FACULTY SUGGESTIONS FOR REVENUE GENERATION IN THE NCR

Submitted December 12, 2008

BACKGROUND:

Last month, the Faculty Association sponsored discussions by Dean DePauw and Provost McNamee in which they explained details of the budget situation. As was reported, there has already been a 5% cut to the university (mostly absorbed centrally but resulting in all units returning 1.5% of their budgets for this year), and the graduate school and all colleges are now preparing plans for an additional permanent cut in the base budget of another 5% or 10% that will take effect in the next fiscal year. Much of that will be handled centrally, but units are planning for reductions to their budgets of 3% to 5%. Dean DePauw indicated she anticipates that the cut will be 5%.

Based on this, Dean DePauw encouraged NCR faculty to generate ideas that are 1) revenue generating, 2) cost neutral, and/or 3) collaborative (i.e., resulting in cost savings). The Provost challenged us to think "revenues" and about different ways of generating them. The Provost noted that the depth of the current budget imbalance is unprecedented. He stated that for this reason we must all be open to new and innovative ideas for how deal with this issue. In fact, he suggested that in such a time of crisis, it is a good time to suggest options that in the past might not have had much chance of being considered. Now, everything is on the table.

Both Dean DePauw and Provost McNamee suggest that we in the National Capital Region begin to think collectively and strategically about the work that we do. To this end, they both requested ideas from us, the faculty, about how we can do this.

As a result of these conversation, the NCR faculty association sent an e-mail invitation to faculty to suggest ideas for revenue generation. The e-mail became an iterative process in which faculty ideas were posted and others had a chance to respond.

Ideas generated by faculty members are listed below. It is important to note that these items do not represent faculty consensus on what should occur—rather they represent a summary of the brainstorming process by those who chose to participate. We hope these ideas make a valuable contribution to efforts to resolve the budget crisis.
NCR FACULTY IDEAS

• Increasing tuition
  o Noting that tuition in the NCR is already somewhat higher than the regular tuition, consider, raising NCR tuition rates incrementally more than the expected increase in regular Virginia Tech tuition. Caveats:
    ▪ Those new revenues would have to be captured for use in the NCR.
    ▪ Such an increase would impact the GRA rate departments would have to front for help
    ▪ Looking more broadly at setting tuition rates in the NCR to coincide with program market value.
    ▪ The approval for doing this was granted within the last few years but only a few programs have taken advantage (e.g., Landscape Architecture, EMBA, joint biomed degree with Georgetown).
  o How about student fees rather than increasing tuition. Our students do not pay any student fees and as such do not have access to career services or student legal.
  o raising the NVC tuition
  o I have been in on discussions of differential tuition that amounted to little more than a soak-the-rich policy. If we're going to differentiate pricing, there should be a perception of extra value on behalf of the students (I find it a little difficult to believe that so many students are assuring us that they are underpaying tuition, regardless of who's picking up the tab).

• Class offering/Structure
  o Increasing the number of certificate programs, thus increasing enrollments
    ▪ recognition that many programs already do this
    ▪ suggestion that those programs could guide others in how to set this up
  o One idea is to offer workshops and short courses in specialized areas like information assurance, critical infrastructure protection, etc.
  o "One-year Cyber MS" program
    ▪ Basically, it is designed to increase enrollments by creating a cohort of students who get their MS in one year. We could also bring in the CS department, if that would help -- the idea is that this would increase students who move through the system fast. I think it could easily bring in 15-20 students per year.
  o Another idea is to expand online delivery and build certificates and condensed courses for pure online delivery around the world.
**Explore Cohort Model Approach to Education**

- In a cohort model, departments can a) plan their course requirements over a two-year period, which maximizes enrollments in each course; b) count on a specific number of students each semester; c) encourage the development of a network of students—something difficult to do in a part-time population, and very valuable to the students' academic careers; and d) build perceived value by the students.
  - In a cohort model, we can also help build perceived value by enhancing the convenience of earning a degree at VT in the National Capital Region:
    - * Finish a master's degree in two years while working full time
    - * The cost of books can be added into the tuition, and delivered to the student on-site
    - * We can provide a meal on class nights (if more than one department is having a cohort session the same evening, the cost of catering can be pooled)
    - * We can register the cohort as a group, which save the students time and hassle.
  - The time may be right to look into adopting this model for any programs that might be interested. It's already being done in some form or another in the E-MBA, MFT and Principal Preparation programs.

**Exploring more cross-discipline class offerings**

- e.g. statistics for Ph.D. students
- requires an awareness of what is currently being offered and what is missing
- suggestion of a "Craig's List" approach to what courses departments are needing that others could respond to—or courses that could be opened to other departments
- Our [ALHRD] scholarly writing class is serving many colleges here—engineering, computer science, and others.

**Renting space in the NVC during daytime hours to external customers**

- renting our NVC the space from 8-4PM.
  - I think that trying to be a rental service to various business groups would be time consuming and take a lot of administrative help that we do not have. The university is trying to downsize admin., not increase it. That said, finding one client to rent the space from 8-4PM may be best. Either a community college or other sort of school might be ideal.

- Can we substitute the word “providing space” for “rent?” As a state-funded building, we could lose all sorts of tax breaks for the university if we rent this building out. We can, weirdly enough, provide space for a fee to cover our costs to do so.
I do not like the idea of renting space to external customers. Why? Our office is burdened with questions such as restaurants, parking, taxi service, airport pickup, computers unlocking rooms, use of equipment and supplies....

the comment about the burden of serving as a resource if we provide space is news . . . never been raised as an issue [before]

Renting space to outsiders seems to be an immediate revenue generator. I saw protest about the time-cost in terms of answering questions and organizing.
- What about a G.A. dedicated to that endeavor: yes, G.A. would have to be paid / get credit, but this would be more than covered by revenue generated.
- Examples: Fairfax County high schools are holding ethics conferences, where they need large rooms and breakout rooms during the regular school day, and their schools cannot accommodate the space needs. We could also provide an off-site venue (a well-priced "retreat" location!) for city, county or state employees' workshops/trainings. Corporations already use us for off-site training - increase marketing there.

• Raising Visibility in Community (informal marketing).
  o When I was first hired in 1980, we did a lot of creating visibility in the community & it really worked (e.g. radio spots, visiting military, corporate, NGO, etc, worlds) to say hi, see if they had needs we could serve and with which we could help. I know that approach is indirect, but every time we venture into the community (from local to global) we represent VA Tech. We could speak for each other. For example, if any of us have on-line classes that would benefit clientele regionally, nationally, internationally we could speak for offerings at the whole Center.

• Increasing Alumni support
  o On another thought, we are trying to further galvanize our alumni (including the international graduates) right now. Perhaps we could all (all programs at the Center) collectively have an alumni reunion and ask for their thoughts rather than orchestrating only within our own programs, departments, colleges.

*************************************************************************************