

March 6, 2018: Dean Update on Budget Cut Organization

Dear Dean Colleagues,

Again, thank you for your hard work on the charge you were given roughly a month ago as well as the direct and honest discussion last night. I plan to share an update with faculty senate today about the questions of mergers and finances.

Mergers - I will indicate that we are going to abide by one of the recommendations of the Deans, which also reflects emerging conversations on campus. We will seek to engage a campus committee to look at administrative structures at the UI in a way that is inclusive and more informed. This will take a longer time period than originally proposed and I will be working with Deans to suggest how the process might move forward in the coming year. Current thinking is that we would discuss options and have a campus-wide process that would conclude by the end of this calendar year, roughly 10 months from now. The ideal is to seek to bring programs together that have natural connections in a manner that makes sense for prospective and current students. Any reorganization or merger should position us to better serve our students. The intent is to move this discussion to a more deliberative phase and to remove the financial aspects as a driver for change. Although some Colleges may make sense to merge with others, we are not considering a merger of CNR and CALS given the healthy finances and national reputation of CNR and CALS separately.

Finances – We have an estimated 1-2% recurring deficit in our budget which must be more accurately measured and rectified over the next 10 months. We will manage the deficit from one time funds for next FY. This approach will give us more time for considering potential mergers or reorganization (if any) as well as a more accurate estimate our revenue for next year. If we can grow revenue by 3-4% (via fulltime on-campus undergraduate enrollment growth) in the next year, we may be able to avoid any budget cuts. Either way, we will be able to address this issue from a better vantage point if we discuss and develop plans between now and Dec. 31, 2018.

We need to develop a next steps communication and a process for doing this work. Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering to frame and/or guide this task.

On a separate note, Brian Foisy has started down the path of restructuring our finances going forward. Marc Chopin and Ali Carr-Chellmann are the Dean representatives on that committee. I will attempt to set aside time as needed to discuss that committee's work so that we can discuss impacts and provide feedback to the committee.

Please let me know asap if you have comments, edits, thoughts or concerns about the above message. I meet with senate at 3:30 pm today so I need a quick turnaround if you want to give me any feedback.

Best wishes,
John