



TO: George Phillip, President, University at Albany
FROM: Eric Lifshin, Chair, University Senate
RE: Comments in response Deactivation of Programs letter

DATE: November 15, 2010

I am writing in response to your letter dated October 1, 2010 concerning the deactivation of 27 academic programs and the discontinuation of the University's living-learning program, Project Renaissance. In that letter you requested that the University Senate comment on the academic component of your campus financial plan which began with the suspension of admission to the Classics, French, Italian, Russian, and Theatre programs as well as the discontinuation of Project Renaissance. Below I outline the process that we enacted to provide the comments that follow this letter.

On October, 4, 2010 the Senate Executive Committee met to discuss your October 1, 2010 letter and to develop a process to fulfill your request for comment. After a lengthy discussion the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) voted to charge Council and Committee Chairs to seek comment from each University Senate Council and Committee and report back to the SEC by November 1, 2010. The SEC also requested that all relevant information and data be provided to Councils and Committees that requested such data.

Appendix I contains the comments submitted from the Councils and Committees of the University Senate. Chairs made every effort to keep the comments about the academic program deactivations focused on the charge of their Councils or Committees. For this reason, several Councils/Committees chose to make no comment for or against the proposed deactivations (CAA, CAFFECOR, LISC). It is clear from the remaining comments that the University community is very aware of the dire financial state of the University at Albany and that "the critical issue behind this painful conversation about the deactivation of academic programs is the continuing reduction of New York State support for its public higher education system (UPPC statement below)." However, we worry about the long term cost of deactivating the 27 programs to our core mission, our ability to educate future scholars, and the value of a UAlbany degree. We are also concerned that we maintain and improve the transparency of the University budget process and shared governance process as we face more of these difficult conversations with you and your management team.

On October 18, 2010 the University Senate met to discuss the academic component of the degree programs targeted for deactivation under your plan. The University Senate Secretary accepted applications to speak for 3 minutes from 28 members of the University community. The comments focused mainly on the language program and language training however the impact on the performing arts was also addressed. In general, the University community members who spoke were strongly against the proposed deactivations. Of note were several comments that focused on the loss of academic opportunities for students, a compromised ability to fulfill the core mission of a research university, and the irony of the University's marketing scheme "The World within Reach." Appendix II contains the comments that were submitted in writing.

In summary, we see the need to reduce University expenses however we agree that these program deactivations seriously jeopardize our ability to maintain our core educational mission.

Appendix I**CAA (Council on Academic Assessment) – Richard Matyi, Chair**

The Council on Academic Assessment takes no formal position regarding program deactivation at the University at Albany. It is the desire of the Council, however, that all actions taken by the University remain consistent with the goal of maintaining continuous quality improvement in our academic programs.

CAFFECOR (Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility) – Pradeep Haldar, Chair

Response to President's request on budget cuts: This does not appear to be an activity directly related to the mission of CAFFECOR, however, if there are any affects on Academic Freedom of Freedom of Expression, the committee will be ready to take-up the case.

CERS (Committee on Ethics in Research and Scholarship) – John Monfasani, Chair

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

COR (Council on Research) – James Castracane, Chair

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

CPCA (Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments) – Vincent LaBella, Chair

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

GAC (Graduate Academic Council) – Laurence Kranich, Chair

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

GOV (Governance Council) – Susanna Fessler, Chair

To: Eric Lifshin, Senate Chair
From: Susanna Fessler, Governance Council Chair
Re: President's memo on program deactivation
Date: November 8, 2010



In response to the President's memo of October 1, 2010 I write today on behalf of the Governance Council to comment on the emergency directive to suspend all new admission to select academic degree programs.

The Governance Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the grave financial situation facing the University. Although it is outside the purview of the Council, we wanted to begin by saying that any reductions in our full time teaching and professional staff, and any reduction in our array of academic programs, will likely diminish the quality of a UAlbany education. Any such reductions would be deplorable, and we earnestly enjoin the University administration to seek other solutions to our budgetary challenges.

