

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

## *Office of the Provost*

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Seymour Wolfson, President, Academic Senate

**FROM:** Nancy S. Barrett, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation for the College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs

**DATE:** March 7, 2005

### **Background**

The College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs was created in 1985 to promote, stimulate, and engage in urban/labor-oriented research and scholarship, to provide instructional purposes in these areas, and to develop and conduct programs of service to the community.

CULMA has a general fund budget of \$7.9 million, 36 (35 FTE) tenure/tenure-track faculty, and 742 (412 FTE) students. Over the past three years, CULMA has averaged roughly \$2 million in grants and contracts.

### **Review Committee Report**

Pursuant to the WSU-AAUP/AFT Agreement, a 2N Review Committee was established in June 2004 to review CULMA. The Committee consisted of four members elected by the CULMA faculty, four appointed by the Provost, and a student representative. The Committee collected data from eight groups using surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and an open forum. They sent a report to the Provost on January 19, 2005.

The Committee found strengths and weaknesses as follows:

1. CULMA has excellent outreach programs and strong relationships with the community outside the university. It is a valuable resource for the city and state.
2. CULMA lacks focus and is fragmented.

3. Other units across the University are not always clear about the role of the College in achieving the University's urban mission. There appear to be greater opportunities for collaboration across units within the university that we are not capitalizing on. The Committee report noted that "the College almost seems better connected to the outside community than to other schools and colleges within the University."
4. CULMA's instructional programs need to be strengthened and the research productivity of some units needs to be enhanced.
5. The Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD) is seen in a generally positive light, but its location in CULMA is seen as potentially diverting both CULMA and ISD from their respective missions.

The Committee also noted that many of these concerns were identified a decade ago in a 1994 external review. Further, there was a general consensus in the Committee that a major reorganization would benefit the college.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the Review Committee's report and after assessing the various options the report presents for a reorganization, I am making the following recommendations:

1. The Interdisciplinary Studies Department and Center for Chicano-Boricua Studies would be moved to report directly to the Provost's Office, together with the Division of Community Studies and Project 350, both of which now report to separate units in the University. These programs share a common mission of outreach to students with special needs, and require better coordination than is now the case. The unit, Office of Special Programs (OSP) will be encouraged to experiment with new pedagogies and other instructional and advising delivery modes to improve student retention and career success. Both ISD and CBS will retain autonomy within the OSP.
2. Many of those interviewed during the CULMA review process felt that CULMA's academic programs in the labor and urban areas had not necessarily thrived in CULMA. I am also persuaded by concerns that at least some CULMA activities are duplicative and might be better served by being integrated into departments and colleges. Moreover, with the move of ISD, very few faculty will remain in CULMA, and it will become even more dominated by its outreach activities and less academic in its orientation.

Consequently, I am proposing that CULMA's instructional programs be moved to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The details of this move and the relocation of each program and faculty member will need to be worked out on a

case by case basis. Some of CULMA's faculty already have tenure homes in CLAS departments; others are in CULMA. Some programs will remain intact as separate departments; others may merge with existing departments.

The Graduate Council will need to recommend approval of the move of the graduate degrees, and by copy of this memo, I am requesting this recommendation. By copy of this memo, I am requesting Dean Thomas to seek the advice of the CLAS Faculty Council on this reorganization. If this proposal is recommended by the Academic Senate and approved by the WSU Board of Governors, I will establish a committee to work on the details of the relocation.

3. I recommend abolishing the College designation, and in its place creating two major applied research and outreach units reporting directly to the Provost. The first of these units would be focused on labor and workplace programs and would include the Reuther Archives, Labor Studies Center, Fraser Center for Workplace Studies, The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, and other labor outreach units. The second would be focused on Urban and Metropolitan Studies and would include the Center for Urban Studies (possibly renamed the Center for Urban and Metropolitan Studies), the Detroit Orientation Institute, and other urban/metropolitan outreach units.\*

Locating our labor and urban/metropolitan programs centrally, will allow other schools and colleges to participate more fully in the University's labor and urban mission and will ensure that these activities are better aligned with the mission of the University.

### **Summary**

This plan has the potential to strengthen our offerings for students with special needs by moving ISD and CBS to the Provost's Office where they can focus on ways to improve program delivery and additionally student chances of success. The plan has the potential to raise the academic quality of our labor/urban academic programs by moving them into a more traditional setting, while bringing labor/urban expertise into CLAS units currently lacking in these resources. And it has the potential to strengthen the university's commitment to labor/urban outreach by uniting participation across the university in these centers that would be centrally located rather than under the auspices of a single college.

\*As part of the Children's Bridge Initiative, plans are already underway to move the Skillman Center for Children into an alliance with the Merrill-Palmer Institute under the Vice President for Research.

## **Timetable and Implementation**

If adopted by the Board of Governors, I am proposing that the programmatic changes take effect Fall 2005 and that budgetary transfers be effected October 1, 2005. There should be no immediate impact on students as no changes in curriculum are being proposed.

c: President Irvin D. Reid  
Vice Presidents  
Deans  
Hilary Ratner, Chair, Graduate Council  
Robert Thomas, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Charles Parrish, President, AAUP-AFT