

To: Geoffrey Feiss, Provost  
From: Faculty members of the Faculty University Priorities Committee  
Date: April 12, 2007  
Re: Faculty University Priorities Committee 2007 Report

## Introduction

Faculty members of the Faculty University Priorities Committee (FUPC) have reviewed the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 budget proposals submitted by William and Mary's academic and administrative units. In addition, we have considered the information and needs conveyed to the committee via meeting presentations, memoranda and letters from administrators, faculty, students, committees, various units, and the results of the faculty survey.

In our review of budget requests this year, we have held to the same theme of enhancing academic excellence that guided our recommendations for the 2007-2008 budget cycle. The major components of academic excellence are excellence in research, excellence in teaching and student excellence. These components, of course, are interrelated and overlapping.



[Components of Academic Excellence, FUPC]

Since almost any issue can be presented as an academic excellence issue, we tried to judge the extent to which a given budget proposal really enhances academic excellence. We recommend that you use this same theme (enhancing academic excellence) in making your decisions on the proposals in the packet that we reviewed.

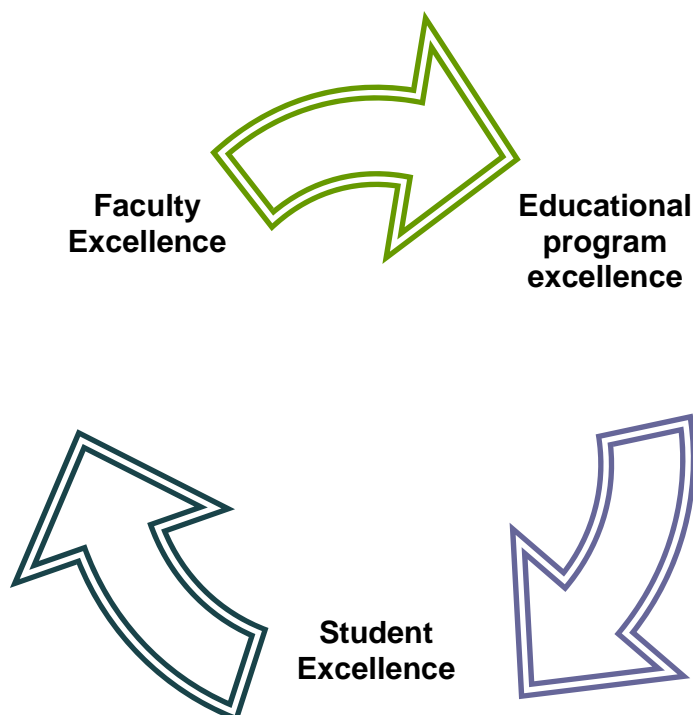
## The focus of the FUP 2007 Annual Report

In our last FUPC Report (Spring 2006), we excluded certain budget requests from our discussions because you had already elevated them to a university-wide priority category (called category 101) that recognized these requests as a very high priority. These category 101 requests were primarily for faculty salary increases and graduate student support and, in the introductory section of the FUP 2006 Report; we underscored the fact that these two items remain very, very high in our hierarchy of things needed in support of academic excellence at the College.

In our discussions this year, we chose not to rely on a “category 101” status to ensure that our highest priorities would be recognized and would receive appropriate attention when budgetary decisions are made.

After much discussion, our conclusion is that *academic excellence* at the College of William and Mary is *at serious risk* unless we place an even greater priority and urgency on the task of more fully supporting our existing faculty and programs. We find the three major components of academic excellence each to be suffering from the stress of being overextended – of trying to do too much – with too little – for too long a period of time.

The key to excellence in research and excellence in teaching is having a strong, competitive faculty with the resources to do the kind of quality research and effective teaching that sustain and enhance the national / international reputation of the College. We believe that strongly investing in faculty excellence leads to higher quality educational programs and more research/learning opportunities for students (both graduate and undergraduate) which in turn attracts excellent students to attend this institution. Student excellence then becomes one more incentive for recruitment and retention of strong faculty.



