

**Plan for Academic Enrichment
Phase II
February 2008**

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

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Report to the President on the Plan for Academic Enrichment
January 18, 2008
Faculty Executive Committee

I. Executive Summary

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) was invited by President Simmons to review the Plan for Academic Enrichment (PAE) and to offer recommendations for the next phase. The FEC solicited feedback on the PAE from individual faculty through its website and through emails. The FEC also held open meetings for faculty throughout the Fall semester and closed meetings with groups of faculty including department chairs and junior faculty towards the end of that semester. The FEC discussed academic needs with members of Undergraduate Council of Students and other undergraduates. The FEC Officers met with members of the Graduate Student Council. The FEC is scheduled to meet later in January with a group of graduate students representing a cross section of graduate programs and another group of junior faculty.

There is a consensus among the faculty that the expansion of the faculty has had many positive effects for Brown but that investment in the infrastructure to support this expansion has not kept pace and needs to be augmented without delay. Among the most urgent needs identified by the faculty are support for graduate programs, support for the library, staff support for research, and growth of departmental budgets. Slowing further expansion of the faculty, hiring junior rather than senior faculty, and delaying major new construction projects should be carefully considered as resource reallocation strategies to expedite attending to the infrastructure needs.

II. General observations

The PAE has had many positive effects throughout the university. In particular, expansion of the faculty, improvements in faculty compensation, and increases in start-up packages for new faculty hires were cited as critical benefits of the PAE. Concerns have been expressed, however, that there has been no proportional increase in the level of infrastructure support to match the unprecedented growth of the faculty. Absorbing this expanding faculty has placed considerable pressure on stagnant departmental budgets, static or declining staff and graduate student pools, and in some areas physical facilities, particularly regarding office space and parking. There is a genuine unease that if this situation is not corrected soon, the tremendous advances made to date will evaporate and the investments will fail.

III. Specific needs

1. Graduate Programs

Across rank and discipline, the faculty is united in its view that expansion of graduate programs is absolutely critical to advancing the research enterprise at Brown. Graduate students are essential to research in the sciences and vital to the reputation of a first-class research institution. Expansion of graduate programs is needed to support the recent expansion of the faculty. A vigorous graduate program is also essential for providing research experiences to undergraduate

students in the sciences and for enhancing academic course offerings for senior undergraduates regardless of discipline. The reduction in NIH budgets has meant that fewer grants are available and those that are awarded tend to have smaller budgets than in the past. These facts coupled with the increased cost of supporting a student on a grant has made it extremely difficult for science faculty to pay for the students they need to get their research done. The senior administration must work with the faculty and academic departments to develop a strategic plan for increasing the size of the graduate programs and for increasing funding of graduate education.

Priorities for the PAE are to:

- Expand the size of the graduate programs.
- Lower the cost of tuition and health insurance charged to research grants.
- Increase summer funding from 3 to 5 years and distribute evenly within the university.
- Provide increased and equitable fellowship support for departments across disciplines.
- Increase support for graduate student travel.

2. Other infrastructure support for research

The faculty identified a number of areas in which current resources are inadequate to support research. Some of these problems originate from expansion of the faculty with no concomitant increase in the budgets that support the research enterprise; others are due to a failure to keep pace with technological advances and inadequate staffing of new initiatives; still others, are the result of relatively static budgets. The FEC's review revealed some common issues, including the library, research-support staff and departmental budgets, that merit immediate attention. Development and the Senior Administration need to get the message out that the library is to non-science faculty what a research laboratory is to science faculty. One way to make improvements in the library might be to tie the hiring of each new faculty member to a one time allocation of funds to the library. One concrete suggestion was that a minimum of \$25K per new faculty hire be built into start ups and designated for the library.

