

units, and unit performance history. Impact on diversity and on graduate education was also considered as part of the deliberation.

The members of the Committee reviewed the documentation individually, and then discussed it in a series of meetings. None of the Committee's deliberations were formulaic. No formula could well capture, compare and aggregate the excellences and weaknesses of different departments and programs. The members weighed and discussed materials in light of the criteria and reached a consensus on its recommendations.

The restructuring plan announced by Dean Forman reflected a combination of elements recommended earlier by the Committee and elements proposed by the Dean. The Dean discussed his proposed elements with the Committee supporting them with arguments and evidence relative to the criteria and received responses and comments from the Committee. Once a restructuring proposal was presented for discussion by the Dean, he requested and received the support of the Committee. Again, this was an exercise of judgment by Committee members mindful of the criteria and based on knowledge and information available to the Committee.

When we interviewed Dean Forman, we asked him if he had used any particular set of metrics in formulating the restructuring plan. We specifically asked about the use of the proprietary benchmarking software, Academic Analytics. He responded that this software was used by the Laney Graduate School and that he had consulted those findings, but that they were not decisive factors in his ultimate decisions. Although the committee understands that the judgments made about the departments and programs that were closed or suspended were comparative in nature, it is the committee's view that the criteria in CFAC's letter represent broad indicators that could be subject to excessive subjectivity. We therefore recommend that the faculty of Emory College openly discuss and debate these indicators as part of the development of a clearer understanding of our liberal arts mission. The goal here is not to develop an explicit set of quantifiable criteria that can be reduced to a formula, but rather to develop a reasonably clear set of observable and consensual rubrics with which departments and programs understand that they will be evaluated.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Departmental and programmatic cuts are invariably difficult and painful, and will inevitably inflict a good deal of distress and even anger. Moreover, we are acutely aware of the hazards of hindsight bias: It is easy to look back and "Monday-morning quarterback" decisions and their handling. Our committee gave a good deal of thought to thinking through these difficult issues. We recognize that it is probably impossible to implement major cuts that do not displease many faculty members. At the same time, the committee attempted to ask whether the best processes were followed, and how future changes might be handled better. Our distinct impression is that the College attempted to

make difficult decisions in good faith and without malevolence, and tried to minimize embarrassment to directly affected faculty members and programs.

Nevertheless, the College Administration appeared to have made the decision to impose the pain “on the front end” (“pulling the Band-Aid off quickly”) in the service of minimizing long-term pain (“pulling the Band-Aid off slowly”). After consulting with numerous departmental and program personnel, we have serious reasons to doubt whether this strategy was successful. From our interviews, we sense that an enormous residue of resentment remains, and many or most affected department/programs believe that they were treated unfairly. In meeting with the chairs of affected departments, we were struck by the widespread perception of a striking absence of communication between them and the College administration, a view not typically shared by the College. Again, pain and upset in such situations are almost certainly inevitable, as are legitimate differences in perception (e.g., regarding the clarity of advance communication) between the affected programs and the College. But we believe that the lack of transparency in some of the decisions has contributed to a lingering sense of resentment in the affected programs, as well as an understandable sense of trepidation in many non-affected programs, particularly those in the non-STEM areas.

One of our overarching recommendations is for a broader change in the longstanding culture of interactions between the Emory College Faculty and the Emory College administration: greater openness and transparency, a greater spirit of feedback and consultation with faculty and department chairs prior to cuts, and an explicit opportunity for appeals. We recognize that the opportunity for appeals could result in a prolongation of uncertainty, and this is a difficult trade-off that College faculty will need to weigh carefully. At the same time, the psychological literature reminds us that humans are highly sensitive to issues of perceived fairness, and the lack thereof. When proper processes are followed and when individuals are allowed a voice, long-term resentment and poor morale will tend to be minimized even when the ultimate decisions are not to the liking of all affected parties.

### **Recommendations:**

*By-Laws:* The College by-laws need to be re-written to include a clear procedure for reorganization of departments and programs. The by-laws should state unambiguously who, when, how and why a program is evaluated. The by-laws also need to make more explicit the role of College faculty consultation prior to departmental/program cuts. What kind of faculty consultation with the Dean is required? Who needs to be consulted, and when? Can cuts be done entirely in confidence, or can they be done more openly? The Committee recommends more rather than less openness, as doing so will enhance shared governance, improve faculty morale, and in the long run, enhance the quality of decision-making. This greater openness is particularly critical, in our view, with respect to the criteria used to evaluate departments. Moreover, the committee believes strongly that the Laney Graduate by-laws, which now call for explicit consultation with the Graduate Executive Committee in the event of potential departmental or program closures, need to

be followed whenever major reorganizational decisions involving graduate programs are seriously contemplated.

