Recommendations of the Faculty Council and the Finance Committee Regarding Alternatives in the $6M Budget Reduction

President Machen announced that alternatives to the present budget reductions plans would be considered provided those alternatives yielded the same overall fiscal reductions within the individual college or unit. The College Faculty Council and the College Finance Committee examined the proposed reductions and principles as outlined in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Budget Reduction Plan (http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/kbrowne/6M%20Cut-02.xls), as well as the changes that have already taken place from the original proposal, including the reduction in the number of faculty to be laid off.

In considering any revenue neutral alternatives, the Faculty Council and the Finance Committee were guided by three important principles:

1. Laying off tenure-track faculty is an unprecedented and unwarranted action that results in a loss to the University's national and international reputation. This action also casts doubt on the trust and credibility of the University's commitment to its programs, faculty, and students.

2. Structural changes are best made for academic reasons.

3. The elimination or suspension of the doctoral programs in traditional core disciplines is out of step with top-tier research universities.

The Faculty Council and the Finance Committee therefore recommend the following four revenue-neutral changes to the proposed budget reduction plan for the College.

Recommendation 1
The retirements from DROP in 2009-2010 should be used to remove the remaining four tenure-track faculty from the layoff list.

Because resignations, including those taking place in the academic year 2009-2010, have been used to cover part of the reductions in the already approved plan, the three 2009-2010 DROP retirements of faculty in CLAS (one each in the Dean’s Office, History, and English) make it possible to remove the four remaining tenure-track faculty from the layoff list. These retirements yield approximately $268,800 in recurring funds (not including fringe), and the total of the salaries of the four tenure-track faculty still on the layoff list is approximately $216,261 (not including fringe).

Recommendation 2
The academic re-structurings (departments, programs, degrees) resulting from the already occurring administrative reductions need to be worked out over the next academic year by the faculty of those departments and the College operating within the stipulated budget constraints and administrative staffing.

Departments in each of the College’s divisions (Humanities, Natural and Mathematical Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences) have been designated for mergers as part of the budget reduction plan. The Faculty Council and the Finance Committee understand that the current fiscal crisis
requires reduction in administrative staffing that these mergers intend to address. Our recommendation respects those reductions. The merging departments will function by sharing the remaining staff as they determine the best academic structure in order to position the College for its best development for the next five to ten years.

It is highly unlikely that any restructuring will be efficient and effective, or even workable, in the long run if it is imposed upon the faculty against their will, without their counsel, and in a short period of time. There is no risk to prudent deliberations, especially because the Faculty Council and the Finance Committee’s recommendation stipulates that the administrative funding of each of the resulting restructured academic units must operate within the required budget and staffing restraints.

Recommendation 3
The doctoral programs in French, German, and Philosophy should be neither suspended nor eliminated.

The proposed Budget Reduction Plan does not address any reduction resulting from the elimination or suspension of the doctoral programs in French, German, and Philosophy. Because we can find no fiscal reductions attached to their elimination or suspension, the Faculty Council and the Finance Committee recommend that no such step occur until there has been full and complete examination of these issues by the College and the affected departments. All three of these degrees are offered by peer institutions such as University of Michigan, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Texas-Austin, Ohio State University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Recommendation 4
Discussion with the Faculty Council should take place as additional funds from resignations become available over the coming year. Reinvestment of such funds to reinstate laid-off faculty and staff should be a high priority.

Faculty and staff attrition in CLAS will continue, if not increase; such attrition will generate sufficient funds to avoid having to lay off many of the targeted non-tenure-track faculty and staff. To avoid further damage to faculty and staff morale as well as to the University’s reputation, the Faculty Council and the Finance Committee recommend that a high priority for such funds be to reinstate those faculty and staff targeted to be laid off.