## Priorities for the 2008-2009 (2009-2010) Budget Cycle

It is clear that the pool of funds available for allocation in this budget cycle is very limited, especially when considered within the context of the PBRs (Planning & Budget Requests) which exceed the available funds many times over. Therefore, we have strongly focused our priority recommendations in this report to address a few key areas where a critical difference can be made.

We recognize the attractiveness of new initiatives and new programs. There is a certain appeal and excitement to launching a new endeavor. But the funding of new initiatives and new programs, or even the expansion of existing programs diverts valuable resources from our higher priorities, delays reaching (or prevents us from ever reaching) our stated goals, and dilutes the quality of both the new and existing programs.

Our conclusion that *academic excellence* at the College of William and Mary is *at serious risk* unless we place an even greater priority and urgency on the task of more fully supporting our existing faculty and programs, leads us to identify the following priority recommendations:

✓ **A-1**      **Bring faculty salaries to the stated goal of the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of salaries for faculty in our peer group institutions [faculty excellence]**

Bringing faculty salaries in line with our peer institutions supports:

- faculty recruitment and retention
- excellence in research
- excellence in teaching
- student recruitment (to work with nationally-recognized professors)

We rank faculty salary increases as our highest priority and unanimously state that ***there should be no 'net' new positions (in instructional or professional & administration faculty) until the stated salary goal (of the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile) for faculty salaries is finally reached for the first time.***

We believe that by adopting a “flexible hiring freeze” for instructional, professional and administrative faculty lines, the administration will underscore its commitment to addressing the salary needs of the current faculty and will finally enable the College to achieve its long standing goal of competitive faculty salaries at the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of our peer institutions.

We note that in the PBR notebooks this year, there are requests for 84 new positions (all kinds of positions) totaling nearly \$5 million dollars. By continuing to add new instructional faculty and administrative / professional positions, we inevitably delay reaching our goal for faculty salaries of existing faculty.

In College documents dating from the mid-1960's, we find published statements calling attention to the issue of low faculty compensation and the need to take action.

The following are three examples of such statements and the College's pledge to reach a specific goal for faculty salaries.

From the *1994 Self Study*:

*“One of the depression commonplaces in each of the past three Self Studies...is the chronic problem of relatively low faculty salaries. Our salaries do not compare favorably with peer institutions and this undoubtedly has hurt the College in the past and will cause difficulty in the future if not rectified on a permanent basis... The salary issue has been addressed time and again by various administrations, but a permanent solution remains elusive.... We affirm the recommendation of the report of the Office of Planning and Budget, endorsed by President Sullivan. In order to retain its current faculty and attract qualified candidates to new positions, the recent salary trend must be reversed. **The College should establish as a salary goal the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile among State Peer Institutions and the College should move to reach this goal over a four-year period.**”*  
(bold in original)

From *Into the Fourth Century, A Plan for the Future of the College of William and Mary*, November 1994

*“The quality of its people is William and Mary's most important and highly valued resource...William and Mary has talented and energetic faculty who place high value upon their role as teachers as well as researchers and who unite these aspects of their professional lives to provide an education that is acknowledged to be among the best in the nation. Goal 1: to recruit, retain, and develop an excellent faculty and ensure that the composition of the faculty reflects the diversity of society. Strategies: Advance faculty salaries to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the State Peer Institutions. As sufficient incremental funds for this purpose are not likely to be available from the State, aggressive private funding raising and reallocation of existing funds may be necessary. It will probably take more than five years to achieve this objective.”*

From the *State of the College Address*, President Nichol, January 25, 2007:

*“We seek, therefore, the academy's strongest scholars who actually want to teach. And we need very substantially improved standards of compensation to make sure that they stay. Our marker is the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of our distinguished group of peer universities – the 38<sup>th</sup> cannot be acceptable.”*

We applaud the College's stated goal of bringing faculty salaries to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of our peer institutions, but we recognize that the first step will be to focus on the more attainable goal of reaching the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. This latter goal has been approved by the Commonwealth of Virginia and endorsed by the W&M Board of Visitors.

