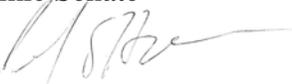




COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

Date: January 25th, 2015

To: Jose Wudka
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jennifer Hughes, Chair 
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: Proposal for New College

At its meeting on January 20, 2015, the Committee on Faculty Welfare discussed the idea to merge CNAS and CHASS. Faculty Welfare took a straw vote as to whether the campus should embark in the formal process that will lead to this merger or not. A majority of the committee does not support the campus embarking in the formal process that would lead to the merger (+1-5-0).

At this time a majority of the committee feels that the proposal is premature as there are other situations that demand attention of the administration and faculty which have priority, the committee on Faculty Welfare suggests administrative energy and resources be focused on fixing UCR's salary issues.

The administration has not articulated a persuasive vision to the faculty as to how the college merger contributes to faculty in their research and teaching and advances the scholarly enterprise.

The committee expresses the following opinions:

Resolving Issues Internal to CNAS

The provost's document identifies two problems remedied by the new structure, a clumsy administrative structure at the level of the deans, and internal dynamics within CNAS, including especially a sense of marginalization among the physical sciences. Some CNAS members present felt that the merger would only exacerbate the lack of representation of the physical sciences departments, for example. Botany and Plant Sciences and most of agricultural department have hired faculty who are not strictly agricultural. Rather, they provide cutting edge technology that people that do research in agriculture can then more easily access. This structure would be dismantled by the merge because some people would go to an arts and sciences environment and some people would remain in the agricultural environment.

Increased Administrative Complexity:

There was a concern that the new structure of the dean's office under the merged college would mean that faculty had less direct access to decision making administrators and that decision making power would be held by administrators outside of their disciplines and

fields. There was concern about the new position of an “uber dean” as well as of the role of the chairs within the new proposed administrative structure. Faculty worry that in the new structure they will not have an advocate from their discipline. The merger would make it more difficult for the college dean to decide the merit worthiness of faculty research and programs in disciplines and fields very distinct from their own. Introducing a new level of hierarchy removes an advocate who particularly understands the discipline and subordinates those people to a much more hierarchal structure.

Faculty expressed concern that the proposed model would make UCR a much more bureaucratic place. In the current structure, a faculty member can now have a relationship with a dean who has some rough idea of what that faculty member’s obligations and contributions to the college. Under the proposed plan, the deans’ role could become much more administrative and less of an advocate for faculty. Faculty worry that the plan as proposed would decrease the power of the faculty.

Favorable Opinion

The CHASS faculty member on our committee who supports the merger noted that while there is less support for the merger among CNAS faculty generally, that CHASS faculty across the college tend to be more divided, with some in favor, and some opposing. The committee member who supported the merger attended graduate school at both a private and a public university where there was a college of Arts and Sciences and thought the merger might have the potential to improve scholarly and collegial relations between scientists, social scientists, and those in the arts and humanities. Further, this faculty member argued that an administrative structure that consolidates those departments in academic disciplines strengthens the campus overall, and creates a clearer role between academic programs (on the one hand) and professional schools (on the other).

Some faculty on the committee suggested that that there already exist collaborative models and projects for faculty across colleges, and making interdisciplinary programs and hires does not require a merger. One CHASS faculty member who was previously at a large public university with a merged College of Arts and Sciences noted that faculty in the social sciences and humanities felt isolated from and under-valued by the Dean who was a chemist, contributing to low morale.