

History Department Thoughts for Discussion of the Future of CHASS, April 12.

- Pay and benefits have to be improved for current faculty and for the sake of successfully competing for new faculty. Private universities will benefit sooner from any economic rebound, and we need to be able to act preemptively and fight to retain our best faculty.
- We must continue to hire, or we will die. We are aware of the concerns about the state's potential 2011-2012 financial difficulties, but we feel that we must take some measured risks now or departments in the College are going to atrophy so severely that we will all be poorly positioned to rebuild when an economic rebound occurs. We cannot make a case for membership in the AAU or for recognition as an outstanding university with an eviscerated faculty, and we cannot become a great university by shifting the burden of teaching on to NTT. Nor can any department build graduate programs and strengthen programs for majors with declining numbers of faculty. Although every department would love to expand, our point is that the ratio of faculty to students has worsened sharply.
- Future TT hiring must be focused in departments/disciplines and not in interdisciplinary programs and centers.
 - Interdisciplinarity begins in the disciplines, and collaborations occur most fruitfully when they arise out of particular disciplines.
 - Note that the graduate board recently raised concerns about the weakening of the key disciplines even as "interdisciplinarity" is being promoted.
 - In the short-term, departments that do much of the teaching of interdisciplinary programs should get commensurate resources, especially new hires.
- As faculty are asked to do more with less, classroom technology becomes even more important, and we must insure that faculty and students have classrooms that work.
- While the University seems to be moving toward recognition of how much CHASS contributes to the University's bottom line and of the need to direct more of what we generate in SCH back to CHASS, we need to institutionalize a fair distribution of resources.
 - Part of this institutionalization should be a "tax" on units for which CHASS provides the core GEP courses so that as enrollment increases elsewhere, CHASS does not have to bear the burden on its own.
 - Programs in CHASS, which is a "profit-center" for the University should not be starved in order to feed less core missions such as FYC.
- How to deal with the prospect of declining resources, in particular freezes on hiring? [Note: in our view, continued hiring should be a priority for the College.]
 - We should "supply" only that which we can afford rather than continuing to act as if we can in perpetuity do "more with less."
 - If "supply" of funds and positions cannot increase in proportion to demand then demand should be reduced by cutting admissions sharply or by setting admission numbers strictly in proportion to available resources.
 - If we have to make a choice between our constituencies, the History department will focus on its majors and graduate programs and begin to teach even more GEP classes in large sections, using full-time TT faculty supported by TAs. However, this approach requires moving resources from NTT positions to TA positions, the ongoing improvement of classrooms, and more ready availability of large classrooms. Although, we have already moved far along this path, we want to emphasize that we have deep reservations about how well quality teaching scales with size, we would pursue this approach more aggressively only as a last resort. Student comments make clear that they do not consider large classes as providing the same quality education as small ones. Students fill the "hyper" sections last, and we have found that large classes detrimentally affect recruitment of majors from GEP classes.