

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

Transformation Process Emergency Meeting Minutes
Wednesday September 17, 2008

I. Meeting called to order at 6:09 pm by Bridget Barker

Present: Stephen Bieda, Randy Vazquez, Bridget Barker, Emily Connally, Boris Glebov, Alison Betts, Jed Laver, Stephanie Levitt, Lauren Sekora, Robert Jacobi, Sanket Unhale, Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, David Lopez-Negrete, David Talenfeld, Helena Morrison, James Johnson, Tim Chambers, Roeland Hancock, Tucker Peck, Tiffany Goforth, Sandra Nameth, Jessica Gerlach

Proxies: A. Quadir Khan, Chizanya Mpinja

II. Guest – Miranda Joseph, Chair of SPBAC - Here to speak about a massive overhaul of administration, trying to make things better to operate for less money, but also to bring in more revenue. Provost Hay is asking for immediate action, expecting budget cuts mid year. President Shelton is looking to make us more independent from ups and downs of state financing. SPBAC is responsible for doing a first run through of white papers regarding transformation. Another communication tomorrow makes the rules for making a proposal more explicit. The white papers, as long as they follow the rules, can come from anywhere. Must come out of teams of faculty and staff with input from students. At one point we discussed the idea that people from more than one unit must be involved in each proposal. Subcommittee of SPBAC has been formed that includes reps from GPSC, ASA and other councils to review white papers. Core of transformation subcommittee is representatives, only a few faculty members, one dean, and one UASouth representative. Important task is making sure proper consultations have been followed even in crafting of papers. I will try to answer other questions you may have.

Q: Boris Glebov: You said restructuring might be to increase revenues. What other options do we have besides grants, tuition, etc?

A: If we can increase student FTE, then we have a source of income from tuition and state. Other possible source is private donations. If we can repackage departments as a new school of something, a private donor may be attracted to new entity even if the department serves the same function as before.

Q:: Boris Glebov: Is this transformation supposed to improve ability of the university to compete for grants?

A: Yes, as you may know, many committees are set in motion to cook up ideas. Provost's advisory council for strategic advancement, with big science researchers, the research that costs alot of money and attracts large grants. The goal is to figure out what areas on which to focus to be competitive for big science grants. Some of the other committees, like the tuition funds flow task force, are thinking

about tuition going to where students are and where students need to be taught. The regents and distinguished professors vision group is talking not just about department and mergers, but ways to differ curriculum. For example, should everyone offer stats or should it be university wide, etc. You all can probably bring forward good ideas about how to restructure curriculum. Pay attention to shifts to make sure they won't harm graduate students who are funded through this mechanism.

Boris Glebov commented that right now we seem overloaded with teaching, if load is reduced, our stress may return to reasonable levels.

Q: Erica Cirillo-McCarthy: Throughout this all, the message comes across that we're in the red, is this true?

A: No, we're not exactly in the red, but we've taking budget cuts for various reasons for a while. Most cuts rolled out to departments, sometimes due to cuts in state funding, other times due to increases in costs not covered around health benefits. Cuts have been rolled out across university for most of the last two decades. Each department has whittled away, firing staff, hiring fewer administrators. Many departments have no travel funding for faculty. My department is giving back last of operational funds. There is now a sense in faculty and administration that if we keep going this way, we will become mediocre, and our remaining good faculty will leave. Salaries are low here, and more competitive elsewhere. Overall, the motivation is not that we're in the red. We have a small endowment compared to our peers because of a very low rate of annual alumni giving. There will undoubtedly be a rollout of another major fundraising campaign, but endowment does very little. Real issue is to try to figure out, given the limited resources with the next budget cuts coming, how can we not just keep deteriorating but instead reorganize to be more efficient and attract more dollars. Think we will need to stop doing some things, some departments will likely be shut down. I will be shocked if that is not one of the ultimate outcomes:

Q: Boris Glebov: How would a department be closed? We we simply have no new admits or actually make current students leave?

A: This process includes many steps, an implementation phase, white papers must be written up into more solid proposals, formal proposal stage, and then we start deciding. Anything still moving forward must go through entire faculty senate approval process. Any new programs or program closures will go to ABOR. Changes will not be done lightly. This is reassuring because administration cannot make a decision about departments, though they can just pull the money. We would hope that as proposals move into the approval stage, meaningful plans are made for everyone who will be affected. Important concerns should be raised at every step of the way.

