

*Pacific Lutheran University***An Academic Road Map: Achieving the Vision of PLU 2010**

At its meetings on January 17, 2003 and May 3, 2003, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents discussed the broad outlines of an academic “road map” to guide academic planning. The intended use of the map is both to show “the lay of the land” and to provide “driving directions” for the “preferred route” to a strengthened, academically and financially viable academic program. In the period of time since the May meeting, various members of the faculty and administration have taken additional steps toward the creation of the map. The purpose of this Key Report is to bring together the pieces of the map that are now “under construction” and to describe “trip preparation” plans. Once again, this key report uses the extended analogy of the “road map” to explain complicated academic processes in simple, straightforward language.

**The Destination**

As a brief reminder, the road map takes us to somewhere, i.e., to fulfill the five key “aspirations” set forth in PLU 2010:

- academic excellence
- an engaged community
- global perspectives
- fiscal strength
- life as vocation

With specific regards to the academic program, PLU 2010 tells us that we will know we have arrived at our desired destination when we are a university known for three “marks of distinction”: purposeful learning, international education, and student-faculty research and creative projects.

In addition, Chapter V of PLU 2010 says we will reach the desired destination by aligning resources with mission, goals, and priorities.

At the May 2003 meeting, the Key Report identified three stages of the road map as three “days” of a journey. To maintain continuity from meeting to meeting, this Key Report uses the same language.

**Day One**

The first phase of the journey involved making short-term changes to have a positive impact on the FY 04 budget. In review, these were the planned decisions with status report on each.

- The FY 04 academic staffing budget was limited to \$18,350,000 as planned. Although enrollment surpassed budget plans, holding the line on personnel expenditures is possible and desirable.

- The budget for services and purchases and student wages in the academic sector as constrained to levels near the original FY 03 allocations (prior to the adjustments of the Fall).
- The budget for study away was stabilized at FY 03 levels; it will be adjusted to actual (up or down) in response to student registrations.
- FY 04 recruiting for tenure-track positions was put on hold pending review of curriculum and administrative structure and clarification of the procedure and guidelines for granting tenure-track requests. The only tenure-track position being searched in FY 04 is one in Chemistry that was unfilled the previous year.
- Budget transfers from non-salary budgets to salary budgets to pay for extra-duty stipends and supplemental wages for students and faculty are now disallowed.
- The offices of Provost, Institutional Research, and Special Academic Programs were merged into a single administrative unit, consolidating budgets possible and reducing costs for “central administration.” The positions of Associate Provost and Dean of Special Academic Programs were eliminated.
- Academic support services were consolidated into the first floor of Ramstad Hall and the first floor of the Mortvedt Library; better integration with Student Life programs is being aided by the appointment of Jeff Jordan as Dean of Student Academic Success and expanding his decanal portfolio to include academic support programs. Jeff reports jointly to Laura Majovski and to Jim Pence.
- Grant-supported positions were filled with current employees in two instances, thereby achieving budget relief rather than adding expense.
- The continuing education efforts of the professional schools are being combined into a coordinated unit with revenue targets to achieve self-sustaining programs; this initiative did not affect the FY 04 budget as much as it will affect the FY 05 budgets (and thereafter).
- Dean-level vacancies in the School of Business and the School of the Arts were filled with interim appointments from within the existing faculties; a search for the Dean of the School of Business is underway now.
- The process of coordinating annual reports with accreditation self-studies has begun; a team of people with responsibility for institutional research is mapping a strategy for institutional effectiveness benchmarks and performance measures.

The cumulative effect of these changes has helped us enter the 2003-04 academic year with a balanced academic budget and bought us a little “rest time” before Day Two.

### **Day Two**

The second phase of the journey involves making the kinds of deeper changes in academic and administrative structure that will have a positive impact on the FY 05 budget and beyond. Two types of “driving directions” are being readied for Day Two: those involving “budgetary topics” and those involving “on-going plans.”