Under the PAE, we need to:

- Invest in the library. We cannot emphasize enough that the collections of books and journals must grow, and not necessarily at the cost of discontinuing existing orders (e.g. journal subscriptions), in order to support the research and learning experiences of faculty and students. We should also protect the browsing experience/culture by preserving on-campus library space for books and limit the trend of moving books/periodicals to off campus storage sites.
- Invest in developing and nurturing a first class professional staff across all academic divisions of the university with particular attention to the development of technological skills and computer literacy.
- Increase support for proposal preparation; chronic understaffing for grants preparation in expanded departments is penalizing successful and productive faculty.
- Increase academic department budgets especially in areas where there has been faculty growth.
- Plan facilities to accommodate the increased size of the faculty and any additional faculty expansion.

- Improve staffing for core facilities and specific high-maintenance instrumentation in the sciences.
- Invest more in high-quality instrumentation in BioMed and the Physical Sciences.
- Provide the strongest financial support for grant applications that request instrumentation (otherwise there is no chance for success).
- Establish stronger connections with partner institutions to advance the research and teaching enterprise across the various divisions. The importance of partnering relationships for both education and research in BioMed cannot be overemphasized.
- Decrease Brown's high benefit rate for postdoctoral researchers from 33% to the more common 15-20% used at peer institutions.
- Provide stipends for post-doctoral students in the sciences.
- Offer incentives/bonuses for meeting scientific, scholarly or financial (grants) milestones.

3. Faculty hiring and compensation

The expansion of the faculty under the PAE has been very welcome and has brought many positive benefits particularly for those departments in which PAE hires have been made. However, not all programs benefited from the faculty expansion; further, there is a perception or understanding among some faculty that the compensation and benefits for some of the PAE hires has resulted in inequities. The FEC will be addressing some of these issues under other mechanisms. The common themes to emerge in this review are that we should slow the rate of faculty expansion and focus on assistant and young associate professor hires particularly in those areas that have not yet benefited under the PAE and where there are clear needs, address the understaffing for language instruction and interdisciplinary programs, and expedite equity in faculty compensation and benefits relative to our peers. We should also make a more explicit effort to invest in faculty who have developed their careers at Brown and do as much to retain faculty as we do to attract new faculty.

We need to attend to the fact that many, if not all, of our language classes are significantly larger than those of our peers. Many of our peers cap their Chinese, Arabic and other language sections at around 12; Brown regularly run sections in excess of 18. Lecturers are overworked and under-appreciated (even more so than regular faculty). There seems to be no normal or explicit mechanism for adding lecturers as enrollments grow. East Asian Studies has been fortunate to be given a new lecturer line, as has Arabic, but their respective needs are much greater than a single new lecturer can address. The PAE made no provisions for expanding those members of the faculty who do most of the heavy lifting in the language classrooms. It is hard to imagine that demand for languages like Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese and perhaps Persian, Swahili and Turkish -, is going to decrease. Tenure-track faculty in the departments responsible for those languages (noting that Arabic has no department associated with it) may teach upper level literature courses, but are often not trained in language pedagogy, and are not likely to happily teach language courses which meet four or five days a week. So in order to build on the promise of the PAE, we need a mechanism and resources sufficient to respond to the changing needs of language instruction at Brown. This is particularly pertinent given the new emphasis on internationalization and the reported focus on countries such as China, India and Brazil, an initiative not covered under the PAE.

Brown is well-known for its interdisciplinary academic programs but has no stable structure to support the interdisciplinary enterprise and no mechanism to hire core faculty for new interdisciplinary programs. This is true for programs as old as gender studies and urban studies, for new programs such as Science and Technology Studies, and for particularly large programs such as International Relations (the largest concentration at Brown). Students suffer because of gaps in course offerings and advising, and faculty who develop these kinds of new initiatives get worn out, angry and cynical about Brown's lack of resource commitment to support new ways of thinking and organizing knowledge. Resources—lines, staff, increases in budgets, authorizations to do fundraising, or an expansion of the Table of Needs—must be directed toward interdisciplinary programs, else they will remain stagnant or disintegrate, despite students' interest.