Q: Robert Jacobi: Given the fact that this process is so long, why is there a rush?

A: So we feel an urgency to move. I don't think it is a good idea to move so fast, but I didn't make that decision. The counter argument is that if there's no sense of urgency, then nothing will get done. I still think there should be more time.

Q: Robert Jacobi: One of the largest portions of expense is Faculty salary. We cannot get rid of faculty, even if we close the program can we?

A: Yes. One of the few ways to get around tenure is reorganization or program closure based on budget constraints. Not aware that tenured faculty have ever been fired, almost always moved to another department, but they could do it.

Q: David Lopez-Negrete: Open question: who is looking at potential impact on community college?

A: What do you mean?

Clarification: If programs or courses are cut, is it possible to make that shortfall through community colleges or different faculty moving around?

A: It seems unlikely that faculty would move to community, it seems like they would want other research universities. As for students, there is some strategic thinking about routing students through community colleges, offloading or outsourcing some courses, that could be provided better and cheaper. This would require deliberate rearrangement for those particular courses.

Q: Tim Chambers: Going back to the whittling process. Since if the restructure goes well and a lot of money has been freed up, is there any intent to explicitly rollback some of the gradual cutting that has been done?

A: In best of all possible worlds we would be investing in areas of strength or future strength, not necessarily recreating what we had.

Q: Allison Betts: While this is taking place, for departments planning to hire to fill faculty shortages, is this going to push out potential hires?

A: I don't know the answer. I would say the bigger impact than reorganization will be the fact that there's no money, well, very little hiring this year or next anyway.

Q: Robert Jacobi: All the parts of restructuring refer to academic units' need to save money. Is there a parallel process in administration, and could it be part of the white papers academics write? Also think priorities should be student input.

A: Yes, a committee recently formed to examine restructuring of business management along the lines of Oregon State, in that instead of each department with a manager, each college has business center, providing more centralized administration. Student affairs, under Melissa Vito, is going through its own strategic realignment. Two main initiatives pushed to rethink administrative side. Regents and distinguished professors group feels free to meddle there and not only in academic realm. SPBAC has looked at lists of personnel of various kinds. I sit on the cabinet with vice presidents and said you better publicly show that you too on the administrative side are doing the same thing that everyone else is being asked to do or faculty will not go along with it. They are not working on the same deadline. Certainly whatever they propose should run through SPBAC.

Q: Boris: Do you think it is reasonable that we will restructure enough to save the cost of budget cut?

A: HR suggests that faculty will start to depart and then we can reallocate those funds. Not going to be soon.

Q: Boris: If we lose all this faculty without rehiring, won't we be worse off?

A: Faculty will be pressured to teach more, regardless of how this pans out.

Q: James Johnson: We keep growing in size, but we're not able to support the number of students. What do students bring in versus what they cost to have?

A: Students are dollars. Depends on the students. Out of state students pay for education. In state students do not. Each student credit hour is worth between \$600-650. That averages everything, doesn't separate in and out state.

Q: James Johnson: How many out of state students do you need to cover loss of instate. as a further step if we keep growing, how much will we need to invest in infrastructure, classes, TAs, dorms, etc..

A: Dorms are auxiliaries. supposed to pay for themselves, and we get bonding to build them. Now we have a speed package, so some money is available for building, though we have to raise \$100 million to get the funds. The funds never cover operations and maintenance, lights etc. Balance of instate and out of state is carefully negotiated by the powers that be. This year most of the growth was in out of state enrollment. limited by the board of regents, who say no more than 1/3 can be out of state students. I do not know the rest.

Paul Kohn, Vice President for enrollment management can tell us anything and everything we want to know. This is ultimately about tuition revenue

Q: Alison Betts: down the line, any talk of bringing in outside consultants to put checks and balances on the transformation?

A: Not only talk, call for proposals being written right now for an implementation consultant firm (not a person) not clear on what the people would be doing, but yes they are bringing in help.

Q: Alison Betts: I get the sense that there will need to checks. When you talk about people cutting own jobs, do we know whether they can and will advocate for a bigger picture. Mediation and facilitation seems to be necessary at some point. minimally trouble shooting for exactly that situation.

Q: Helena Morrison: Noticed skepticism about how this plan may differ from previous plans, and the success, back at it 5 years later. Is there any kind of accountability, long term plans, restructuring, what kind of accountability system do we have? There have been rumblings of coincidence of this happening right after new provost, and purpose is for other reasons than those stated. What's making sure it's not happening, and this is not just a bullet for a CV?

