

Background

In anticipation of a flat budget in Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) and a significantly reduced budget in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19), President Stearns has initiated “Forward 125” to reconcile the FY19 budget for a projected student headcount of 11,000. It is generally understood that the “Forward125” timeline is too brief to conduct a thorough and strategic University-wide Program Prioritization process.

Under Montana law (§ 39-31-303, MCA) the administration has the authority to:

- hire, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees;
- relieve employees from duties because of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and nonproductive;
- take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the agency in situations of emergency.

Under the Collective Bargaining Agreements (7.100) the Faculty Senate has the right, in accordance with Board of Regents policies, to review and make recommendations concerning:

- development, curtailment, discontinuance, or reorganization of academic programs; and
- issues that pertain to the academic affairs of the University and matters of critical concern about the welfare and Administration of the University.

Under 7.100 the Senate also has the right to establish committees and other bodies necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this provision.

Therefore, the Executive Committee of the Senate presents for consideration in special session on February 28, 2017 the following resolution concerning faculty participation in Forward125 and asserting the faculty’s rights and responsibilities in that process.

Resolution

The Faculty Senate will appoint representatives to participate in the “Forward125” taskforce created to define and apply the metrics and measures used to identify academic programs and administrative services for curtailment, discontinuance, or reorganization and strongly urges the participation of all shared governance partners.

The “Forward125” taskforce will present its final recommendations, citing the applied metrics and measures, at the October 2017 meeting of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate will review those recommendations and vote at the November 2017 Senate meeting on whether to recommend them, all or in part, to the President.

Should “Forward125” lead to retrenchment the Faculty Senate will participate in accordance with the CBA (18.500-18.530).