Under the PAE, we need to:

- Continue faculty expansion (hiring and cultivating junior colleagues) but at a slower rate.
- Fill needs for language instruction (not included in the PAE).
- Add lecturer positions to staff large teaching laboratories in the sciences (not included in the PAE).
- Develop a structural solution for interdisciplinary hires and allocate interdisciplinary FTEs and sensible budgets.
- Continue improving competitiveness of salaries, benefits and leave policy for all faculty.
- Improve support for faculty travel. Due to increased costs, it is becoming harder and harder (sometimes impossible) for faculty to attend key conventions and symposia. With the increased emphasis on faculty visibility both nationally and internationally, university support for faculty travel should be a high priority.
- Improve support for family life issues for all faculty including child care, maternity leave, and parental care.
- Optimize standards for tenure requirements in BioMed and the sciences in general taking the extremely harsh funding environment into consideration.
- Continue improving diversity of the faculty. Some strides have been made in recruiting under-represented minorities, but a strategic effort needs to be developed to bring Native Americans into the academy. We do not have a strong program to reach out to Tribal colleges to train and recruit into all levels of our academic initiative. Native Americans have particular areas of excellence and expertise that are poorly represented at Brown, such as caring for the earth/climate change/global warming and its effect on plants, animals, and the sea.

4. The College

Brown's distinctive curriculum and its faculty's national reputation for delivering an outstanding undergraduate education are at the heart of Brown's success in competing for extraordinarily talented students. The PAE should seek to increase faculty recognition and compensation for commitment to teaching and advising, and for meeting the needs of the curriculum (eg small class experiences for all first and second year students, senior capstone experiences, service learning courses, research experiences). Research scholarship is, of course, important but to be a true intellectual community, we must officially value teaching and advising. One way to begin to accomplish this is through the establishment of programs that provide research support (eg graduate student and postdoctoral stipends, summer salary, research funds, UTRAs, and travel

grants) as supplementary compensation for outstanding teaching and advising. These programs should be developed through endowments.

Under the PAE, we need to:

- Increase recognition of and compensation for outstanding teaching and advising.
- Invest in advising and small classes by providing incentives to faculty for offering First Year Seminars and other courses in semester 1 as part of the CAP. Students indicate that CAP courses are dispensable in semester 2.
- Increase opportunities for all students to have a small class experience in their first two years at Brown by providing incentives to faculty for offering a seminar in semester 2 open to first and second year students and for serving as a general advisor for one or both groups.
- Establish an endowed advising program (President's or Chancellor's Faculty Advisor Program) to improve advisor-advisee matches, accessibility, quality of advising, etc. Under this program, students would nominate effective faculty advisors; nominees would be invited to participate in the program for a 3-5 year appointment. The program would be managed by the Dean of the College. Faculty advisors might hold "extra" office hours and organize other events for student development such as talks and dinner with scholars, community service projects, mentoring for graduate school or professional careers.
- Expand support for undergraduate research experiences, service learning opportunities and capstone experiences. Incentives should be used to help achieve these objectives when possible. It is also not enough just to increase stipends, we need to provide funding for supplies and other research expenses so that faculty without grants can attract students by offering viable research projects – this is a win-win situation.
- Increase resources/support for interdisciplinary concentrations and activities
- Invest in science education (science resource center) and retention – offer support for a two-week winter session for students in introductory math and chemistry courses (largely minority and female target population)

III. Additional comments/questions from faculty

A number of questions surfaced in the course of our review that should be addressed by the Senior Administration. The FEC expects to bring these issues forward at the University Faculty Meetings over the course of the Spring semester.

1. What does it mean to hire and retain the "best" faculty? To recruit the "best" students? To be the "best" university? Who defines what is "best"?
2. Why is the administration saying that it has been too easy (for how long?) to get tenure at Brown and that we need to raise standards? Are there different standards for tenure across the university? Is tenure for BioMed faculty preferentially dependent on overhead income from grants?