*Procedure:* The procedure should include steps to be taken for evaluating programs; who should do that; what will be the timeframe; what is the evaluated program owed as far as consultation and notification; and what broad criteria should be used in such cases. In addition, the procedure should include an explicit and well-delineated mechanism for appeal, which the College should set up at the earliest opportunity. As noted earlier, the Committee believes that an appeals process in some form is necessary given that departmental or program cuts can in rare cases be based on inaccurate or incomplete information. Without some form of appeals process, administration decisions based on such information are not open to reconsideration. In the committee's view, at least some formal mechanism of self-correction in the event of errors is essential. In addition, an important element in the procedure should further include a plan for dealing with the aftermath of the cuts. This should contain suggestions for how to deal with the faculty, administrative staff, declared majors, incoming students, and parents and angry or concerned alumni. The surprise that the reorganized programs (except for Spanish) reported should be avoided at all costs. If departments and programs are cut with little or no certitude of problems, this can inadvertently contribute to an atmosphere of fear and paranoia on campus that is detrimental to faculty and student morale, and to shared governance between the administration and faculty.

*Relations between Emory College Faculty and University Faculty:* Non-tenured and Lecture-Track faculty in Emory College are not afforded the same protections and avenues of appeal afforded Tenured Faculty of the University. There are on-going discussions in the Office of the Provost to regularize the treatment of non-tenured and lecture track faculty across the University. We recommend that the Emory College faculty seek ways to more effectively connect our College system of governance with University governance.

*Developing a vision of the liberal arts mission for Emory College:* One of the unclear and undefined issues in the reorganization and the elimination of departments and programs is a well-articulated and publicly agreed upon vision of the liberal arts mission of Emory College. Members of CFAC and Dean Forman appear to have an implicit vision of this mission in making judgments about departments and programs, but this vision was not made explicit, beyond the general call for greater eminence and the as yet general specification of new goals and directions for the future (e.g., Chinese studies, new media studies, interdisciplinarity, and enhancing eminence). Moving forward, it will be important to articulate broad criteria for eminence so that future decisions regarding departmental and program cuts can be made in a more explicit and open manner, with the reasons for these cuts being more evident to the affected and non-affected units alike. We recommend that Dean Forman and the Faculty of Emory College join in an active discussion about our liberal arts vision going forward, joining with on-going discussions. Although we harbor no illusions that such a process will lead to complete agreement, we are confident that it will help us better understand our complex character as a liberal arts

college in a major research university. We hope that it will also help restore faculty confidence in difficult decisions involving departmental and program reorganization.

### **Conclusion:**

Finally, we, the members of the Process Review Committee, wish to thank our colleagues for entrusting the review of the reorganization and restructuring process to us. We are also grateful to the members of the affected departments and the College administration who were gracious enough to lend us their valuable time and feedback. By looking back, we have tried to determine the nature of the process, its strengths and its weaknesses so that we all have a better understanding of how to move forward. In that spirit, the members of the Process Review Committee look forward to working with the Shared Governance Committee to help develop a more effective system of governance for all the members of Emory College. If anything has become clear to us, it is that greater faculty participation in governance and clearer, more effective communication between the Emory College Faculty and the College administration will alleviate, if not forestall, future difficulties of the sort we have recently experienced.

Respectfully submitted:

Matthew H. Bernstein  
Professor and Chair,  
The Department of Film and Media Studies

Oded Borowski  
Professor of Biblical Archaeology and Hebrew,  
The Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies

Scott O. Lilienfeld  
Professor  
Department of Psychology

Fred Menger  
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Chemistry,  
Department of Chemistry

Gordon D. Newby  
The Goodrich C. White Professor of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies,  
The Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies  
Chair of the Process Review Committee

# Appendix 1

April 15, 2013 Letter from CFAC to PRC



## Appendix 1



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY

Department of Political Science

To: Matthew Bernstein, Chair  
Committee to Review the Work of the CFAC

Date: April 15, 2013

We, former members of the College Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC), have been asked to respond to a request for further information about the counsel and advice given to Dean Forman regarding the Restructuring Plan. We do so with grave concern over the precedent established by creating a faculty committee to “review” the work of another duly created faculty committee and are able to do so only within the limits afforded by our promise to keep our conversations and advice to Deans Paul and Forman confidential.

Effective faculty participation in College governance requires that at times selected faculty will take part in confidential processes, and we believe that confidentiality is an important value in such processes.<sup>1</sup> We were asked to make a promise of strict confidentiality to the Dean at the time the Committee was formed. All new members of the CFAC have also been asked to promise confidentiality. The reasons for this promise are twofold. First, at various times we were given unprecedented access to a range of highly sensitive information as part of our work, such as detailed departmental budgets (excepting individual salaries) and external reviews of departments and of Emory College. Second, we were asked to offer advice and to respond to proposals by the Deans for possible cuts and restructurings in response to budgetary pressures. This required candid, detailed, lengthy, and searching conversations about program and department performance and budget, and about the College’s necessary structures. We do not believe the conversations could have occurred effectively without confidentiality, and we well understood why the Deans asked us to commit to it. We viewed our participation in these processes as essential to faculty governance; it was important to have faculty voices at the table when these decisions were being considered. *But at every point our work has been advisory, and the decisions have been made by the Deans in question: first by Dean Robert Paul and then by Dean Robin Forman.*

We believe that confidentiality is best maintained and the potential deleterious effects of this “review” process on faculty governance best limited by providing a written response to inquiries concerning the work of the CFAC. Given that proviso what follows expresses the responses of

<sup>1</sup> Many appointed and elected faculty advisory committees operate under explicit assumptions of confidentiality. These committees cover a range of issues including but not limited to promotions and tenure, student and faculty misconduct, the selection of award nominees, faculty and administrator search committees, reviews of special programs, and financial planning.

the undersigned to the request for information. In addition we take the opportunity to reiterate some basic facts about the history of the Committee.

