditions, and one eye on what others are doing and learn from them, learning both positive and negative lessons. How else will we achieve our twin goal: a world-class research university with the soul of a liberal arts college?

Faculty
12/21/07

The FECPAEcomments1207chairs.pdf, which Chung-I sent to faculty in physics mentions "Staff support" and "Research support". I think this is a very good document, and I agree with most of the points.

I would like to comment on two offices, purchasing and OSP, which could aid considerably in strengthening research in the physical sciences.

For my research, my lab needs to purchase many things. It seems that turnaround time from requisition to PO is anywhere from a week to a month (seriously). Compared to other universities this is exceedingly long and not competitive. I have heard many explanations for why issuing POs takes so long. I am aware of the P-card, which was supposed to help, but which has its own limitations and drawbacks.

In my view, the purchasing/OSP system is broken, and I think the need to improve this aspect of staff/research support should be explicitly included in the PAE. I'd be happy to provide detailed comments, observations and/or case studies in an effort to improve this part of staff/research support.

(I came to Brown ~10 years ago from the federal government, which is notorious for its purchasing bureaucracy. I didn't believe that Brown's purchasing system could be more inefficient, but it is, and it has gotten more so during my years at Brown.)

I should add that I know my experience with purchasing/OSP is not unique.

Faculty
1/6/08

Does the Plan for Academic Enrichment including its areas of focus, goals and objectives, continue to reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown? If not, in which areas and why?

With the downturn in federal funding for research in the basic sciences, more attention is required on graduate training and fellowship support, for support of core research facilities, for the establishment of new core research facilities to ensure that all of our students including undergraduates will have the opportunity to see how modern instrumentation and technologies can assist in the discovery of new knowledge in the biomedical sciences. As stated by the Director of NIH in an article published in Science in 2007, it is up to academic institutions to build the infrastructure of core facilities and instrumentation necessary to carry out modern scientific research. It is the role of NIH to then fund individual-investigator initiated research projects that can utilize the infrastructure to carry out the funded research program. Federal sources can no longer be the sole source for resources to acquire sophisticated instrumentation and facility operational support. This needs to become much more of a priority for fund-raising through philanthropy. This model has been the one that peers have been pursuing for some time now. Several years ago, Vanderbilt withdrew \$100 Million from their quasi-endowment in order to purchase equipment and build several core research centers. Vanderbilt now estimates that this investment has now returned an additional \$1 Billion in ENDOWMENT contributions based on the research output from those newly established centers. Vanderbilt is currently considering repeating this effort to provide additional resources to those centers that have been most successful in their research output

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

In order to maintain a competitive position in basic research, processes need to be in place for the acquisition of modern instrumentation and for their continued maintenance. This has traditionally been a weak point for Brown.

Are there aspects of the Plan that need more (or less) attention, refinement or focus?

The Plan does need to be aware that priorities in science can arise quickly and that needs now could not have necessarily been anticipated 5 years ago.

Please provide us with any additional thoughts you have about how the Plan for Academic Enrichment can best guide Brown to achieve its mission and goals.

Although it is stated that now all graduate students have health insurance coverage, in BioMed this will only be true because the faculty are being told to place these charges on their federal grants, which in most cases will mean that fewer dollars will be available to fund the research. In addition, this creates a fundamental inequity it would appear in how the health insurance policy for grad students is applied within BioMed versus the remainder of the University.

Faculty
1/6/08

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

Focus resources on improving support for the graduate program! (see below)

Are there aspects of the Plan that need more (or less) attention, refinement or focus?

Yes. As a new faculty hire (I have been here 6 months), I have an admittedly small perspective on what has been happening and what has changed. In spite of this, I can see a central problem in the way the PAE has moved forward that is already beginning to have repercussions. In general, Brown has put tremendous resources into 1) new buildings and 2) new faculty hires. Unfortunately no money seems to have been dog-eared to SUPPORT either of those two endeavors. This amounts to having a large coalition of new faculty arrivals who are critically lacking the resources to build a successful research program. As a concrete example, my department has EIGHT new faculty hires (and a total of 21 faculty). We are currently allotted FOUR NEW GRADUATE STUDENT SLOTS. New junior faculty must take turns in accepting new students (and established faculty must give up the idea altogether, if they want us to succeed). That is not making for a healthy academic environment. Secondly, and directly stemming from the above point, there must be more internal funds to support graduate training here. A graduate program cannot be sustained entirely by PI; it must be a combination, and graduate students must have the possibility of TA-ing for their stipend/tuition in times when there are no active RA-ships available in their labs. This again may be especially true in the case of junior faculty- in our current funding climate it often takes years to be awarded your first grant proposal.

