Planning for Distinction: Program Prioritization

In July President Morishita wrote to the campus community to introduce a plan to engage in a comprehensive review of all campus programs and activities during this coming academic year, which we are calling Planning for Distinction: Program Prioritization. The objective of this planning effort is to find the proper balance of academic and administrative programs that allow us to maintain the hallmarks of quality at this university and pursue those initiatives we believe are most essential to the campus mission, our eight shared strategic commitments, and institutional learning outcomes.

Cal State East Bay faces significant financial uncertainties affecting students, faculty, and staff. Due to the significant budget reductions in recent years, we are no longer able to provide the quality educational experiences called for in our institutional learning outcomes and strategic commitments. We will continue to face severe financial challenges in the coming years that will require us to prioritize activities and programs to ensure that we are spending our limited resources in support of our highest priorities and to maintain or expand our areas of distinction.

We recognize that all of our programs and activities have value and make important contributions in advancing the university, or we would not be doing them. However, based on our ever-decreasing resources, and if we are to protect the educational quality for our students, we must make some informed and strategic adjustments: we cannot continue to do business as usual. Together we need to assess our present and future infrastructure, and our ability to deliver high quality educational programs and services to our students within an uncertain budgetary future.

At the President's direction, we have formed a Prioritization Steering Committee, chaired by Vice President Linda Dalton, to oversee the work of two subgroups: the Instructional Program Task Group and the Support Program Task Group. Starting with each individual program, our objective as a campus community is to conduct a comprehensive review of all academic and nonacademic programs using criteria that are developed by each task group. The review process will follow, in general, the work of Robert Dickeson outlined in his book “Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services.” The criteria will then be weighted and used to measure, analyze, and prioritize those programs. Planning for Distinction: Program Prioritization will drive
our allocation decisions in the future by ensuring we are putting sufficient resources into our highest priority programs and maintaining steady funding for programs that remain central to our mission.

The work of the steering committee and the task groups will be conducted during the fall and winter quarters, with the objective of publishing recommendations during the spring quarter. Implementing recommendations for nonacademic programs will begin with the new fiscal year in 2014, while any recommendations that affect academic programs or activities will be considered by the Academic Senate according to the Senate’s organizational practices and policies.

A website has been set up to keep the entire university community informed of the work of the task groups (Planning for Distinction: Program Prioritization). We invite you to visit this site regularly for updates as the process moves forward. Additionally, we will begin this fall to visit with colleges, libraries, and student organizations to ensure those entities have the opportunity to ask questions and provide input.

If we wish to continue to be a vital public higher education institution and advance Cal State East Bay’s institutional excellence, distinction, and regional influence, we must be clear-eyed and take this window of opportunity now to carefully plan for our future.

As the president stated in his convocation address: “We cannot emphasize enough the importance of this next part of our journey together. As we begin our Planning for Distinction: Program Prioritization process, we must hold ourselves accountable. Successful implementation will depend upon three key processes: effective communication, an inclusive and transparent process, and clearly articulated implementation plans. This is the only way we can be sure of significant progress toward crystalizing our shared vision and aspirations for our collective future.”

James Houpis  
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