3. What has been the impact of the 100 new faculty hires? What fields were strengthened? What holes plugged? Why is there no proportional increase in number of courses and research opportunities?
4. What will be the strategy with respect to the international initiative? Will we develop new areas (humanities/social sciences) or invest in existing “proven” areas (physical sciences)? Will we focus on contemporary studies or invest in historical comparative approaches?
5. Why don't chairs in BioMed turnover at the same rate as the rest of the campus? We need academic renewal at this level.
6. Why is our success generally reported in terms of how we compare to our peers? Why not set our own goals and metrics and work towards them? Given the size of our endowment, success at Brown will look different from our peers – Such a model has served Brown well in the past.
7. The increased cost of a graduate student now means that it is almost as cheap to have a postdoc on your grant instead - and be guaranteed much greater productivity. Is this what the University wants?
8. So many aspects of Brown these days have become very hierarchical; it seems that a ‘business model’ has been implemented. Does ‘academic excellence’ (US News ranking???) require that we abandon teamwork and community?

UCS Recommendations for Updating the Plan for Academic Enrichment

January 2008

Over the Fall 2007 Semester, The Undergraduate Council of Students has invested a large effort to evaluate undergraduate student needs and priorities at Brown. We have conducted large meetings and discussion forums, provided surveys, spoken with individuals, solicited written feedback, and spoken with faculty, administrators, and campus groups. We have attempted to synthesize recommendations for updating the Plan for Academic Enrichment. While these recommendations do not and cannot speak for every student, we believe they reflect the priorities most important to many students.

- **Develop and implement a program to encourage and reward high quality faculty advising**

Many students seek new opportunities to develop strong one-on-one advising relationships with faculty and feel that some faculty do not have enough incentives to encourage and reward time and energy spent on advising.

Recommendation: Create a program called “President’s Advisors” or “Chancellor’s Advisors”. Students would nominate top advisors for this position, and the Dean of the College Office would choose from the nominees to maintain a balanced group of advisors, who would be appointed for several year terms. These advisors would provide a profile of themselves and their interests, and be available for any undergraduate – similar to the current Randall Advisor program but more prominent and with a wider scope. Whereas Randall Advisors currently receive little prestige and no compensation, these new advisors would receive some benefit – funding for a graduate student or summer salary, for example, and the program would be promoted strongly. The program would provide a valuable new set of advisors, and because of the prestige and reward would also create incentives to encourage a larger group of faculty who are not necessarily in the program to dedicate more energy to quality advising.

- **Create more opportunities for building student-faculty relationships, including small seminars and outside-the-classroom programs**

The First Year Seminar and CAP programs have been very successful, but many students are not part of these programs, and even some who are need more opportunities to develop strong personal relationships with faculty who also know them in an academic setting. In addition, students seek better opportunities for interaction with faculty outside the classroom.

Recommendation: Create a CAP-like seminar program for sophomores that will help those who do not have one-on-one faculty relationships to develop them after their first year, and that will provide additional small seminar classes to undergraduates who are not eligible for first year or senior seminars.

Recommendation: Create new programs and improve existing ones that provide opportunities for student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom, although specifically not in residence halls: significantly expand and improve the faculty fellows program, and explore opportunities in other areas such as dining.

- **Improve and increase financial aid to reduce burdens for students on financial aid and to attract new students**

Students from both lower and middle-income families suffer excessive burdens because of their financial circumstance. Many are unable to attend Brown, and some at Brown are unable to pursue important educational opportunities like research because of financial obligations.

Recommendations: Decrease student and parental contributions for financial aid and decrease loan burdens. Reduce summer work requirements or increase summer stipends in programs like UTRA to allow students on financial aid to pursue activities like research. Allow outside scholarships to reduce the student and parental contributions beyond the current limit to encourage undergraduates to pursue such awards.

- **Improve the quality of students' residential experience by adding lounges and renovating residence halls**

Few residential floors have lounges available, so residential communities are not as strong as they should be. Existing residence hall space is unpleasant and discourages community.

Recommendation: Substantially increase the amount of common space in residence halls by returning all lounges that have been converted into housing back to lounges, and by removing additional rooms from the housing lottery and designating them as lounge space.

Recommendation: Undertake major renovations of many existing residence halls, including upgrades to lighting, paint, and common spaces across campus and as a larger scale project than is currently planned.