Faculty
1/9/08

Does the Plan for Academic Enrichment including its areas of focus, goals and objectives, continue to reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown? If not, in which areas and why?

No. The initial strides of plan are in jeopardy of being negated. The growth in the faculty ranks, primarily at the junior level in the biomedical sciences, is in desperate need of support as we move forward. The PAE has unfortunately coincided with a downturn in federal funding trends, causing junior faculty to struggle in the establishment of their labs. Compounding these difficulties, Brown has not increased support for vital services necessary to aid the increased faculty ranks in their competition for limited federal funding. Supporting Brown's initial investment to increase faculty size with additional resources, including increased graduate class sizes and financial support for these students and support for core facilities (including support staff and new equipment), will solidify the initial strides made. Without these additional resources, Brown is in jeopardy of losing many of the faculty members hired under the plan due to limited success in acquiring extramural funding and in promotion to tenure. Furthermore, without additional support for the research enterprise, Brown may lose established faculty to other institutions, as the downturn in funding contracts faculty ranks elsewhere.

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

Additional support in two areas is needed immediately to allow faculty recruited under this plan to achieve success and to solidify the investment that Brown has already made in them. First, the size of the graduate student body must increase, and additional funds for their support must be identified. As an example, the MCB graduate program currently houses an equal number of faculty advisors and graduate students. Thus, an individual faculty member can hope to attract a graduate student roughly every five years. Typical federal grants for biomedical research encompass three aims (requiring a minimum of three scientists) and five years. With this disconnect, faculty cannot generate sufficient data to support new applications or renew existing grants. In addition, Brown is out of step with peer institutions which charge

nominal tuition to grants beyond the period of formal instruction (first two years). Here, graduate student tuition is charged at a high level throughout the student's tenure, even in the years beyond admission to candidacy when the student is no longer enrolled in formal class work. Finally, the infrastructure of the research enterprise needs more substantial support in the form of dedicated personnel and service contracts to keep key pieces of equipment functional and the purchase of additional equipment (for example an NMR magnet) to support and expand the research activities of faculty that were hired under the plan.

Are there aspects of the Plan that need more (or less) attention, refinement or focus?

As detailed above, the graduate program and facilities support should be the focus of future efforts to ensure the success of the investments already made.

Do we have the institutional discipline, skills and resources to achieve the Plan goals? If not, what's missing?

I believe that reallocation of existing funds to areas of crucial need could help.

Please provide us with any additional thoughts you have about how the Plan for Academic Enrichment can best guide Brown to achieve its mission and goals.

The expansion of the faculty requires a commensurate expansion of supporting programs. Without the former, Brown will not meet its ambitious and laudable goals.

Faculty
1/10/08

Does the Plan for Academic Enrichment including its areas of focus, goals and objectives, continue to reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown? If not, in which areas and why?

I believe that the areas of focus in the PAE do reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown. Those which I am most concerned about are listed below and will be described in more detail in the following sections of the webpage input : 1) Enhancing Undergraduate Education (especially undergraduate research opportunities), 2) Excellence in graduate education, 3) Excellence in Teach and Research 4) Enhancing the quality of our facilities, infrastructure and administrative support.

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

1) Enhancing Undergraduate Education (especially undergraduate research opportunities):

Statement of Importance: Undergraduate research experience is becoming more and more important for students to successfully compete for available positions in graduate school programs and medical school. A case in point is one of my own undergraduate alums, Geoffery Stetson, is an author on a paper I recently submitted and he was asked where the paper was submitted, when it will be published, his authorship position, etc., during one of his medical school interviews. Admissions committees clearly value students that have had research experience.

