Report to the Strategic Alignment/Budget Reduction Review Committee

Date: November 19, 2009

A. FY10 Budget Reduction Actions:

The College of Science was assigned $521,167 in recurring reductions in FY09 and $358,000 in FY10, for a total of $879,167. In FY09, the College balanced the operating budget with a mix of operating cost reductions and expenditures of fund balances. The FY10 budget is projected to balance without the use of fund balances. The timing of the budget release and issues related to the transition to the Arts and Sciences Business Center have delayed the completion of a detailed review of individual unit budgets. However, while there will be some internal adjustments during those reviews, the overall budget reductions have been accommodated as recurring changes.

The principal contributions to those reductions are:

i. Course reductions, eliminations, or consolidations: $132,000

About 24 sections were reduced, combined, or eliminated. Much of this had been ongoing to adapt curriculum to reduced staffing over the last two years. About half of this was because courses did not meet the guidelines.

iii. Positions held vacant: $359,600

We had four assistant or newly promoted professors leave for other positions and several retirements. Three of those have been held vacant and not budgeted. The vacancies will be important to replace as we consider investments of new positions in Arts and Sciences, as they have left critically low staffing levels in some of the most productive units in the University (as measured by SCH and research income).

iv. GTA/Instructor positions vacant or eliminated: $50,433

The instructional support for the Professional Science Masters program was reworked and reduced. The management courses are now delivered through the College of Business though the support is from the College of Science. The net savings in the change is shown.
v. Reduced services and supplies budgets: $ 0

For most units in the College S&S expenditures are funded by summer, Ecampus, and ROH income. There have been significant reductions in S&S spending in all areas over the last ten years and there is not additional room to drop these and deliver programs appropriately.

vi. Use of reserves or fund balances: $ 0

We have developed a budget assuming no use of reserve funds for operating costs. If the tax measures are rescinded in January we likely will have to use some of those funds.

vii: Revenue increases: exist not used

We have seen revenue increases in some important areas (Ecampus, summer, ROH) but have directed those to covering GTA raises and other program development investments locally, including costs for basic instructional needs that are unmet through other funding mechanisms.

viii. Other strategies:

a. Business Center savings: $ 25,000

Our estimate of the savings in the Business Center move in the College was modest, but did contribute.

b. Rebasing funds allocation: $400,000

As the budget picture developed last year, the College elected to not commit a portion of the rebasing funds allocated in FY09 and FY10. These funds would have gone to increased GTA stipends and increased GTA numbers in areas of critical need. Investment in our number of and rate of compensation for GTAs remains a critical need for the quality of undergraduate education and the growth or our research enterprise.

TOTAL: $967,033

We aimed for somewhat larger cuts than necessary to create room for unexpected issues that always arise.
B. Process and Timeline for Planning:

The College is working on plans to comply with the guidelines on academic structure. These are complex discussions as we have a large number of units, service course obligations in most of those units, and formal and informal faculty appointments and collaborations with other Colleges. Some of the key processes and timelines are noted below.

Planning for biennium reductions has not progressed specifically, as we do not yet know the size of those targeted reductions. Our work on the costs of various organizational strategies and the potential savings from managing under-enrolled courses has shown the savings originally estimated from those actions to be significantly higher than can be realized. A reassessment of those targets will be necessary, as we gain more detailed information.

The College is filling only those vacant positions deemed critical for program viability, holding spending from reserve accounts in all cases possible, and working on specific plans to expand our Ecampus and summer offerings. All of these actions will provide some tools to use in accommodating any necessary budget reductions in FY11. Recurring reductions of any size will need to come from personnel, either instructors or vacant tenure-track positions. Most of our instructors are delivering courses in areas where we have had access issues, so we have been trying to protect those areas so as not to aggravate the access issue. We believe we can deal with our budget issues and maintain essential access and our very successful research programs. We are also exploring, as part of the restructuring and divisional alignment, opportunities for curricular consolidation and streamlining, both within the College and between Colleges.

Some specific issues:

i. What decisions need to be made: What organizational structure will allow the most success for the faculty and students in the College and in our partner Colleges? What are critical implementation issues to make that structure work? How will the management and leadership structure of the organization be staffed? How does the structure further the goals of the division and the strategic plan? How will the structure accommodate budget reductions in FY11?

ii. What’s the timeline: The Dean has asked for a December 15th set of recommendations on strengths and weaknesses of possible organizational structures. We are then aiming for a decision on a general structural path in mid-January, with work on defining implementations issues and strategies in time for the March 15th
Our goal is to have the essential organizational changes fully operative by the beginning of next fall term; recognizing that some issues like graduate recruiting may take longer to coordinate.

iii. Who needs to be engaged: Faculty, staff, and students in the College; faculty in key programs in other Colleges (plant sciences, materials sciences for example); leadership in allied Colleges (COAS, CAS, CVM, Pharmacy, HHS, CLA, Education, COF, COE); Provost’s Office. We will keep our key alumni and advisory boards informed, but they have generally been clear they do not feel suited to advise on internal organizational issues.

iv. What process will be used and who will make the decisions: The College has started conversations in three forums, based on discussions in late summer and early fall by the leadership group: 1) a faculty and staff Consultative Committee that is independently considering plans and ideas 2) individual department and discipline conversations to surface ideas for structure led by Department chairs 3) A leadership Steering Committee to consider administrative and implementation issues with various approaches. The student senators for the College will be asked to comment and review various proposals. The Dean has visited with the faculty of each unit to discuss concerns and try to answer questions and the College maintains a web forum for anonymous comment and posting of ideas. This work will provide a set of recommendations and analyses to the Dean. These will be discussed with the leadership and a final proposal will be distributed to the College for comment and refinement. The Dean, with approval and consultation with the Provost, will make the final decision on the plans to be forwarded to the Review Committee.

v. Who will need to be informed of decisions: The same groups as need to be engaged in the process need to know the final decisions and be involved in developing implementation plans.