That said, the Governance Council recognizes that the UA administration made an effort to follow the process laid out in the Bylaws and Charter in populating the first and third Budget Advisory Groups (BAG 2 was not an advisory group as defined in the Bylaws, section 2.5) in the lead up to the suspension of admission to the five programs announced on October 1, 2010. We regret that the University Senate was not given an opportunity to discuss and vote on the merits of these actions prior to the President's decision to suspend admissions to these programs, an action that could be construed as a breach of shared governance processes. The Bylaws read in part:

2.5 Faculty Participation in Advisory Groups Outside of Governance Bodies.

Administrators may choose to advance their leadership vision for the University by constituting special committees and task forces, selecting individual faculty members because of their experience or expertise. Ideally, such advisory groups shall be constituted in consultation with the Governance Council of the University Senate and lines of communication with relevant governance bodies shall be enunciated. In any case, such groups do not represent the Faculty as a whole and advice from such groups does not replace approval by or formal consultation with the Faculty. Such groups may freely provide advice; however, for such groups to be considered part of the formal consultative process, a majority of the faculty members must either be appointed by, or their recommended appointment approved by, the Senate Governance Council, as specified in Article 2, Section 5.5, and specific faculty members must be designated to regularly report to the Senate. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate shall be consulted in the composition of all major University level search committees and committees to select honorary degree recipients.

As concerns BAG 1: The minutes of GOV from November 10, 2008, read:

Interim President Philip has requested a list of approximately twelve names from whom he may choose members for the Budget Advisory Group that will advise him with upcoming difficult budget decisions. A list of nominations that had been received from members of the Council and the Senate Executive Committee was reviewed and additional suggestions were discussed in response to concerns that women were not sufficiently represented on the list, and that there was the need for representation of UPC's Resource Allocation Committee. A request would be made for inclusion of at least one of the members from that committee on the BAG. It is important that all stakeholders are represented and GOV members added additional nominees to ensure such broad representation. GOV members discussed that

recommendations could be submitted by category, and agreed, with one abstention, to hold a ballot by e-mail, selecting individuals in three different groups: all Non-CAS units, CAS, and Professional Faculty. The Council's recommendation would go to SEC before going to the President.

The Senate minutes from December 1, 2008 read:

...GOV met on November 24, 2008. The status of GOV's recommendations for the BAG were briefly reviewed. Senate Chair Delano, who was present at the meeting, stated that so far he had heard no objections from anyone on the SEC, and that the recommendation would be transmitted to Interim President Philip after Tuesday, 11/25/08 afternoon unless major objections would be raised until then.

In the end there were 14 members on BAG 1, five of whom were from the College of Arts and Sciences, and of those five, three were recommended by GOV for service.

GOV was properly consulted in the composition of BAG 1, pursuant to section 2.5 of the Bylaws.

As concerns BAG 3: On March 23, 2010, President Philip sent an e-mail to the Governance Council requesting GOV advice on the composition of BAG 3. This e-mail included a potential BAG 3 slate, a detailed explanation of how that slate had been constructed,¹ and a request that GOV reply by March 26th with advice on the slate. Given the short turn-around time, the Council chair contacted GOV members by e-mail for their response instead of trying to convene a meeting. A total of seven GOV members replied to the chair's e-mail (out of a total of 13 members, not counting ex-officio). 5 members supported the list as it was; 1 member suggested a

¹ "...it is important to draw on individuals who are versed in taking a broad look at the campus circumstance, who are highly respected, and who represent a reasonable range of campus constituencies. I [the President] think we can address all these values largely through a combination of existing or recently existing bodies. I plan to begin with the University Policy and Planning Council of the University Senate and add to it the members of our community who have participated over the past year in the first Budget Advisory Group as well as the Provost's Budget Advisory Group. Where these three bodies, together, do not provide representation, I have supplemented the membership primarily with individuals who have been selected to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee. Provost Phillips and Interim Vice President for Finance and Business Beditz will be asked to co-chair the group."

larger representation of Professional Faculty; 1 member abstained. All members' comments were forwarded to the president, with the following comment from the GOV chair: "GOV was unable to meet on such short notice and also the total number of email responses is less than a majority so we cannot say that we have voted on the taskforce composition. You may, however, find the comments useful as you make your final decisions."

There were originally 45 proposed names on the BAG 3 slate, 13 of whom were from the College of Arts and Sciences. The final BAG 3 group had 39 members, 10 of whom were from the College of Arts and Sciences. One BAG 3 member came from a program that was eventually slated for deactivation.

In sum, although formally GOV did not vote on the composition of BAG 3, it was consulted by the President pursuant to section 2.5 of the Bylaws.