Current progress: expanding the UTRA fellowship program is very helpful for the professors that are responsible for training these undergraduate students. Because of their limited experience, it often takes daily interactions of the PI with the students to teach them the skills they need to carry-out their own independent projects. If students have any chance to be successful, they must be able to spend at least one summer in the laboratory and UTRA's contribute significantly to allowing this to happen. However, in order to have the laboratory interactions and exchanges that will allow undergraduates to have a quality research experience, there must be a strong graduate program as well. While undergraduates do contribute to individual laboratories, PIs cannot build their research groups on undergraduates alone because undergraduates simply do not have the time (because of classes) nor the long-term commitment (4 years of dedicated laboratory work for graduate students) to give back to the laboratory. A strong, well-supported graduate program will ensure that all the laboratories at Brown are thriving and productive and it is this environment that will allow the undergraduates to have a quality research experience. Ideas to further strengthen graduate education are described in the next section.

Recognition for training undergraduates in research: Although I have only taught two classes since I have joined Brown University (Bio127, fall 2006 and fall 2007), I have trained multiple undergraduates, including Michael Hadley, Geoffery Stetson, Ojus Doshi and Jennifer Arruda. I take this training very seriously and my students carryout projects that are not only essential for the success of the laboratory but also allow each of them to write an outstanding senior thesis (so far, they have all received 'A's'). The time it takes to train these students, and work with them every day to ensure they are productive, is extensive. It would be valuable for us, as faculty, to know that this type of teaching is considered to be as important as teaching in the classroom, especially for tenure decisions. Efforts to make it clear that this type of teaching will receive equal (or at least some kind of) weight and credit for faculty evaluations, like tenure, will also encourage more faculty to take on more undergraduates into their own laboratories.

II) Excellence in graduate education.

A group of junior faculty in the sciences has been meeting regularly during the past few years to discuss issues of concern to junior faculty. This year, we have initiated an effort to interact with senior administrators in order to voice issues we (i.e., graduate education and facility support), to propose potential solutions to the issues and to gain an understanding of what the individual administrators have the power to change. We have also begun to put together a draft document to summarize these issues. What I include below are excerpts from this document which reflect my views. I also want to state that, in bring up these issues/concerns, I, and the other Junior faculty I now, are actively interested in developing solutions that are beneficial for the University as a whole and are more than willing to actively participate in the process of developing and implementing these solutions. Thus, what follows is meant to be constructive. Any failure of the statements to convey this message is solely the fault of my own.

Introduction: Graduate students and post-doctoral fellows are critical components of all first-class research institutions. Moreover, *they are absolutely essential for undergraduate science courses where they function as teaching assistants and for research in the sciences.* It is the daily, tireless work of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in the laboratory that allows them, with their advisor, to develop their own experimental and scientific skills, that leads to publications in top tier journals, and, importantly for Brown University, that leads to the awarding of federal grants from the NIH, NSF, DOE and other institutes that carry full institutional overhead. The following outlines current issues, and suggestions for their improvement, that concern junior faculty about the current state graduate student and postdoctoral training here at Brown University.

Brown University has made substantial contributions to graduate and post-doctoral research during the last years (i.e., increasing the stipend) which has already had a very positive impact. However, with the current funding shortfall in the sciences, it is becoming more and more difficult to support graduate

students in the laboratory. In fact, a number of faculty are being encouraged to hire post-docs exclusively (which now, with the increased cost of graduate student tuition, cost about the same amount of money per year as a graduate student), because they are already trained, and thus immediately productive. This allows more research to be accomplished with the same monetary investment by the PI. Although this is not a readily viable option for junior faculty (who traditionally have more difficulty recruiting post-docs to join their laboratories), if increasing numbers of faculty hire post-docs instead of graduate students, the graduate programs will eventually cease to exist.

