

## APRCA Committee Report to Faculty Senate – February 2021

### Committee charge

According to the [Constitution of the Portland State University Faculty](#), the Faculty Senate has the power to act on “the establishment, abolition, or major alteration of the structure or educational function of departments or of programs” (Faculty Constitution, p. 1). Further, “The Faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life that relate to the education process” (Faculty Constitution, p. 2).

The Ad Hoc Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Program Reduction and Curricular Adjustments was charged by the Faculty Senate in October, 2020 to uphold a faculty voice in decisions regarding how budget reductions will affect educational policy, curriculum, and the structure of the University.

As outlined in the Senate charge, this committee will:

- **Focus** holistically on PSU’s collective future.
- **Ensure faculty participation** in meaningful, inclusive, and formative discussions of curricular adjustments related to budget reduction.
- **Recommend principles and priorities** based on PSU's values and mission, with an emphasis on applying a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens, and share these with OAA to guide decision- making.
- **Plan and implement transparent communications**, including but not limited to periodic townhall forums on budget information, regular campus-wide emails, and a website or Google Drive for material, including data on which decisions about reorganizing or eliminating programs are based.
- **Solicit input and feedback** from faculty, including but not limited to implementing surveys and arranging other forums for gathering input and suggestions. Ensure input and involvement from Deans and Chairs/department heads. Facilitate communication with and incorporate input from students, staff, and other stakeholders.
- **Plan and implement meetings and interactions** (preferably with professionally mediation), including but not limited to meetings of Colleges/Schools.
- **Assist**, if requested by OAA or AAUP, in contractually mandated retrenchment hearings arising from elimination of positions as per Article 23 of the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The committee charge instructed the committee to present reports to the Senate in December 2020 and June 2021. Because the committee was not fully staffed until early December, this February report is our first. Given the importance of keeping the campus community updated on the tasks that we are undertaking, the committee plans to report monthly to the Senate through the end of the academic year.

### Committee membership

Committee membership is listed on the Faculty Senate website on the [APRCA committee webpage](#).

### Committee accomplishments and ongoing tasks

1. **DEI discussion:** Cynthia Gomez, our DEI advocate, led an interactive meeting during which we addressed the following questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
  - a. Goals
    - i. Seek out faculty guidance on cuts that impact the curriculum.
    - ii. Decide on actionable and concrete steps we will take to ensure this process addresses our equity concerns.

b. Questions

- i. What are our guiding principles? Or what story do we tell ourselves as it relates to outcomes, DEI, process?
- ii. How will faculty feedback be gathered/shared in a way that honors DEI (particularly equity) principles? How will we highlight these issues in our communications with the faculty and administration and in the forums that we organize at the university and college/school level?
- iii. Can we anticipate how racial/ ethnic and other disparities will play out in the budget cuts that PSU will likely face in the near future? Can we mitigate these impacts? How?
- iv. How does applying an equity lens this time make our work different from past processes that have not gone so well? How will we know we are being successful?

2. **Partner with the Provost's Program Reduction Working Group**

- a. The Provost, Susan Jeffords, has created the **Provost's Program Reduction Working Group** (PPRWG). According to that committee's charge, "The Provost's Program Reduction Working Group will support the need to have decisions that are data-informed by identifying metrics and conducting analyses that will inform recommendations of units to consider in the Program Reduction process." The PPRWG is charged to:
  - i. "Establish a set of metrics that will enable us to get an initial sense of unit-level performance (driver metrics). These may include, but not be limited to, metrics such as: SCH generated annually; the number of: undergraduate majors, graduate students, minors, yearly degrees conferred, or students enrolled in courses that serve other majors or general education requirements; utilization of course capacities; costs/SCH; and others."
  - ii. "Establish a set of metrics that reflects institutional values and priorities (value metrics). These may include, but not be limited to: retention and graduation rates by student population, any available post-graduation success metrics, contributions to university-wide DEI goals, unit research activity, unit community engagement, and others."
  - iii. "Utilize these metrics to establish unit profiles that can inform holistic decisions about considerations for possible reduction, reorganization, or elimination."
- b. The Provost has asked the PPRWG to provide metrics by February 15<sup>th</sup> and report their analysis of units by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

3. **APRCA Principles and priorities** by Feb 15<sup>th</sup>.

- a. The Provost has informed APRCA that the APRCA committee's list of principles and priorities will be of most use if received by Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, and the committee will meet that deadline.

4. **Website:** The committee will create, develop, and maintain a website through which information about program reduction will be communicated to the campus community and faculty input and feedback will be solicited.

- a. The website will be linked to the APRCA committee's Faculty Senate webpage at <https://www.pdx.edu/faculty-senate/academic-program-reduction-and-curricular-adjustments-ad-hoc-committee>

5. **Winter symposium:** This year's annual Winter Symposium (scheduled for Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup>) on

will focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Symposium will continue the momentum generated by the Equity Summit in October, under the leadership of the Vice President for Global Diversity and Inclusion. If the organizers of the Winter Symposium wish to discuss how upcoming budget cuts may affect vulnerable populations such as BiPOC faculty, staff, and students, the APRCA committee would be happy to contribute to that conversation. Similarly, we will work with OGD I when we organize an event of our own to focus on issues of diversity. At that event, in addition to speaking about race and ethnicity, gender, and other identities, we plan to focus attention on different categories of faculty employment, asking how cuts will affect adjuncts, Fixed-Term Faculty, Non-Tenure Track faculty, and Tenure-related faculty. The APRCA committee invites faculty to join in this important discussion.

6. **Subcommittees:** The main APRCA committee has formed subcommittees to address a series of tasks. One group will work on principles and priorities. Another will work with FADM and OAA to schedule budget “town hall” forums to update the campus community on financial developments.
7. The APRCA committee stands ready to help organize an **additional meeting of the Faculty Senate** as outlined in Article 22 of the [PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) if the University moves forward with budget-related layoffs.