- **Increase the amount of high quality study space in libraries and in regional computer clusters**

Students lack adequate study space on-campus, both in libraries and in residential areas. The Friedman Study Center has been wildly popular, but it is overcrowded at almost all times.

Recommendations: Increase on campus study space by adding or expanding library areas like the Friedman Study Center. Create new regional computer clusters and study spaces in places where they do not exist, such as on Pembroke Campus.

- **Increase the amount of high quality social, event, and performance spaces**

Student groups consistently suffer from a lack of adequate and high quality social, event, and performance spaces.

Recommendation: Create new social, event, and performance spaces, and renovate existing spaces specifically to accommodate large social or performance events.

- **Support new initiatives and strengthen existing ones in climate change/energy/environment areas**

A very large number of undergraduates are excited about opportunities in climate change/energy/environment areas, across a wide variety of disciplines.

Recommendations: Support initiatives in the climate change/energy/environment area. Develop new course and research opportunities in these areas. Permanently fund the CCURB program at a high level.

- **Increase funding for student groups to support student publications and events**

Student groups are under-funded, largely because the Undergraduate Finance Board has inadequate funds and does not receive substantial regular increases to its budget.

Recommendation: Create a permanent funding source, such as an endowment, to provide reliable supplemental funding for the Student Activities Fund.

- **Improve comprehensive support for students in science, technology, engineering, and math fields**

Many students need a stronger and more comprehensive network of support resources in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

Recommendation: Create an “Undergraduate Science Education and Outreach Center” as proposed by the Undergraduate Science Education Committee.

- **Improve support for interdisciplinary concentrations**

Interdisciplinary concentrations like International Relations and Development Studies are very popular, but undergraduates suffer from a lack of resources and support for such programs.

Recommendation: Increase funding, faculty, and administrative support for targeted interdisciplinary programs.

- **Improve support for and encourage more independent projects and research by increasing support for the UTRA program as well as for ISPs and GISPs**

Recommendations: Increase the number of UTRAs and the size of the UTRA grant, which is currently insufficient. Create more programming to support the UTRA grants. Create structure to support and encourage independent study projects (ISPs), and group independent study projects (GISPs).

- **Make expensive classroom technology a lower priority**

While it is extraordinarily difficult to pinpoint any area that students clearly agree should be de-emphasized, there appears to be almost universal agreement that classroom technology should be a

lower priority. While comfortable classroom environments are essential, undergraduates feel that costly innovative classroom technologies (such as SmartBoards) do not significantly improve their educational experience in the way that other priorities discussed above do.

- **Make major renovations to existing residence halls at least as high and possibly higher priority than building a new residence hall**

Students acknowledge, support, and desire the functions a new dorm with high quality apartment-style housing could provide – such as creating better space to develop community, allowing better educational program in residences, and encouraging upperclassmen to live on campus and remain involved in campus life. What is absolutely clear, however, is that students believe that renovating and improving existing residence halls is absolutely essential, and do not want to see fewer resources invested in renovations because resources are being dedicated to creating a new dorm. Many existing residence halls are deficient and badly need very sizeable improvements. If a new dorm can be built in addition to improving residence halls, that would be ideal – but renovations and improvements on the scale of a major new dorm project must be undertaken.



BROWN



The President's Staff
Advisory Committee

December 18, 2007

Richard Spies
Executive VP for Planning
President's Office
Box 1860
Brown University
Providence, RI 02912-1860

Dear Dick,

On behalf of the President's Staff Advisory Committee, I want to thank you for inviting our group to be included in the five-year review of the Plan for Academic Enrichment (PAE).

The staff at Brown University are as eager as the students, faculty and alumni to read each status report issue of the PAE. As you can imagine, we are especially interested in ensuring that a strong infrastructure to guarantee staff success is in place to support the PAE as it evolves.

I have attached the comments generated during your 11/6/07 meeting with SAC in the spirit of constructive feedback and in hopes that the issues raised are included as part of the review process.

If there is anything SAC can do to assist in communicating the review process to staff, or if we can help to create a buzz and generate additional feedback, please do not hesitate to ask.