From the original list of topics reviewed in May by a Joint Committee of the Faculty Affairs and Educational Policies Committees, the “budgetary topics” now being studied are these.

- 1.

Academic Structure. The Faculty Affairs Committee and the Academic Deans' Council are jointly investigating changes in academic structure. In preparation for the Fall Faculty Conference on September 3, four alternative models for the academic leadership structure at PLU were drafted and circulated by a sub-committee of FAC and ADC. These models and the general topic of academic restructuring were discussed at two of the Fall Conference concurrent sessions. At their first regular meeting of the semester, FAC reviewed the feedback from the vigorous discussions that took place during the Fall Conference. Continued FAC work on this issue will involve the Committee's meeting with the academic units to discuss the opportunities they see in considering alternative groupings of programs as well as their concerns. According to FAC Chair Dana Garrigan, "By the end of the fall semester, we seek to determine whether alternative academic leadership structures could create greater efficiency while maintaining the integrity and vigor of PLU's academic programs. Follow-up work would involve drafting a concrete proposal that would be considered by the Faculty Assembly and other appropriate parties."

2. Faculty Welfare Issues. This broad category includes such topics as phased retirement, faculty size, workload, and compensation. The Faculty Affairs Committee has primary responsibility for this category. Professor Garrigan summarizes FAC progress on these topics as follows:
  - Phased Retirement – Working with the Vice President for Finance and Operations, the Provost, and the Director of Human Resource Services, FAC seeks to offer guidance in clarifying the "call to service" for faculty and administrators retiring under the current phased retirement plan. In addition, the Committee will review proposals for an alternative plan that would reduce the expected service commitment in exchange for reduced compensation for phased retirees. This issue is one of the top priorities for the fall, and FAC has already held a follow-up meeting with the Director of Human Resource Services.
  - Faculty Size – FAC will review issues related to the student to faculty ratio and academic quality to act in an advisory capacity in discussions with the administration of faculty size and hiring.
  - Faculty Teaching Loads – FAC will review the formulae used by different Schools and Divisions at PLU to calculate teaching load. The Committee will seek to promote equity in calculating teaching loads through consideration of instructional hours and course enrollments. In addition, FAC will review the variety of course releases that are offered to department chairs, program chairs, and other teaching administrators to promote equity through consideration of department/program size, budgets, responsibilities, etc.
  - Faculty Compensation – FAC will continue to work with the Provost and President to make PLU salaries and benefits competitive with those offered by similar institutions. In addition to facilitating the discussions outlined above to pursue greater operating efficiencies with the goal of improving salaries, FAC will discuss other suggestions to raise faculty salaries (e.g. development opportunities, reviewing the allocation of funds to salaries versus other expenditures, etc.) During the year, FAC will continue its work to define appropriate comparison groups and to revise the plan presented in 2001-2002 for bringing PLU salaries to the level of the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of AAUP category IIA institutions.

3. Curriculum Revision. The Educational Policies Committee is taking the lead in this area of the road map. Several sessions at the Fall Conference focused on curricular issues. Professor Peter Ehrenhaus, Chair of EPC, summarizes the Committee's progress to date as follows:
  - EPC has asked to hold meetings with faculty in each of the academic division and schools by early October. EPC is distributing a set of questions for faculty members to consider and through which to structure these meetings.
  - The Committee will hold at least one information-gathering session with students, to be sponsored by ASPLU.
  - EPC is evaluating and comparing core curricular models and credit requirements of the Top 10 universities in our region, and of our institution-type (i.e., "Western universities – masters programs"), as ranked by *U.S. News*.
  - The Committee is evaluating core curricular proposals generated by faculty at PLU, specifically to locate the common ground among these proposals.
  - Based upon these initiatives, EPC plans to submit for faculty vote at the November 2003 faculty meeting its own proposal for a revised core curriculum.
4. Academic calendar and daily schedule. This topic was assigned to the Provost and Registrar. The goal of analyzing calendar and schedule is to look for opportunities to make more efficient use of personnel and facilities throughout the academic year and the daily schedule. An important corollary goal is to modify the daily schedule to create "community time" for students, faculty, and staff to meet and confer on these major academic issues. A working group of administrators is reviewing the current calendar and schedule and identifying options for change.