Concerning the role of Advisory Groups and Governance: GOV states for the record that the Advisory groups as defined in section 2.5 of the Bylaws are formed by the President to provide input, but that ultimately the President takes ownership of his decisions. GOV also states for the record that *consultation* with faculty governance as described in 2.4.1 of the Bylaws is required, but that it does not necessitate the President following the advice of the faculty.

As concerns further communication between the administration and the UA community at large: All three BAG reports were posted to the MyUAlbany website in a timely fashion. In addition, the Budget Update Section of MyUAlbany has been regularly updated since May 2008 with memos from the President about the budget.

As concerns formal consultation: The Faculty Bylaws state:

2.4.1 Formal Consultation. The Faculty shall engage in formal consultation with the President and the administration, as outlined and limited by the Policies of the Board of Trustees, and further characterized by the Chancellor's Statement on Governance [Faculty Handbook, Section III, p. 1]. Formal consultation is required for matters covered by Article 1, Section 2.2.2. Either the President or the Faculty shall be able to request formal consultation on other matters.

Except where precluded by contractual or other legal restrictions, minimally, formal consultation with the faculty on these proposals shall entail consultation between administration and University governance bodies. Formal consultation shall require communication, preferably in writing, specifying the area or issue for which recommendations are being solicited and accompanied by sufficient information as necessary for an informed recommendation. Formal consultation should occur as soon as issues needing resolution are identified. The faculty shall be given adequate time to respond. A written response to final Faculty recommendations shall be provided,

indicating what decisions were made and the basis for such decisions; this should be particularly detailed in instances where faculty recommendations are not followed.

GOV passed a motion to support the recent resolution by the SUNY-wide Senate on Consultation with Governance. GOV interprets the President's memo of October 1 to be "communication, preferably in writing, specifying the area or issue for which recommendations are being solicited." However, GOV notes that the memo itself did not have "sufficient information as necessary for an informed recommendation." This information is in part available from the BAG reports, Institutional Research, and Presidential reports to the Senate, but it should be appended to the President's memo. Moreover, the *precise* metrics used in choosing the proposed deactivations are not clear. For example, the President has said the deactivations were in part "enrollment driven" but that could mean number of majors, total enrollments in classes, FTEs, or a combination of all these and other variables.

LISC (Council on Libraries, Information Systems, and Computing) – Shadi Shahedipour-Sandvik, Chair

LISC has no official position (for or against) with regard to the deactivation directive.

UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council) – JoAnn Malatesta, Chair

UAC Response to President Philip's Request

The Undergraduate Academic Council has given serious consideration to the President's request for feedback regarding the proposed deactivation of the French, Russian, Italian, Theatre, and Classics Programs. Over the span of two weeks, members of the UAC have shared a variety of suggestions, opinions, and strategies regarding this proposal and the following is a summary of those comments.

Student Notification/Information

- A primary concern of the UAC is that all students be notified of the proposed deactivation in order to plan accordingly. Immediately after the initial announcement of the proposed deactivations, all intended majors in these programs were identified and individually notified of this proposed change. However, students who might wish to declare majors or minors in these areas are not identifiable and therefore could not be individually notified. Therefore, the UAC feels that it is particularly important for all students to be made aware of the proposed changes in order to afford them the best opportunity to plan their course selections appropriately.
- Concerns were expressed about the ability of current students to declare majors or minors in these areas if they had planned to do so and were already invested in the program. It is noted that the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education has implemented an appeals process to address the needs of those students and, to date, a number of students have utilized that appeal. It is the recommendation of the UAC that the appeals process be more broadly publicized and information about the process be distributed to all students and advisors.
- Additionally, members of the UAC expressed concern about the ability of current students to obtain the necessary courses and access to faculty that they will need in order to graduate from these programs, if in fact the programs become deactivated. Specifically, can we guarantee that students currently in these majors and minors will be able to meet graduation requirements? There is a clear commitment to assisting these students to plan for the completion of program requirements. However, the UAC is seeking clarification regarding proposed timelines for completion of program requirements to ensure that students are advised correctly and able to fulfill degree requirements.

Project Renaissance

- The UAC discussed the discontinuation of the Freshman focused Project Renaissance Program at some length. In general, the Council feels that the discontinuation of the program could impact potential recruitment and retention of students who look forward to participation in this unique program.