A: I am not going to answer that, but this is not bad for her. I can't provide any guarantee that this will work and that in 5 years the new person will not decide to do something else. This is different to me because focused excellence targeted specific units. The administration picked things that they wanted to close and then largely failed to pull it off because the units mobilized against it. The process was top down and produced resistance. This new transformation is different in a number of ways. Everybody is being asked to reevaluate. Down the road i think proposals to close programs will come through, as we saw with the Eller college fiasco to close school of public administration and policy. If you pick off one unit they will mobilize and fight back. But in general everyone is being asked to change, not particular victims. In this way the structure of the process is somewhat grass roots, but with much broader involvement in thinking this through than last time. Beyond that,

can't promise it wont work. I think it has everything to do with new provost walking into a tight situation.

Q: Alison Betts; As graduate students what should we do to make sure our voices are heard.

A: Take a look at communications that come out tomorrow. All white papers are supposed to be written by and signed off on by teams, must include students. It is not a proposal unless there is a student involved. I don't know if must be UG, grad, whatever. I will pay attention to whether students have been on those teams, and SPBAC will. Boris Glebov is not able to participate but we will get a good GPSC rep to participate in the abetting committee. Think through your own concerns so that all of you can carry those same set of concerns out into miscellaneous teams you are included in. Just keep bring it up. Feel free to communicate with me if you feel you are not being heard.

III. Officer Reports:

President – *Stephen Bieda* – (1) Bad news; Randy Vazquez has resigned as treasurer. First thing I would like to do is meet with appropriations committee to decide who is to be interim. Not an external, it will be an entirely internal vote for the new Treasurer. We will make a call for elections next week. Responsibilities are very small but important. Budget is updated regularly, reports to council when called upon. Treasurer chairs appropriations for POD and Club funding. Cosigns on spending. The position is paid with a stipend.

Q: Tim Chambers: when do executive board and appropriations committee meet?

A: Appropriations usually try to meet before general meetings to approve or deny funding. Executive board meetings are now every Monday. Point of clarification by Jed Laver: Just two appropriations committee meetings left in the semester.

(2) If you are a new GPSC representative and have not spoken to me about committees, today is a good time. ABOR meets next week, so we will be turning our attention to lobbying efforts there very soon. With ABOR, we have specifically requested a sit down meeting with the president. One of the big issues to talk about is the fact that graduate students are not mentioned in the last report on tuition, so it appears as though there is no cap on what they can request from graduate students. We will meet before the regents decide on tuition in January.

Q: Tucker Peck: Can you explain your last comment about the cap?

A: In the last ABOR meeting representatives said tuition can rise to meet the rate of living increase, but highest they can raise undergrad tuition is 13.1%, that puts us in the “top of the bottom one third”. Aside from that, no mention is made to cap costs for graduate and professional students. We worry that we are used as a stop gap to make up on lost money. Professional and non degree seeking are hit hardest by tuition increases. Overall, we see an astounding amount of debt that these students are carrying, average increase of 1,000 a year on average.

Q: Tim Chambers: The administration is putting pressure on departments if tuition goes up. How are departments expected to pay for students who have guaranteed tuition support with all these costs?

A: Alison Betts: TA ships come from tuition remission, so the department pays out money, waives tuition, and then some portion goes against tuition in budget to help the department. It is not a direct departmental cost. Robert Jacobi: Department does not pay full rate, it pays a discount rate, so in a way, the system is taking university money from departments. Stephen Bieda: An RA's money comes out of PI's budget. The money is taken out of the grant and sent back to administrative offices. Some TAs are from a temporary fund, the expectation is it will be cut if major cut goes down. Alison Betts: Temporary funds are considered for temporary instructors, supposedly these funds follow student numbers.

Q: Erica Cirillo-McCarthy: Back to ABOR meeting, are you going, are we getting a big bus?

A: Stephen Bieda: The executive board will decide to send representatives, nothing requires immediate attention. They are basically only talking about buildings, plans, urging ASA chair to raise up fact that UA retransformation is painful, to get a sense of what they are thinking. Number of reps is important, they need to see many and new faces. The major thing is to get attention when doing lobbying.

Q: David Talenfeld: Are we working with David Martinez?

A: Yes, we have been engaging him about concerns. We cannot say anything outside of a call to audience, the legislature has been receptive so far, sent me UA tuition adjustment plan.

