

REPORT TO FACULTY ASSEMBLY CONCERNING THE PASSHE INITIATED PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

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I appreciate the opportunity to speak with members of the Faculty Assembly in an effort to clarify the actions taken by Mansfield's academic administration and President Loeschke over the past several months in relation to the review of academic programs initiated by the State System and to explain our responses and intentions as we move forward. Here is a summary of the process as it occurred:

- **Summer 2009:** In a meeting of PASSHE Chief Academic Officers, Vice Chancellor Moran indicated that we would soon be asked to review a set of our programs that had low numbers of students who graduated over a five-year period. He emphasized that the Board of Governors had a responsibility to manage programs and the right to place in moratorium or close programs.
- **September 9, 2009:** University presidents were informed we would be asked to provide information on programs identified by the System as under-enrolled. This is an extension of a conversation that has been held at the System and university levels for more than a decade. In this instance under-enrolled was defined by PASSHE as follows:
 - Graduate Programs: Less than 20 completions over the past five years
 - Baccalaureate Programs: Less than 30 completions over the past five years
 - Associate Programs: Less than 25 completions over the past five years
 - Certificate Programs: Less than 10 completions over the past five years
- **September 15, 2009:** I asked Vice Chancellor Moran for an extension in reference to the Program Review for the Art Department following a discussion with our new Deans about significant concerns regarding the program's five-year report.
- **October 2, 2009:** "Show Cause" Forms were distributed to Provosts by Vice Chancellor Moran with a request that we submit responses/recommendations to PASSHE by October 29. Shortly thereafter we reviewed the forms and the list of Mansfield programs included, and forwarded copies of the forms to chairs of affected departments with a request that they assist us by drafting a response while we began our own review process and considered various options. We defined a set of criteria that we believed should guide our decisions and response to the Vice Chancellor. Our criteria included the following:
 - Program need internally and externally
 - Mission and strategic plan relevance
 - Evidence of quality based on annual reports & program reviews where available
 - Five-year enrollments and completions
 - Invited feedback and discussions with departments regarding their recommendations and perceived options
- During their regularly scheduled meetings, we informed the Academic Planning Committee of the PASSHE requests and the show cause criteria we had received, including the timeline under which we were operating. The Provost and Academic Deans met regularly during the month of October to assess the information we had available and discuss appropriate responses.
- **Late October 2009:** We invited department chairs and representatives from the affected departments to meet with us to discuss their recommendations so that we could prepare an institutional response. Meetings with department chairs and representatives occurred at various points during the last two weeks of October. We approached the meetings as an opportunity to learn about department responses and have a discussion about

what we could or could not successfully support and directions we might take in our response to Vice Chancellor Moran. Preparation of the responses took place over a series of weeks.