1. Graduate student tuition charges are high, thereby draining valuable PI resources.

The tuition for the 06/07 academic year was \$8,472. As per the Provost declaration, this cost will increase to \$13,015 for the 08/09 academic year, a difference of \$4,543/year. This is an increase of 53.6% over the 06/07 rate. What is the cost to the faculty? If a student is enrolled for 5 years, the PI is responsible for supporting the student for 3.5 years and, with the new tuition rates, this will cost the PI an *additional* \$15,901 per student and this is assuming tuition is *not* raised over the next 3.5 years. Moreover, with the additional increases in the stipend level and health insurance charges (note, numbers reported here were obtained from the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies website and are, to my knowledge, accurate based on these reported values), this *results in an increase of 31.8% in graduate student costs in just four years*. It is important to state that funding from federal institutes are not increasing and, in fact, being cut (for example, NIH is currently operating under a continuing resolution (CR) during which time NIH Institutes and Centers will fund research projects, at a level below that indicated on the Notice of Award, *up* to 80 percent of the previously committed level). Thus, the same amount funds used to support 4 students in 06/07 (\$142,472) will only be sufficient to fund 3 students in 10/11 (\$140,826), resulting in a 25% reduction in those critical personnel which are essential for research in the sciences. This will have a profound impact on the productivity of *all* laboratories here at Brown University. Because we are competing for federal funds with PIs from institutes that require *less* PI support for graduate students (through lower tuition costs/less health care charges), we will suffer because our productivity will be comparably lower and, in turn, be less likely to be awarded grants.

It is important to state that in Biomed, the increase in tuition has been earmarked to be returned to the individual graduate program, and thus, the impact of these increases should be 'less' than what is described above. It is not yet clear if this increased tuition cost will come back to the individual PI who funded the student or will be distributed in some other manner.

Potential action Items

- Reduce tuition charges to the 06/07 level
 - Reduce tuition charged during graduate training years 3-5; during this time students are not taking classes and thus should not be charged for tuition.
 - Reduce or eliminate the additional health insurance charges
 - Clarify how the additional tuition charges will be distributed within the BioMed graduate programs (this may be an issue appropriate for a particular program, rather than the University as a whole). It may be that this additional tuition will be distributed within the program in such a way that it will allow us to continue to fund same amount of students in 06/07 (4) instead of the projected 10/11 3 students.
2. Institutional graduate student fellowships are not common at Brown University. *The University should make an effort to fund at least 10-15 graduate student fellowships that can be used to provide funds to pay outstanding graduate students in their later (3-5) years of graduate education. In addition, the Frank and Levy fellowships should be awarded to senior graduate students and not first*

year graduate students. By awarding these to first year students, you are awarding undergraduate and not graduate achievements.

Graduate student fellowships that pay for the stipend/tuition of senior graduate students (3-5 years) are available at multiple institutions (for example, Princeton University has the Harold W. Dodds honorific fellowships that are awarded to senior [4-5 year] graduate students that have demonstrated success throughout their graduate career). Not only is this an excellent opportunity for the students, because they will receive an award that recognizes their achievements while studying at Brown University and which they will be able to include on their Curriculum vitae for their entire career, this will also benefit their faculty mentors, as the mentors will not have to support them with valuable laboratory resources. This is appropriate because in many cases, students are successful in large part because of careful, constructive mentoring by their thesis advisors.

Potential action Items

- Make the Frank and Levy graduate student fellowships, *senior* graduate student (years 3-5) fellowships, for those students that have completed their coursework and teaching responsibilities and which have succeeded in their research endeavors at Brown University
 - Actively pursue donors that are willing to provide funds that pay for additional *senior* graduate student (years 3-5) fellowships. Donors may appreciate such an opportunity because they can interact directly with the students that were awarded their fellowships, perhaps at an award dinner. Junior faculty, including myself, are willing to help out on this front, as they are with any of the action items listed in this document.
3. Benefits for post-doctoral fellows are high compared to sister institutions. *The University should initiate efforts to reduce the benefits charged for post-doctoral fellows to levels in-line with those of other institutions, i.e., to 15-19% instead of Brown University's current level of 30%.*

The benefit rate for post-doctoral fellows at Brown University is 30% (07/08) and 30.2% (08/09), the same as that for faculty. This is excessively high. For example, in 2005, the benefit cost at The Scripps Research Institute was 17% for post-docs (note, this includes health care; in no way is this a request to eliminate healthcare coverage for our post-docs). At a salary of 35,000 for 3 years, the difference paid by a TSRI professor (TSRI: $\$35,000 \times 1.17 \times 3 = \$122,850$) vs. a Brown professor (Brown: $\$35,000 \times 1.33 \times 3 = \$136,500$) is $\$13,650$, which is 39% of postdoc salary for one year. It is important to state that a significant portion of these benefit costs pays for retirement, which most post-docs, because they only stay 2-3 years, only partially vest and receive. The fact that Brown University faculty must pay more not only for our graduate students but also our post-doctoral fellows (due to the high benefit rate) means that our financial resources do not go as far as those of our peers do at other institutions. Why is this important? Because we are unable to hire as many people or provide as many supplies for them as our peers and thus are cannot be as productive, which in turn means fewer results and, in turn, fewer grants.