The predecessor to the CFAC was first empanelled by Dean Robert Paul in November 2008 on an ad hoc basis. It was comprised of former department chairs (chosen by the Dean on the basis of familiarity with budgets and experience with the College), along with the Chair of the Governance Committee (GovCom) as an ex officio member. The Committee subsequently requested to be regularized as a sub-committee of GovCom, so that meetings could be held independently, in addition to the meetings called by the Dean, and so that GovCom could enhance faculty representation as needed. The CFAC was created as a subcommittee of the Governance Committee (GovCom), given its mandate and its membership appointed in the spring semester of 2009.

The formation of the CFAC was well publicized. Its creation was announced at the February 11, 2009 College Faculty Meeting along with a request for nominations of faculty to serve on the Committee. At that same meeting Dean Paul expressed appreciation for the work of the predecessor Committee, listing its membership by name (Appendix I). Calls for nominations for membership on the Committee have gone out periodically from GovCom in the intervening years. The existence and work of CFAC was also prominently mentioned in discussions surrounding the faculty vote on the elimination of the Physical Education requirement from the General Education requirements in the spring of 2010.

The initial membership of the Committee was maintained through the 2010-2011 academic year to take advantage of the accrued budgetary knowledge and experience of the members. To better ensure continuity given the extended life of the Committee, rotation of membership commenced with the 2011-2012 academic year. An additional representative of GovCom was also added to the Committee at that time. The Committee throughout its history has at a minimum had two members from each division of the College. The Committee has also had one representative of lecture track faculty and representation of the GovCom.<sup>2</sup> Because of the inclusion of lecture track and GovCom representation, the distribution of members has in some years exceeded two for a division. For detail of the membership of the Committee by year see Appendix II.

Because of the continuity of the work of the CFAC across its history and the rotation of its membership, new members inherited and built on the accumulated knowledge and work of their predecessors.

As its mandate clearly states, the purpose of the Committee was to provide advice to Emory College administration. That advice has been given in the form of both recommendations and responses to proposals made by the Deans.

---

<sup>2</sup> The exception is the current academic year, 2012-2013, when GovCom has been unable to recruit a member of the humanities faculty to fill a position on the committee.

While the mandate of the Committee has remained unchanged, its work has required different responses at different times. The crisis initially confronting the College was a deficit in the current year (2008-2009) budget as a result of the world-wide financial crisis. Given the fall in the stock market and correspondingly in the endowment, planned and budget expenditures for the 2008-2009 academic year significantly exceeded the expected revenues for the year. The focus of the Committee was on making recommendations to, and responding to proposals from, the College Administration for cuts in expenditures. This process initially focused on savings in expense categories (e.g. travel, utilities etc.) but these were not adequate to eliminate the deficit and various Centers within the College were closed or had their funding reduced by the Dean in that year. During this initial period and in planning for the next budget cycle, the Committee also made recommendations and responded to proposals from the College administration for ways to increase College revenues. For example, the Committee wrote to the Provost Earl Lewis in support of Dean Paul's successful request for an increase in the size of the freshman class. The Committee also expressed concerns to Dean Paul, Provost Lewis and Executive Vice-President Michael Mandl about the ramifications of the student financial aid policy in principle and as implemented for the budgetary health of the College. Thus, while the mandate of the CFAC always focused on assessing the sustainability of departments, the work of the Committee also involved centrally making recommendations and responding to proposals from the Dean for expanding revenue sources and reducing costs. But even in this earliest period of its existence, the Committee was faced with the possibility of cutting programs, and the urgency with which the Committee worked with the Dean on revenue enhancement and expense reduction was in large part motivated by the concern that program cuts would be required should the efforts to increase revenues and cut costs prove inadequate.

The CFAC routinely received information regarding the finances of the College from the Dean. These were augmented, particularly in the early life of the Committee, by presentations by then Provost Earl Lewis and Executive Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer Michael Mandl. We note that information on the financial health of Emory College was also made available to College faculty. Deans Paul and Forman made multiple presentations to meetings of the Emory College faculty and to meetings of the Chairs and Directors of Emory College departments and programs in which it was made clear that revenues to the College from tuition and endowment were not adequate to meet the budgeted expenses of the College. As noted above, this was initially addressed by cuts in expense categories for departments and programs as well as for College administration and by reductions in the budgets and in some instances the elimination of various Centers within Emory College. As the deficit continued, the budget reserves of Emory College were also committed to deficit reduction, careful attention to endowment accounts extracted all available funds, and restraint in hiring and salary increases were employed to bring down costs. Despite these efforts, it was only in effect by taking a multi-million dollar loan from central administration in 2010-2011 (FY2011) that the College was able to meet its budget.