SAC looks forward to working with you in the future!

Sincerely,

Ruth Crane
Department Coordinator, Geology
2007 SAC Chair

Attachment: Q&A's from 11/6/07 SAC meeting

Copy: Karen Leonard
Roberta Gordon
Walter Hunter
Marisa Quinn

COMMENTS GENERATED DURING THE 11/6/07 SAC MEETING WITH DICK SPIES

SAC: Administration seems to be taking away parking places with no thought to replacing them and no communication about what is next.

DS: Dick acknowledged that the administration could communicate better. He wondered whether the regular update booklets were not comprehensive enough. At the end of this year, the strategy is to take undergrads (200-300) and remove them from campus. Brown will provide parking for them elsewhere – if the numbers work out. Brown is also working with the College Hill Parking Task Force which consists of several College Hill constituencies. One of their goals is to manage on street parking more effectively. By the end of this semester/or beginning of next semester there will be feedback.

Bert Gordon (SAC Advisor) mentioned that people do indeed read the Plan for Academic Enrichment. It's mentioned at New Employee Orientation and several other programs that Human Resources sponsors. Dick receives positive feedback about the status report and also mentioned that Brown hasn't used the web enough to communicate

SAC: With all the faculty increases, has there been a proportionate increase in staff?

DS: Dick responded by saying that this is an issue that the current review will address. Brown has not kept a good balance between new faculty and administrative support. In some areas there has been a conscious increase: the Banner Project, the Life Sciences Building and in Public Safety. Academic departments have been pointing this imbalance out because academic needs are substantial. At the outset of the Plan, Brown tested the limits of the support structure to determine what the balance should be and did push the envelope a bit.

Bert commented that not only is it the increases number of support staff that is needed, but also the skills the staff need to have. Due to the nature and complexity of the Plan, a higher level of skill is necessary.

SAC members added that with an increase in skill levels, compensation should be higher as well.

Dick commented that the University has incorporated staff more on updates and reviews. Initiative #10 was very broad and the majority of staff felt left out; however, he informed the group that Brown is the only institution that includes staff in its strategic plan. He will think more strategically and aggressively about the support structure.

A SAC member commented that there should be a succession plan for staff similar to what the faculty have.

SAC: What worked in the Plan for Academic Enrichment? Also, what didn't work and what was out of your control?

DS: Dick commented that the focus on academic priorities served the University well. Brown could have done better at making small adjustments and responding to information in real time. For example, from the list of multidisciplinary initiatives, Brown should have asked all along whether or not they were worthwhile. Dick also commented that other institutions have been pushing harder as well to keep competitive, and the bar continues to be raised.

SAC: Do multi-disciplinary initiatives continue to be key priorities?

DS: Dick answered that multi-disciplinary work happens more naturally at Brown than most places. Whether or not this is a priority is exactly what is being reviewed by the deans.

SAC: When we secure discretionary funds for multi-disciplinary initiatives, does it go to the initiative or to the department?

DS: Dick said it depends - some funds may support faculty members directly; sometimes funds go to the center itself, and sometimes money is directed to the department but targeted to a specific activity.

SAC: What was accomplished quickly in the PAE and what was more difficult?

DS: Dick responded that the core elements of plan happened quickly (faculty salary increases/ faculty number increased/financial aid). It has taken longer to find the right level of support structure but Brown consciously pushed the envelope to see where the flaws would be.

SAC: How have special security issues or other issues affected the Plan for Academic Enrichment.

Walter Hunter (SAC Advisor) commented that there have been no surprises that have been so negative that it's derailed the plan. Brown has added \$2 million over 5 years towards safety.

Dick mentioned that Brown hasn't been able to add new undergrad housing because it would strain the capital budget. Also, the biggest bullet dodged was what was happening in financial markets in 2002-2003.

SAC: How much will the re-examination of the curriculum affect the plan?

DS: Dick commented that making adjustments to the student advising process is a clear area to work on. The issue with the curriculum itself is with concentrations. As we push forward, does Brown need to create more concentrations?