Potential action Items

- Initiate efforts to lower the benefit rate for post-doctoral fellows to a rate comparable to that of other institutes (i.e., 17%).
4. Obtaining VISAs for post-doctoral fellows is difficult (especially since the numerous changes made to the process since 2001). *The Dean of graduate and post-doctoral studies should centralize efforts to secure VISAs for post-doctoral fellows from other countries.*

Recruitment of international postdocs is an untapped resource. For example, they often have greater chances to come with their own independent funding from their home country. However, navigation through the paperwork required to secure VISAs for these post-doctoral fellows is daunting and currently department dependent. Because many post-doctoral candidates (and the PIs trying to hire them) face the *same* issues while applying for their VISAs, it would be infinitely more effective to have this process centralized and coordinated within the Office of graduate and post-doctoral studies (BioMed) in conjunction with the international office.

Potential action Items

- Work with the international office to develop a method for streamlining the visa application process for post-doctoral candidates.

III) Excellence in Teaching and Research

As described in the PAE, many numerous beneficial steps have been achieved in the university's efforts to enhance excellence in teaching and research. In addition to the action points listed in the PAE, I would simply like to reiterate the following:

1. That undergraduate training the scientific laboratories be formally recognized as teaching for the purposes of faculty evaluation (if it is already, I am unclear as to how it is evaluated as compared to traditional classes and clarifying this point would also be useful).
2. In addition to developing a large-scale multidisciplinary grant-seeking program and identifying further opportunities for new research program, enable faculty to better utilize the funds they have by, for example, making efforts to return graduate student tuition charges to 04/05 levels, additional support for facilities so individual investigators can use their valuable resources to fund more people, which in turn will lead to more papers and ultimately external funding.

IV) Enhancing the quality of our facilities, infrastructure and administrative support.

Research infrastructure is a critical part of academic research and Brown University has made a significant investment in these resources. I am an x-ray crystallographer, and in 2005, a new x-ray system was installed in the LMM, which has been invaluable to my research. The upkeep of this equipment is expensive, especially in the absence of a service contract. The service contract for our system is \$29,720/year. Initially, we (Gerwald Jogl, the second x-ray crystallographer here at Brown) and I were unable to purchase this service contract, as we did not have grant funds to cover the costs. I immediately began budgeting for x-ray costs in my submitted proposals, since a functioning x-ray system is absolutely essential to my research. The following is a portion of a review I received from a grant I submitted to the American Cancer Society (ACS). Specifically, in my budget I requested one additional \$25,000 module to help defray the costs associated with supporting the x-ray facility instrumentation.

Reviewer response: One additional module is requested for maintaining the X-ray equipment because Brown University does not maintain a service contract on the instrument. Maintaining equipment for a multi-user facility is part of what overhead costs are designed to pay for. No additional module should be offered, and the overhead costs from the grant should be used to defray expenses associated with maintaining the instrument.

Fortunately for me, and for which I am extremely grateful, Associate Dean Ed Hawrot and Executive Dean John Deeley responded to this review with a letter of commitment from the University that, if the ACS grant was awarded, the University would pay for 50% of the service contract costs for the lifetime

of the grant. Upon resubmission, in large part because of this commitment of support from the University, I was awarded the 4-year ACS Research Scholar Grant, which provides a total of \$737,000 CD+IC to the university over the 4-year lifetime of the grant.

This example serves to illustrate the importance of University support for critical research facilities. Other facilities include the NMR facility, animal care facilities, genomics facility, proteomics facility, microscopy facility. While I believe that most, if not all, faculty agree that it is essential we, through our grants, contribute to the support of these facilities, it is not realistic to expect the facilities to be self-supporting. In fact, as demonstrated by the above example, funding decisions are more and more frequently being determined by the level of support also committed by the University. Continued efforts by the University to provide this support will result in more research accomplished by individual investigators and, ultimately, the awarding of new grants, especially instrumentation grants like NIH S10 awards, which will increase the overall competitiveness of the university as a whole.