Impact on Other University Course Offerings

- Members of the UAC expressed concern over how deactivation of these programs, and subsequent diminished offerings at the upper level of certain language courses, would impact other programs on campus. Specifically identified were the Globalization and English program's uses of courses from the targeted departments. Even though it was noted that these courses are not required for either major, and alternative options are available, the concern remained that this would narrow options for students and could create greater demand on other programs across campus. It is noted that at least one minor, Broadcast Meteorology, would be affected by the deactivation of the Theatre program as the minor requires a Theatre course for completion.
- One member suggested that it would be beneficial to consider retaining upper division language courses in the targeted programs if they are currently utilized by other departments so that students can achieve the high level of mastery expected in the workplace and for graduate school.
- The impact on the general education sequence was considered by the UAC. While it is clear that a number of language courses and sequences remain at UAlbany, the UAC notes that deactivation of these programs would likely impact the number of lower level language courses available to students to meet the general education requirement.
- Additionally, there was concern about the impact on general education courses given the closure of Project Renaissance. It was noted that Project Renaissance provided a minimum of 350 general education seats per semester and students who would have completed general education requirements through Project Renaissance will no longer be able to so. It is estimated that this will create a demand of 700 or more seats in existing general education classes annually.
- It was thus recommended that the University engage in widespread discussion regarding the impact of these deactivations on other programs as well as which, if any, of the courses in the targeted programs might remain.

Other Comments/Notes

- It was noted that enrollment has been highlighted as the primary area of consideration in choosing these programs for potential deactivation. Given the current budget situation, and the possibility that similar discussions will be undertaken by UAC in the future, some members have asked for clarification of the other factors considered in choosing these programs.

Respectfully Submitted by JoAnne Malatesta, UAC Chair

ULC (University Life Council) – Danielle Leonard, Chair

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

UPPC (University Planning and Policy Council) – R. Michael Range, Chair

To: Eric Lifshin, Chair, University Senate

From: R. Michael Range, Chair, University Planning and Policy Council

Subject: **UPPC Comments on President Philip’s plan to suspend admissions to specified academic programs**

Date: November 8, 2010

Please find below comments by UPPC in response to President Philip’s memo of October 1, 2010, in which the President asked for comments regarding proposed deactivations of academic programs. Part 1 is a statement agreed upon by a large majority of UPPC members, identified at the end of the statement. Part 2 represents additional comments by other members of UPPC.

Part 1

The University Senate has been asked by President Philip to comment on his plan to suspend admissions to specified academic degree programs in consideration of their deactivation. The Senate Executive Council (sic) in its turn has invited comment from the various Councils of the Senate. The University Planning and Policy Council (UPPC) has a unique perspective on the President’s plan because UPPC routinely discusses issues related to campus initiatives in light of university resources and their strategic allocation to maintain the campus’ mission. Related to the specific plan under examination, virtually all the members of UPPC served on the President’s third Budget Advisory Group (BAG 3) earlier this year, and many of our members have participated in other University-wide conversations having to do with future plans for the University and / or the University’s current financial profile—in processes related to Middle States accreditation, “Going Forward” planning, and Strategic Planning, and in the deliberations of BAGs 1-3 and the Provost’s Executive Advisory Council—as well as UPPC and Senate deliberations. On the basis of the work of the Council and its various members, we offer the following comments:

1. The general idea of deactivating academic programs on our campus is abhorrent to us. The academic mission of the University is the core of its enterprise, and every academic unit of the campus has made and can continue to make valuable contributions to the intellectual vitality of the students and scholars that gather here. Deactivation of an academic program by necessity results in lost opportunities for students and lost opportunities for enriched scholarship. Deactivation should be a strategy employed with great reluctance and only after careful consideration of alternatives
2. We are convinced of the dire fiscal circumstances of the University. In particular because of continuing reductions in New York State’s support for our operations, the University finds itself in an unsustainable position, maintaining more academic and administrative initiatives than it has assets to empower them.
3. It has been clear to us that, in the context of an historic national economic crisis, the University would be challenged to curtail its operations. We understood that, even though the “administrative” portion of the University’s activities would continue to bear the brunt of future budget reductions (as it has done in the past), the “academic” portion of the University’s activities would also absorb additional reductions. We agreed with the President’s intention that the

reductions be targeted and “strategic” and not “across the board.” We understood the likelihood that such strategic reductions could result in the ultimate elimination of academic programs or units, as abhorrent as that outcome would be to us.