SAC: With the partnership with the Marine Biological Lab at Woods Hole, it is a challenge for Brown students to get credits transferred – also true of the RISD partnership.

DS: There is not a lot of communication between institutions; however, with RISD the process should work better. We need benchmarking with other schools to be more effective.

SAC: How does Brown evaluate issues that flare up, for example, the change in the way grad students' funding is done?

DS: The Plan was explicit about raising the standards of the graduate school. Brown wanted to get away from the notion that the reason why we have graduate students is to teach undergraduates. We made decisions about graduate programs and how they link to research and the undergraduate program, not how it links to teaching

SAC: Is there something to give faculty more support for external funding because the faculty have teaching/research/publishing responsibilities as well.

DS: Dick mentioned that now we have the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) which we didn't have 5 years ago. Seed money is critically important, but there's not enough of it. This is part of the planning process. Brown is guaranteeing 5 years of funding and this allows us to compete with other universities, will become a global competition

SAC SUGGESTIONS:

There should be an anonymous forum for people to provide input on the Plan for Academic Enrichment.

Events Review Committee- there are now so many more events at the University – SAC/staff would like to see funds from the Plan for Academic Enrichment be earmarked to help centralize how events are run, as well as a building dedicated to performing arts and/or large venue events.

SAC will send a Morning Mail to all staff members in early 2008 encouraging staff to give their feedback about the PAE.

Graduate Student Council

Joe Bush, President

11/26/07

One-on-one meeting with Marisa Quinn

Individual Comments:

- Keep stipends competitive.
- Enhance health insurance—some prescriptions not covered in current plan. (Limit is \$1200.00/year—perhaps have a fund to subsidize small group of students with dire need).
- Graduate school itself is actually not really a place for grad students to gather. Would be good to have common space for grad students—more central location than grad center.
- Need more journal subscriptions in the library with comprehensive listing.
- Governance-the current system (GSC) is not necessarily a recognized body that the Grad school must interact with. Grad student council is a voluntary group, and perhaps it should be elected/more formalized.
- Support the development of small businesses in Providence. Support students in tech transfer.
- Housing not really an issue—would be better to help graduate students get loans to purchase area real estate. Workshops on homeownership for grad students would be helpful.
- Find a way to develop and retain young administrators (positions are so important, but turnover is high).
- Enhance child care for grad students, faculty and staff.
- Would be good to have shared infrastructure/space for physical sciences and engineering.

Medical Student Senate
Jeremy Boyd, President
12/3/07

Excerpted from email to Marisa Quinn

“We reviewed the general PAE in our Senate meeting, specifically in regards to how it relates to the division of Biology and Medicine. We discussed both the Specific Objectives and the proposals. Overall, many student reps felt that the specific objectives were not specific enough. For example, statements regarding the enhancement of "educational offerings" and the "reputation and visibility" of the school were too open, without anything concrete to direct the medical school's development. Students raised questions regarding the status of the MD/PhD program in the current PAE, given that there seems to be a great deal of emphasis on research and research centers, while simultaneously the MD/PhD program struggles for funding support. Students also felt there was a significant difference in quality between the specific objectives in other sections that might be more undergrad-centric, while those S.O.'s focused on the Division of BioMed were not concrete enough. This of course relates back to what students said earlier in the discussion. I think the final overall impression of the Senate was that the S.O.'s overall were not groundbreaking or concrete enough. They all sound fine, but they don't offer any solid guidance for where the medical school is in its transition. (I personally think this opinion of students comes from the fact that many of us recognize that our institution is evolving, but few feel that they have been given any real vision for what the end-state of that evolution is going to look like.) So...in summary, the students felt like they wanted some more concrete objectives posited which would coin a vision for the school that is significantly unique enough--or significantly "Brown" enough--to give some understanding of the changes that are unfolding around us. They also want accountability for those specific objectives.

I hope that helps somewhat in your endeavors--I'm not sure it is exactly what you were looking for. If you have further questions, please feel free to ask me...”