Response of the Faculty Council to the Administration's Request for a $6M Reduction in Budget for CLAS

The Faculty Council has been asked to provide advice and counsel regarding the proposed $5,966,377 budget cut for the College to plan for. In order to accomplish those goals, members of the Council consulted the following documents:

- Review of University of Florida (UF) Financial Resources Compared to AAU Public Universities
- Finance Committee Report, Part I: Recommendations With Respect to Making a $3 Million Cut in the CLAS Budget
- Dean’s Report on 7-9LS Graduates in program as of January 15, 2008, from Academic Advising
- 07-08 Financial Data (including Salary, OPS, OE, EM, and Summer 07 Allocations)
- 07-08 Research Expenditures
- Student Credit Hour (SCH) Production (F06/SP07, SUM07, F07 Undergraduate [upper and lower] and Graduate)
- IDC CLAS Detail (FY 2005, 2006, 2007)

As the Finance Committee Report, Part I, makes clear, any of the proposed cuts will harm the College and lead to further losses in program quality. Student Credit Hours will plunge, graduate enrollments will decline, and there will be delays in graduations and critical tracking courses for undergraduates. The $2M cuts in postponed hiring, Enrollment Management, OPS, and OE “will not be easy for CLAS to absorb. Instead, they will make problems CLAS already faced worse” (p. 3).

The Finance Committee recommends devolving down to the departments and centers the additional 1% cut proposed as a first response to a possible 3% cut, but the Report makes clear that “for some units it will be impossible” to make the additional 1% cut (p. 4). In other words, any further cuts beyond an already harmful 2% cut that the College might be able to absorb will require especially drastic actions.

The Faculty Council has been tasked to consider a reduction three times greater than the $2M mentioned above, and according to the Council’s estimation, faculty layoffs cannot be avoided in CLAS if cuts extend beyond $2M. Moreover, the Faculty Council recognizes that if the administration chooses to make layoffs in CLAS, it would have to do so in a way that would not violate the Faculty Collective Bargaining Contract currently in effect.

As the Council understands it, only the Board of Trustees through the President or his designee is authorized to designate layoff units. Because the faculty rights and protections under the Contract restrict which faculty can and cannot be laid off in any particular designated circumstance, the Faculty Council cannot responsibly assess or calculate the best ways to absorb such a reduction without first knowing which CLAS unit or units, if any, the President wants to contemplate for layoffs.

The Faculty Council is prepared to calculate the specific impact of various degrees of cuts for any CLAS unit or units that the President might realistically select for possible layoffs, but the Council cannot do so before knowing which units the President may want to designate and for what specific amount of cuts.