UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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Jeff Dembo, Chair
University Senate
153 Bowman Hall
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Dear Jeff:

I am pleased to respond to your request for comments on the draft *Procedures for Consolidation, Transfer, Termination, or Significant Reduction of Programs and/or Academic Units*, prepared by a special Senate committee last year. I appreciate very much the time and contribution of the committee in helping the University Senate develop rules for fulfilling its responsibilities related to recommendations "on the establishment, alteration and abolition of educational units in the University" (Senate Rule 1.2.1.D). My comments follow:

In the introductory paragraph, I suggest adding wording to include "a college" along with the program or department, in order to be inclusive in identifying the potential units that may be consolidated, transferred, discontinued, or reduced.

Section A is very good, as parts one through three use existing unit procedures for program change, rather than creating new ones. Part four addresses new procedures and requires careful consideration. I am comfortable using a Senate-established procedure to seek affected faculty input. I recognize the importance of seeking faculty input prior to Senate review, given the critical nature of such information to the Senate's deliberations. I am not comfortable, however, with the requirement that consulting unit faculty and submitting a proposal to the Senate take place in the same academic year. Program reviews, a primary source for information related to these kinds of changes, are generally completed late in the spring semester, and the timetable required to review the final report, craft a proposal, seek faculty input, and forward the proposal to the Senate would often span the end of one academic year and the beginning of another. To limit the University in this manner presents an arbitrary barrier to effective decision-making.

Section B is also very good. I think it is wise to identify the considerations to be taken into account in reviewing a proposal. I also applaud the committee's recommended use of the program review report and the willingness to seek recent information if the report is

more than three years old. I do recommend that the rules specify a timeframe for completion of the review. The term, "as expeditiously as appropriate," is open for varying interpretations. In these times of "ongoing fiscal limitations," as you so aptly phrased it, the University must be allowed to move quickly to make decisions that preserve the quality of programs and services, while maintaining our financial health and stability.

Sections C and D are, in my view, more problematic. The function of the Senate as it pertains to the alteration and abolition of educational units is "to recommend," and it seems to me that this responsibility is effectively fulfilled once the recommendations are forwarded to the President and/or Provost. My suggestion for Sections C and D is that the committee re-write these sections to specify the content that Senate committees must address in preparing recommendations, including a timeframe for completing final recommendations and whether to develop phase-out plans that ensure due consideration of all affected faculty, staff and students. While prohibiting for six years the re-establishment of a program that has been eliminated may have merit at some level, I believe it is inappropriate as a Senate rule subsequent to submission of a recommendation regarding program change.

Finally, Section II appears to be an afterthought, and it deserves more consideration. Educational units include centers and institutes, and responsibility for them resides within the Provost area as well as with the Executive Vice President for Research. A complete and thoughtful rule would seemingly need to include this position as well as the Provost.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the committee's work and am available to discuss its proposed procedures further if you wish.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Nietzel, Provost

jlf

cc: Lee T. Todd, Jr.
Rebecca Scott