- **Late October 2009:** As soon as we had formulated responses and discussed them first with the departments affected, we shared a summary of our recommendations with the Academic Planning Committee. We believe it is important to respect the role of the Academic Planning Committee in reviewing such recommendations, but we also believe that it is inappropriate to ask the Committee to make recommendations about placing programs in moratorium. Faculty have in the past been afforded the opportunity for input through the proper committees, but we do not believe it appropriate to ask faculty to make decisions about the possible closing of programs in which their colleagues are employed. It is solely within the authority of the President and State System authorities to make decisions on closing or placing programs in moratorium. When members of the committee inquired if they might assist our academic administration or departments in finding solutions to enrollment challenges, we welcomed the input. Program closings have historically been initiated by the academic administration unless a department wished to redesign their curricula or portfolio of programs.
- **December 16, 2010:** At his request, I had an extended telephone conversation with Vice Chancellor Moran to review our recommendations regarding programs that had low numbers of graduates. In summary, he stated that we had not gone far enough in recommending programs for moratorium or closing and suggested strongly that additional program within Music, Geology and Geography, Philosophy, and others should be slated for moratorium unless they could demonstrate a viable plan to increase enrollments to meet to the System's desired number of graduates in the near future.
- **January 2010:** Immediately after the holiday I spoke with our President regarding the end-of-semester call from Vice Chancellor Moran and his directives regarding the closure of additional programs. President Loeschke, the Deans, and I were in substantial agreement that our previous response was appropriate but that most of the additional steps that Vice Chancellor Moran requested were not constructive for Mansfield at this time. I also promptly scheduled conversations with Senate President Timko, Mansfield APSCUF President Chabala, and chairs of the departments mentioned in the phone conversation with the Vice Chancellor. We explained to the chairs that their programs were under System scrutiny and asked that they assist us in preparing a response to the Vice Chancellor. We were at first asked to respond by March 1st but requested an extension because of a conflict with the March 1st due date of a monitoring report regarding assessment for the Commission on Higher Education. Vice Chancellor Moran suggested a date later in March, which was recently extended to later in April. Some departments have already drafted responses that we think address the matters raised by Vice Chancellor Moran. We expect to continue working with others to prepare our responses.
- **Updates and Current Activities:** Regarding the programs currently in question from the first round of the show cause process:
 - We do not believe we can defend successfully an undergraduate degree program that graduates only one or two students each year, which is the case with French and German, but we do hope to continue offering students an opportunity to study languages for two years. Spanish faces similar challenges to French and German in terms of the number of students graduating unless it is able to revise the program in a manner that attracts a larger number of majors. Our understanding is that the department wishes to propose a new design for the study of modern languages at Mansfield, and we support the consideration of an innovative, more efficient approach. Lock Haven University has already proposed a redesign of its programs based on two years of language study, followed by study abroad and a language proficiency examination. Their redesign appears to have been well received by PASSHE in a preliminary response. Lock Haven faculty have made a gesture of collaboration with our modern language programs, which we would like to see explored further.
 - Philosophy generally has strong enrollments at both lower and upper division levels, even though it did not meet System expectations for numbers of graduates over the past five years. However, they have been at a disadvantage because of having two faculty on leave for administrative assignments. We are hopeful that their draft proposal to move closer to the PASSHE requirements will be acceptable.

- We have encouraged Sociology and Anthropology to redesign their program based on specific goals, objectives and outcomes. At this point we are very hopeful that we might convince the System to allow it to move forward. We have met with faculty on several occasions and continue to offer our assistance.
- We have encouraged faculty in Physics to find ways to collaborate with other System universities that have low enrollments and expect to have continuing discussions with them about the future of the program.
- We do not believe we can defend the current Art graduate program to accreditors or PASSHE. We expect that the graduate program in Art will remain in moratorium at least until we complete a planned program review process with the input of an external consultant. We also intend to continue working with faculty in Art to find ways to improve their programs.
- **More Information:** A summary of our responses to PASSHE as well as a fact sheet about the review process are available online at the Academic Affairs website.
- **Budget:** Regarding questions about the budgetary aspects of our review, we would emphasize that the primary factors in our analysis were not financial. Moreover, any financial gains from placing a program in moratorium would not be apparent for several years because (a) there were no personnel actions associated with the changes and (b) we will enable all students currently in a program to complete their studies. However, from a more general perspective classes that have enrollments less than our undergraduate average target enrollment of 27 cost the University more than they generate in revenue. Classes above that number generate more revenue than they actually cost. We recognize that there will always be a wide range of class sizes at the University, but that we must maintain an average as close to 27 as we can reach if we are to have the resources required to manage Mansfield effectively. For fall 2009 our average class size was 22.4—considerably above the average for the previous several years when we were experiencing a decline in enrollment. We must move quickly toward 27 if we are to have sufficient resources to sustain the university in the next two years. Replacing some smaller courses in low enrolled majors generally will assist us in achieving that goal. Each increase of 1 in *average* undergraduate class size across the University generates nearly \$1.0 million in additional revenue. Currently we project a shortfall of over \$4.5 million in 2011-2012. This is the year the federal stimulus support is removed from our budget. To adjust, we will need to increase our enrollment modestly, raise our average class sizes to the target goal, and have the Board of Governors grant a sufficient tuition increase over the next two years. Put differently, sustainability will require a collaborative team effort.

