Planning for Reduced Budgets: Criteria and Procedures
January 2010

The long-term forecast for state revenues and consequently state support for higher education in Louisiana suggests that LSU will face the challenge of evaluating the scope and size of some of its academic programs. In order to allow for a thoughtful approach to this challenge, a task force comprised of faculty, administration, staff, and students has developed a participatory process and appropriate criteria for adjusting the size, number, and scope of LSU’s academic units and program offerings. The following paragraphs list the criteria and explain the procedures that will guide planning for the consequences of forthcoming higher education budgets.

Criteria. Decisions to close, reduce, sustain, or enlarge academic programs should be based on the following considerations, each of which is ultimately concerned with the centrality of programs, units, or services to our University mission as a top-tier research one land-grant institution and to our academic core:

- Significance with respect to the production of an educated, cultivated citizenry
- Comparative advantage with respect to state, peer, competitor, model, or aspirational institutions
- Impact on Louisiana social, cultural, intellectual, environmental, or economic well-being
- Strength or potential strength with respect to performance, national reputation, and the meeting of national and local needs
- Effect on, relevance to, or cooperation with other LSU programs
- Current or potential student demand and effective use of teaching resources, with special attention to placement after graduation and lifelong learning
- Effect on the overall University budget
- Feasibility of and time required for (a) improvement or (b) phasing out

Procedures. Owing to the urgency of the budget situation (as of January 2010) and likewise owing to the limited time allowed to comply with state budget reductions, planning will follow an accelerated schedule and an abbreviated path. With the assistance of experts in Financial and Accounting Services and with data gathered from the colleges, the Deans, and other sources, the Chancellor and the Provost will apply the aforementioned criteria and prepare an initial set of scenarios and recommendations. The Chancellor and Provost shall, within a reasonable period of time, present the planning task force with the essential budget data and at least three alternative models for cuts and other budget-driven expediencies. The task force will provide further guidance, input, and recommendations, whereupon the Provost and Chancellor will prepare the final version of the budget plan. Additional consultations with the task force may be necessary as information becomes available.