Faculty
1/11/08

Does the Plan for Academic Enrichment including its areas of focus, goals and objectives, continue to reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown? If not, in which areas and why?

I believe the plan does represent the most important priorities, but that additional support for some areas is now required, as discussed below.

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

I feel that having increased the faculty numbers substantially, there also needs to be a commitment to the other factors that go towards successful faculty recruitment. In particular, in BioMed, there is increased support necessary for the graduate students and for the facilities that support the research program.

Are there aspects of the Plan that need more (or less) attention, refinement or focus?

I would like to see greater support of the costs of graduate students, as these are a critical factor in determining whether research faculty are going to be successful or not. They are an integral part of the university and play the major role in getting the scientific data necessary for publication of papers and obtaining grants. Similarly, with the facilities infrastructure, if this infrastructure is undermined then this will have a very deleterious effect on research at Brown and the ability to keep faculty and be successful in competing for external grants.

Faculty
1/14/08

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

It appears to me that the PAE runs a great risk of failing because of mis-calculating the importance of expanding graduate programs concurrently with the expansion of the faculty. For example, despite the fact that more the 20 faculty have been hired in the Bio-Med division, growth of the graduate programs has been non-existent. This growth in the faculty ranks have been primarily at the junior faculty level, who are wholly dependent upon graduate students to perform the research that they were hired to do. There appears to be no institutional plan to increase the number of graduate students to keep pace with the growth of the research enterprise at Brown. Furthermore, it appears that institutional support for the existing graduate programs is at best waning. For example, substantial increases in graduate student tuition charges have been instituted and the number of teaching assistantships has diminished. This could not have come at a worse time: funding from federal biomedical research sources has been dramatically decreasing and therefore, it is more difficult than ever to garner outside research support, or renew that support once it has been received. Research productivity is the main criteria by which research awards are judged; without graduate students to perform the research or by effectively limiting the number of students that can be supported by raising tuition charges and limiting teaching assistant positions, research productivity suffers. In turn, the likelihood of success in establishing a vigorous, externally supported research program is rather limited. Under this scenario, not only does the university not receive a return on the institutional investments it has made in junior faculty, those initial investments may be completely thrown away. At the risk of sounding simplistic, the situation reminds me of spending a lot of money on landscaping for your home, but not watering or occasionally fertilizing the plants and shrubs once they are planted. In short, Brown has made considerable investments in the biomedical sciences through the PAE, with the goal to significantly improve the research and teaching enterprise through enhancing the academic excellence of the faculty in the Bio-Med Division. I am afraid that the success of these initial investments is in serious jeopardy and even a reasonable return on the initial institutional investment in junior faculty will never be realized because a plan for institutional support is lacking.

Faculty
1/22/08

I would like to congratulate the FEC on a very thoughtful and accurate report.

Further in terms of graduate students- I believe graduate students are essential for teaching and for maintaining teaching standards. I refer not only to teaching in class but also in Biology where tutoring undergraduates in the laboratory setting is also an important responsibility. The dearth of graduate students means fewer undergraduates will experience what it is like to perform research and write an Honors thesis.

A second point regarding graduate students in terms of teaching is that only first year graduate students are allowed to TA (in Biomed). If graduate students were allowed to TA a course over several years the standard of teaching would improve. At the moment, a common complaint from undergraduates is the

lack of experience of the TAs, which is correct as the graduate students have to learn the material simultaneously with the undergraduates.

Finally, I would suggest a model for graduate students based on Dartmouth College, where tuition is covered by the institution through e.g. research assistantships. In fact faculty are not allowed to ask for tuition through grants. I would like to see every faculty member have access to at least one graduate student. The Dean of the Arts and Sciences at Dartmouth, Carol Folt, found that the benefits of not having tuition outweighed the comparatively small amount of money gained through tuition. This conclusion was based on faculty who have NSF grants (similar to Brown), and cannot afford to pay tuition for a graduate student. Clearly, at the peer university that most closely resembles Brown (we certainly are not comparable to Harvard or Yale in terms of research dollars), they have a winning formula that enhances teaching and research excellence.

Incidentally, this policy has allowed faculty to write competitive grants which has actually increased the number of successful research grants and overhead that far outweighs the cost of the lost tuition dollars.

Faculty
1/22/08

Thanks for your effort collecting feedback.