Activities continue in three areas of "on-going plans":

1. As a follow-up to the Key Report on International Education in January 2003, a Drafting Team has prepared the draft of a strategic plan to guide our decisions in this PLU 2010 "mark of distinction." The text of the plan is included in this Board Book as a Key Report.
2. A cross-section of faculty and staff associated with the First-year Program traveled to Vancouver, BC this summer for an international conference on first-year programs. The Director of the First-year Program, Drs. Majovski and Pence, and an advisory committee of faculty and staff are assessing next steps in this planning effort.
3. The Graduate Council began work on the draft of a strategic plan for graduate programs, meeting twice before the end of the summer. The planning process recommenced in late September.

In my address to the faculty at Fall Conference, I reaffirmed the recommendations I had made last Spring to the Joint Committee:

- That all changes designed to impact the FY 05 budget should be processed through appropriate governance channels by December 2003, with "back-up" time as the Faculty Assembly meeting in February 2004.

- That faculty committees focus on making three to five strategic decisions to be implemented starting June 1, 2004.
- That open and regular communication on road map topics, such as occurred at the Fall Conference 2003, continue throughout the process and into the 2004 Fall Conference.

A written text of my talk is on the web at: <http://www.plu.edu/~newsinfo/fall-events/provost-address.html>.

As I reflect on the events and discussions of the summer and the Fall Conference, I think the immediate challenge is to make significant progress on a limited number of Day Two activities during the Fall to positively impact the FY 05 budget. The hope of significant progress rests, in my judgment, on three variables:

1. Leadership. This Fall, I included all academic department chairs and program directors in the opening-of-the-year retreat. About 60 people gathered in the Steilacoom Town Hall to consider the challenges ahead and the opportunities for leadership. One of my important roles is to facilitate leadership among deans, chairs, and faculty. Given our current academic structure and the traditions and legislation of faculty governance, keeping the faculty committees and the academic administration in conversation is also an important role. To that end, I will be sending an electronic update to this Academic Leadership Assembly every Friday, summarizing road map activities and encouraging effective communication.
2. Data. Effective decision-making is always enhanced by good data. Creating and nurturing a culture of evidence around institutional data is one of my highest priorities. To that end, I invited Don Bell, recently retired Dean of the School of Business and an expert in institutional performance measures, to work part-time with me until December 2003. Don's exclusive duty will be to assist in the design and testing of institutional research data.
3. Change. President Anderson's State of the University address, and my talk "Toward an Academic Vision," mutually reinforce the need for change. The current academic program, in my professional opinion, is not sustainable. People and resources are stretched too thin; we are not performing consistently at the level of quality necessary to distinguish us academically; and we have few resources to support new endeavors. The availability of major resources from externally funded grants off-sets these problems for the time being; but those resources are end-stopped. I am also convinced that the system itself is the main problem, everything from the way we de-couple the scheduling of courses and personnel budgets to the idiosyncratic approaches to planning and budgeting practiced by each of the academic divisions and their sub-sets. If we can change elements of the way we do things, we have a terrific opportunity to move forward. If we cannot or will not change the system, only a large infusion of resources can keep things running.

### Day Three

The third phase of the journey, yet to be planned, involves making the deepest changes that will have a long-term impact on the FY 06 budget and beyond.

**Summary**

Cooperation and collegiality are in good supply at PLU these days. The opening-of-the-year was one of the smoothest in my fourteen years as a chief academic officer. While the specifics of the road map may vary somewhat from week to week or month to month, the road map itself lays out in front of us the “territory” we must navigate to reach our destination.

James L. Pence  
Provost