The bottom line is that after many years of an unmet goal for faculty salaries, we believe that this issue now trumps a lot of other things – in fact most other things. It would take

extraordinary circumstances to justify something new (a new position, a program, a new initiative, etc.) before fully addressing the issue of faculty salaries.

Recognizing that an absolute “hiring freeze” might be unduly restrictive, we believe that any new full-time instructional faculty lines (tenured or tenure-eligible) and/or any new administrative or professional positions should have clear and convincing reasons to justify an exception to this recommendation.

In the Provost’s annual report to the Faculty Universities Priority Committee (at the first meeting of each new academic year), we ask the Provost to include an update on the implementation of this recommendation and to inform FUP Committee members of exceptions – any new positions created and the rationale for these positions.

Please refer to the Appendices for additional information regarding faculty salaries over time and in comparison to other institutions.

### Second level of priorities

- ✓ **B-☆ Full implementation of the Scheduled Semester Research Leave (SSRL) Program**  
[faculty excellence & academic program excellence]

The recently approved SSRL Program represents an existing initiative for which there has been a clear commitment of support from the Provost and the President. We recognize that it will continue to require funds until it is fully implemented.

- ✓ **B-1 Restoration of M&O budgets in academic units**  
[academic program excellence]

The restoration/enhancement of M&O budgets:

- supports the undergraduate & graduate academic curriculum
- maintains or increases the scope and quality of learning opportunities for students (both graduate and undergraduate)
- supports faculty research conference presentations, etc.
- increases opportunities for student research
- recognizes the increasing costs of materials and corresponding increasing pressure on unit budgets

- ✓ **B-2 Raise graduate student support to nationally competitive levels** [student excellence]

Raising graduate student support to nationally competitive levels contributes to:

- graduate student recruitment & retention
- faculty recruitment & retention
- the quality of the undergraduate program

We find that there is great value in being a doctoral university and we recognize that our peer group would be very different were it not for the strength of our doctoral programs. To maintain (and to enhance) our standing, we need strong faculty with competitive salaries across the board, but we also need good graduate students for they are an integral part of faculty research for many faculty. In order to recruit and retain strong graduate students, we need to offer a package of support for graduate students that is nationally competitive.

The faculty members of the FUP did not find the case for increased graduate student aid to be equally compelling for all graduate programs and professional schools. With limited resources, the distribution of increased funding for graduate students will require careful planning and decision-making. We do not have the information to make recommendations on specific programs, consequently, we recommend that the decision of how best to allocate graduate aid be left to the Deans who are in a better position to decide how to maintain or improve the quality of their graduate programs.

In principle, we support the issue of providing health insurance for graduate students. However, we did not receive sufficient information to make a concrete recommendation on this matter. Without more detailed analysis and cost estimates, it is difficult to make any specific recommendation. Instead, we chose carefully our terminology for this recommendation. Our recommendation is to raise graduate student “support” to nationally competitive levels, rather than graduate student “stipends”, precisely to leave flexibility in designing a support package for graduate students that will most effectively raise our competitiveness and ability to recruit the best graduate students.

### Conclusion

In sum, before we dilute the quality of the educational experience at W&M by spreading our limited resources even further, our highest priority should be to more fully support our existing faculty and educational programs. The first step is to raise faculty salaries to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of our peer group and to restore the resource levels needed for existing programs at the College to become truly competitive commensurate with the level of “greatness” that is the goal of the College. These priorities may not be as “flashy” as other new initiatives, but they speak to the core values of the College – excellent teaching, excellent research, excellent students and excellent faculty. These are the fundamentals on which the College of William and Mary has built its reputation.

In previous years, our committee has identified a greater number of priorities for budget allocations. Many of these proposals were made in budget climates that were different from the one that we now face, and the needs of the university have changed. Therefore, while we realize that an organization as large as this university tends to change course slowly, it is our intention that the spring 2007 FUP Report override all suggestions made in previous years.