Q: Robert Jacobi: Remember last week you told us about 4 new committees, when do they come in? This is good information to have for shared governance meetings

A: Boris Glebov: The committees don't review papers, they come up once suggestions are in place. The four groups are looking at the university as a whole. None of them have student representation. possibly on division committee, one composed of some faculty is not related to graduate students, it is about research projects. One is the academic side of issues, one division looks at everything, we should bring it up when we know more. SPBAC was a bit blindsighted by all the new committees. A lot of this happened without much consultation. The decision that proposals go forward is from SPBAC, not up to committees, not president who chose the committees. I am surprised that some do not contain students. The committees:

Arizona Transformation Vision Group
UA Transformation Plan Team Focus Group
Tuition Flow Task Force
Provost Advisory Council on Strategic Advancement

Q: Helena Morrison: Is there a possibility that students will be added to committees because of white paper input?

A: Stephen Bieda: We strongly urge to see if specific colleges need input first.

Q: Alison Betts: All white papers are supposed to involve input from at least one student, but how comfortable do students feel in that situation? I know students will feel pressured and threatened in certain situations. If they know another alternative to giving input in a group of faculty, if they can talk to someone else, it might be easier.

A: Robert Jacobi: Now that restructuring is actually moving along, it might be a good time to team up with the consultant faculty council for your college. The advisory council meets with the dean once a month or such. We should be curious about what is set up on college level. The faculty may feel public, even with just one student there, so that should help.

Boris Glebov: I think it depends on the college. I would be comfortable sitting in some colleges, in some it may not be so open. I think if it is indeed the fact that there must be a student. and if faculty circumvent by replacing student or intimidating, that information can be relayed to Miranda. Miranda can apply excess scrutiny to those proposals. The administrators want to safeguard and make sure it is valid shared governance process.

Emily Connally: We have plans to help GPSD reps structure what we talk about, how we talk about it, who to go to, even perhaps faculty who are responsive. look in your inboxes for these memos and guidelines.

David Talenfeld: Should we endorse this letter plan, draft it, send it to students on committees, advising them on what authority they do have, tell them to stay in touch with us, tell them if they feel pressured or have not been heard, and to communicate that with us? We should send to non student committee meetings, so that they know we are doing this as well.

Stephen Bieda: I want to speak up for college of science graduate council. There will be students who want to read this information, to keep up on it. Having 8000 informed students is better than 20 reps.

Tim Chambers: Since we're talking about college of sciences. The graduate council just wrote a first draft of the letter, basically it is this buddy system, talk to faculty, talk to deans. The letter is asking for very concrete, basic concessions that we want to be assured that people claiming to represent us will vote for in face of the transformation. These are basic things, like don't reduce benefits, make sure that we can get our degree in same program we joined. The point of my ramble is that college of science has a letter that is being revised to pass around, saying "will you agree that when it is time to vote, will you only vote yes on proposals that guarantee to protect our basic rights?"

Stephen Bieda: For at large reps, we currently have 5 colleges that will not have any representation in GPSC may not receive letters we are sending out. If you are at large, look at these colleges, give them information, and let them know what is going on. I doubt that they are getting as much information as the colleges with reps.

Q:Jed Laver: Did you say that college of architecture and landscape has a council, who is on it?

Q:Helena Morrison: What are these faculty blah de blahs? Do we have a right to be on them? to request to be on them? Should we be finding out who is on them and passing that information down?

A: Robert Jacobi: Students as well as faculty administrators and staff, among others, should be reviewing these, as is laid out in our guidelines for shared governments. The goal will be that, as the policy says any college must have a student input to the council, if it has faculty members, should have students too. If not, a change should be made. The deans didn't sign off on this process, it is legal loophole. If you can argue to dean that head of SPBAC, and shared governance policy says students should be on there, then you can get a place on the council.

Q: Alison Betts: Is this student input or representation on councils?

A: Boris Glebov: Appears to be input, not representation.

Vice President – *Boris Glebov* – Since I am on SPBAC and am gone for October, are there any volunteers willing to step up and take my place in reviewing white papers? From 10/13 to 10/31 SPBAC is reviewing papers, grad students should be there. The subcommittee will meet quite a bit. Robert Jacobi volunteered for the position.

IV. Motion to Adjourn – at 7:42 pm Stephen Bieda moved to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Tim Chambers and carried unanimously.