

## **Question for Provost Jeffords**

### **Context:**

Provost Jeffords, President Percy, and others in the administration have thanked the faculty and staff of this university for stepping up when the pandemic hit to shift teaching and advising online without missing a beat. You've thanked academic professionals and non-instructional faculty for helping the university save money by agreeing to furloughs. You've thanked us all for enduring the hardships of the last 15 months while at the same time continuing to put students first. Every such communication of thanks from you and the President has helped to bring us all together over the course of an extraordinarily difficult year. Your appreciation has been received by us as heartfelt and sincere.

And yet the administration's insistence on program reduction and reorganization has created a lot of anxiety and mistrust. Enrollment projections seem to be driving these initiatives, but even during normal times these are unreliable more than 2 years into the future – and these are not normal times. We, along with many other faculty and academic professionals, are convinced that PSU should not be making major strategic decisions to eliminate, reduce, or reshape academic programs when enrollment and other factors determining the university's financial health are in a state of flux. The administration's initiatives have the appearance of taking advantage of the pandemic to push through long-sought cuts and reorganization. That may not be the administration's intent, but it certainly seems that way to many of us.

Now departments and programs must embark on a process of justifying their budgets, and perhaps their existence, by providing data for dashboards designed to generate metrics of their value to the university. During normal times, many of us would take such an exercise in stride – indeed, it is reminiscent of past exercises at PSU. But is this necessary, or at all wise, while we are emerging from a pandemic and are focused on a smooth transition to Open for Fall, Open for All? Moreover, the plan for IELP retrenchment strikes us as ill-timed and unfair, coming at this particular moment and after so much progress by IELP faculty in rebalancing their programs. They, and we, would like to know that every corner of this university has been scoured for cost savings before our colleagues are put out of work.

### **Our question to the Provost:**

So far, the ReImagine PSU initiative seems focused mainly on the revenue-generating units in OAA. How will the burden of closing the projected budget gap be distributed throughout the university? Have dashboards been designed for purposes of assessing administrative and other units, including athletics and campus police? Will these metrics be shared with Faculty Senate?

### **Submitted by the following Faculty Senators and Officers:**

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### **And our faculty colleagues:**

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