4. In the many conversations regarding future planning and resource allocation for the University both directly related to UPPC’s work or to the work of its members, we never heard—nor would we support—general denigration of the humanities or of languages and culture as areas of scholarship on this campus. On the contrary, it seemed an implicit assumption of these conversations that the arts and languages were important elements of the intellectual life of the campus. We learned during BAG 3 conversations and in new information that we continue to receive that recent budget reductions are having severe consequences across the University, not only in humanities.
5. We commend the University administration for its efforts to stimulate frank dialogue about strategies to manage budget reductions while at the same time working to keep these conversations confidential. The Budget Advisory Groups, particularly BAG 3 in which most of us were participants, heard voices from all corners of the campus and allowed free and open dialogue about different possibilities and their consequences. Though we were not involved in the final determinations for department deactivations, we supported the administration’s intent to make strategic rather than across-the-board reductions and were aware that program suspensions and department deactivations were a very possible outcome of these reductions.
6. We want the best for the University at Albany, but we understand that there will be considerable diversity of opinion about what constitutes “the best.” We acknowledge, however, that the University cannot do all that it wants to do nor may it be able to continue all that it has been doing. The deactivation of any academic program will be a tragedy for those students and colleagues most directly affected and a loss for all of us, but it appears to be a direct and probably inevitable consequence of diminishing support by New York State for its system of public higher education. In order to meaningfully discuss, review, and comment on the University’s response to budget cuts imposed by NY State, more information about the reductions around the whole University would be needed. Statements that other units and divisions of the university are taking certain cuts, whether disproportionately higher or not, do not form a sufficient basis of information. No other specific actions to implement reductions in other Vice Presidential divisions have been made public. The small list of specific incremental policy actions presented to the Council needs to be examined within the context of other specific actions across the university. More clarification on the future of the University, its mission and strategic plans in light of the severe budget reductions we face, is also needed to make an intelligent assessment of the particular proposed deactivations. Lacking such full and specific information, the Council is unable to review the budgetary, planning, and policy implications of the particular program deactivations under consideration.

We wish to reiterate that the critical issue behind this painful conversation about the deactivation of academic programs is the continuing reduction of New York State support for its public higher education system. It appears that powerful voices around the state want institutions of public higher education that are accessible geographically and financially, but without essential autonomies to determine their future or sufficient taxpayer support. The combination of the SUNY system’s geographic dispersion, low tuition, limited local empowerment, and lack of taxpayer support are directly related to the University at Albany’s financial challenges and our inability to sustain all of our academic initiatives. There will inevitably be more painful conversations to be had on our campus if these fundamental problems are not resolved.

UPPC members in support of the above statement:

Robert Bangert-Drowns, Tom Bessette, Scott Birge, Eric Eisenbraun, Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Patrick Ferlo, James Fossett, Richard Johnson, Eric Lifshin, Benjamin Shaw, David Wagner, Geoffrey Williams

Part 2: Additional Comments

While we are in agreement with the substantive comments made in the preceding statement, we would like to clarify that our support of *strategic* reductions rather than *across-the-board* reductions was and is based on the understanding that

- a. all resources available to the university, and not just those available through the state budget, be on the table, and
- b. possible outcomes of the reductions include - beyond program suspensions and department deactivation - substantial cuts in non-academic divisions, which may entail major restructuring and/or elimination of administrative units as well as deactivation of non-academic programs not part of the core mission of the University, and
- c. given the centrality of the Arts and Sciences for the core mission of the University, strategic reductions affecting CAS be coupled with strategic reinvestments in CAS, consistent with reinvestment priorities supported by the third BAG.

Since the reduction plan presented by President Philip does not include any specific details that would suggest that the above principles have been adhered to, and since a convincing rationale for the particular proposed deactivations has not been put forward, we do not support the President's plan and we urge that President Philip consider alternate plans that are consistent with the principles listed above.

UPPC members in support of the above statement:

Kajal Lahiri, R. Michael Range, John Welch

GSO (Graduate Student Organization) – Heidi Nicholls, GSO Representative

The GSO's Assembly's Response to the President's Proposal

November 8, 2010

During the November 5, 2010 Graduate Student Organization Assembly Meeting, the floor was opened to the RGSO and Departmental Representatives to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions regarding the proposed deactivation of the Classics, French, Theatre, and Russian Programs. Below is a compilation of what was shared during this meeting in addition to the concerns emailed by graduate students enrolled in one or more of the above listed departments.

