



MEMORANDUM

To: Julio Frenk
University President

From: Tomas A. Salerno
Chair, Faculty Senate

Date: November 23, 2015

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2015-13(D) – Goals and Strategic Plan Principles for the University

The Faculty Senate, at its November 18, 2015 meeting, adopted the attached statement of Goals and Principles to guide the University under your leadership, with particular emphasis on the next decade.

We look forward to working with you, the Provost and others in the administration to bring about needed changes and improvements as we move toward our second century.

We would like to meet with you in the near future to discuss practical steps that can be taken to meet those objectives.

This statement is now forwarded to you for your information.

TAS/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
Enrique Ginzburg, Chair, ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee

Senate Statement of Goals and Strategic Plan Principles

The Faculty Senate believes the University should adopt the following goals, and pursue the following principles in developing the University's next strategic plan.

Goals

By the conclusion of our first century, we aspire to be nothing less than one of the nation's great private research universities, and to be increasingly recognized as such. We also must be a major resource for the local community and serve the interests of wider communities through our research, service and teaching. The faculty is committed to an inclusive UM culture based on mutual respect among administrators, faculty, staff and students.

Proposed Principles

We should continue to work to become AAU-ready, but other programs also need improvement

Comment: The Senate continues to endorse the goal we share with the Provost of bringing the University to the point where we are fully competitive with the standards of our comparison schools in the Association of American Universities. We applaud the progress that has been made. We recognize that further progress will not be achieved rapidly and will require additional resources, but doing so is worth the effort. However, we reject any implication that being AAU-like is a sufficient academic goal. There are important aspects of our mission which are irrelevant to AAU membership, yet they also merit strengthening as we strive to build an ever-greater University.

Substantial improvements are essential for our Ph.D. programs

Comment: The Provost has correctly emphasized that the reputation of universities is based in good part on the strength of their Ph.D. degree programs. While there has been some progress, this is an area where we need major improvement over the next ten years, analogous to the progress we have achieved with our undergraduate degrees. We need to strengthen existing programs, cancel weak ones, and establish new doctoral programs where there are obvious gaps, or where we can create new and imaginative interdisciplinary degrees. Under the Faculty Manual, the Senate must approve all new degree programs, including Ph.D. degrees, but the Senate also needs to take a larger oversight role on existing degrees without thereby

duplicating the work of the Graduate Council and the Provost. At a minimum, we believe the President should announce a new policy that if a Ph.D. program has not achieved the stature of being in the top half of competing programs nationally by the time we reach our 100th Anniversary, the program would be reviewed to see if there is a basis for its continuance.

We need to invest more heavily in human capital and less in new buildings

Comment: When the university invests in itself, the very highest priority needs to be accorded to human capital, i.e. endowed chairs and scholarships, retention of students through graduation, retention of existing faculty and staff, and hiring of additional tenure and tenure-track faculty. With respect to physical facilities, recent years have seen the construction of new buildings which have contributed to the University’s attractiveness and capacity to do its work. Some new construction is still necessary (completion of the Lennar Foundation building; construction of the science building, the nursing simulation hospital, and the medical education building; and planning for and carrying out a new building for arts and humanities). But much more emphasis needs to be placed on upgrading existing facilities including classrooms, laboratories, and offices, many of which are still substandard. More is needed for equipment, academic computing capabilities, and the libraries. Additionally, we still need to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance, and improve the University’s cash position, two areas where the Senate has been supportive of the administration’s efforts. However, the pace of these two endeavors needs to be balanced against other critical needs.

The University must aggressively deal with a rapidly changing world

Comment: The University has avoided some of the worst excesses of “fad-ism” that have infected some universities, often at the expense of their educational quality. Nevertheless, while we can point to some successes, we have not been national leaders in such important developments as on-line courses and degrees, interdisciplinary programs, international exchanges, or joint degree programs. However, significant expansion in these areas must be done without sacrificing quality, academic freedom, or the faculty’s intellectual property. Faculty institutions should have an expanded role in oversight of the schools’ innovative program initiatives, not only to determine if they are being strongly encouraged, but also to assess their quality.

Interdisciplinary teaching and research must be greatly expanded, which will require minimizing the “silos” that separate schools and disciplines

Comment: The administration and the Senate have worked together to foster greater cooperation among the schools and colleges, and among departments. But more needs to be done. Additional interdisciplinary degree programs, and centers and institutes need to be created. Resources to encourage such programs are needed, and the central university administration needs to provide incentives (such as clear policies on graduate school-level tuition-sharing), particularly when the relevant fields are quite different from each other, and the expertise rests in different schools. Joint appointments need to be encouraged and financially supported for tenured faculty members. The President should make clear that a major factor in evaluating deans will be how well they foster interdisciplinarity and work to demolish barriers within schools and among schools and departments.

We must place greater emphasis on the University being a vital asset in service to the local and broader communities

Comment: The University is already a major asset to the greater Miami area, but we can do more. We should target special efforts to bring our considerable expertise to bear on critical problems facing us, such as public health and global climate change. We already provide valuable service, for example through, patient care, but throughout the university we should further emphasize, continue and expand our work on behalf of vulnerable and underserved communities.. We should place even greater emphasis on sustainability and implementation of environment-friendly practices within our campuses, so as to set a good example for the community. Given our location, we should truly become the “Hemispheric University,” in part by building strong links to the best universities in Latin America.

We need to foster more vigorously the ideal of shared governance articulated in the Faculty Government Charter

Comment: Increasingly, the faculty, in collaboration with the Deans and the Administration, has made major contributions to improved academic policies and practices. The faculty stands ready to expand its efforts, working together with the new President. The development of a new strategic plan should involve heavy faculty input, primarily through the Faculty Senate and the School Councils.