One issue that is often overlooked at Brown is the difficulty hosting visitors of any sort.

I don't need to explain why visitors are an important part of being a vibrant research and teaching institution. Yet everything from a one-day visitor, for whom there are neither map nor parking facilities, to a one-month visitor, for whom there seems to be little housing support, are greatly inconvenienced.

In some cases, I have fixed these things personally (e.g., authored several Web pages for my department to fix lack of information from Brown), but I have simply had to turn away several academic visitors because the logistical headache was more than I wanted to manage.

The problem is exacerbated when the visitor is international -- not just for visa reasons (which I'm sure I could work out with help from the office for international students) but for cultural and practical reasons. A US visitor may be able to drive here with their pots and pans; a visitor from western Canada or Chile or France can only show up with a suitcase. For a week they can live by eating on Thayer, but not for a month. Etc. -- you catch my drift.

The enrichment afforded by visitors cannot be discounted and cannot be matched by any other means. But we seem to be especially poor in infrastructure for supporting faculty who want to bring in visitors -- even those of us with grants that can help pay for costs.

Alumnus
1/26/2008

Does the Plan for Academic Enrichment including its areas of focus, goals and objectives, continue to reflect the most appropriate priorities for Brown? If not, in which areas and why?

The Plan has made a tremendous positive difference for Brown, and because its provisions were derived in the first place from extended consultation with many constituencies in the Brown community, its priorities continue to be appropriate. That degree of consultation must continue.

In areas that do reflect the most important priorities, have we made enough progress? What particular actions should Brown take in the next three to five years to advance these University priorities?

The most important priorities--expanding financial aid and increasing the size of the faculty--have really progressed well. The University has moved expeditiously to implement those priorities. With regard to financial aid, Brown's peer institutions (as you know, of course) have upped the ante since then, aggressively enhancing their aid programs, and Brown has no choice but to keep pace. With regard to enlarging the faculty, I am aware that the steady pace of expansion will probably need to slow a bit, if only to allow the physical infrastructure (classrooms, labs, offices, etc.) to catch up. That said, it certainly has been exciting to see Brown recruit so many superb new scholars, and that, I would guess, has helped to sustain the momentum of the capital campaign. As it appears that the capital campaign is likely to exceed its original goal by a significant amount, I think that building even more growth into the faculty would be appropriate. The first priorities, however, have to be financial aid and enhancing the residential experience. My guess (hope?) is that there will be enough extra cash to permit some attention to all of these priorities.

Are there aspects of the Plan that need more (or less) attention, refinement or focus?

Residential life needs more attention. Time for more dormitories. A suggestion: perhaps the University should look at consolidating Lincoln Field into more of a residential quadrangle. How feasible would it be, for instance, to make Maxcy into a dorm (didn't it start life that way?) and perhaps do the same with the Lincoln Field building and/or the old Arnold lab. Or knock them down and start over... Does Brown need a new concert hall--something more suited and specific to the function than Sayles or Alumnae Hall? Just asking...

Do we have the institutional discipline, skills and resources to achieve the Plan goals? If not, what's missing?

So far every aspect of the plan--the research that preceded it, its formulation, its execution--has exemplified an excellent mix of dispatch and discipline. The fact that we can see concrete results so soon, even while the capital campaign is still in progress, has made a big difference. Keep it up. As an alumnus, I am very pleased and proud.

Please provide us with any additional thoughts you have about how the Plan for Academic Enrichment can best guide Brown to achieve its mission and goals.

I really like what you're doing with the corridor between main campus and Pembroke. I've thought for a long time that there was some potential for development there but never imagined that there was as much as there apparently is.

Staff

2/5/08

For the next phase of the Plan for Academic Enrichment, we recommend the creation of a “community action plan” modeled on Brenda Allen’s Diversity Action Plan. This plan would pull into one place the range of Brown’s actions related to priority 9 (“Collaborating with the Local Community on Issues of Mutual Interest and Benefit”); establish goals and processes for university efforts related to fundamental community priorities; convey the importance Brown places on these issues and the extent of Brown’s investments; facilitate community input; and communicate Brown’s priorities, rationale, and processes for both internal and external audiences. It could also help address questions of long-term sustainability for Brown efforts with proven or promising impact. We would be happy to elaborate further on this recommendation.