The Departments Selected

A resounding worry on the part of the GSO Assembly, was the selection of the departments and a sense of marginalizing the Humanities. The contribution of the Humanities was discussed in length as members shared their personal appreciation for being expected to take advantage of the diverse curriculum, which included, both hard and social sciences, the arts, languages, etc. The point was made that prospective students may be deciding between Albany and another institution that does possess these departments, in turn leaving University at Albany in a potentially more vulnerable space for the future, while simultaneously weakening the overall program of study for students currently enrolled.

Students are concerned about the ability to finish their graduation requirements (i.e. language requirements) and for those in the departments proposed to be deactivated, there is a fear of the future weight of their degree. Similarly, the question of who will be next was raised, where do these cuts stop, and what do these cuts say about a graduate or undergraduate degree from SUNY Albany in general.

Funding

Construction projects, the elimination of trees, and the façade enhancement of the school was addressed. It was explained that in fact the monies for these ventures come from separate sources from operational expenses. It was expressed that although it was understood the predicament of the University in accepting these funds, it is still difficult to watch educational programs suffer and people lose their jobs while ground is being broken for new projects. Similarly, it was asked if enrollment continues to increase, where are those dollars being allocated?

The Voice of the Student

A major concern is the voice of the student body. Many feel silenced beyond this report and suggested ways in which students can have a sense of being proactive and producing something tangible. A “Think-Tank” was put forward as an opportunity for students to generate alternative options, both a means of boosting morale and potentially identifying other avenues that would not result in the deactivation of these departments.

Beyond the University

Recognizing that much of the proposals are based on budgetary decisions made outside of the University, there is a sentiment that students, faculty, and administration need to consider

the political and economic factors on a state and national level that have created a need to have these discussions. The assembly proposed the formation of a committee focused on alternative funding options and bringing a student voice to the state legislature.

Closing Notes

In sum, the GSO takes the position of understanding there are difficult decisions to be made, lack of an adequate budget, and by no means is this an ideal situation for anyone involved. With that said, the Graduate Student Body would like the opportunity to serve on committees or form their own councils focused on these concerns, where other possibilities could be discussed before any final decisions are made. The GSO Assembly would like to have access to more numbers and figures on which the selection of these particular departments were made. Furthermore the Assembly wonders if there have been any institutions with a similar funding design and history that is in a comparable situation that has made analogous or disparate decisions.

SA (Student Association) – Justin Wax Jacobs, President Student Association

No comments available as of 11/11/10.

Appendix II

Below are the speakers who commented on the deactivation of academic programs during the meeting of the University Senate held on Monday, October 18 in the Alumni House. Several have submitted their written statements which are included in the following pages. This document will be updated as additional statements are received.

List of speakers in order:

Fernando Leiva

David Wills

Mary Beth Winn

Barry Trachtenberg

Brett Bowles

William Whalen

Jean Francois Briere

Martha Rozett

Richard Fogarty

Jackie Hayes

Tara Needham

Michael Range

Timothy Sergay

Sarah Cohen

Walter Little

Charles Scholes

Eloise Briere

Branka Arsic

Rachel Cohon

George Aaron Broadwell

Andi Lyons

Deborah LaFond

Richard Barney

Cynthia Fox

Reed Hoyt

Lana Cable

Kabel Nathan Stanwicks

Bonnie Steinbock (Submitted statement prior to meeting but unable to attend)

Submission to Senate Meeting of 18 October 2010, by David Wills, Professor of French

My first point is an informational one. In spite of George Philip's multiple correctives to the language used in his initial announcement regarding the proposed program deactivations, repeated again in this morning's op-ed piece, the fact is this: if you/a student/goes today to the SUNY website and looks for programs in French, Italian, Russian (and, I presume, Classics or Theatre), you are told that such programs do not exist at UAlbany. They have been expunged, UAlbany has been culturally cleansed of important domains of the humanities, by decree in the areas just mentioned, and, as my Barry Trachtenburg will explain, de facto in Judaic Studies. The requests have been filed and acted upon by SUNY central: programs no longer have a public presence; undergraduate students have been told to finish in two years. Any statement about deactivations being still pending is patently untrue.

But the point I really want to make is that the attack upon academic programs does not amount to trimming around the edges of a bloated set of disciplines, but represents a fundamental restructuring of the University at Albany, which as a result will no longer be a university. Others will speak to how the targeted programs weave deeply into the fabric of this university. As Louis Menand explained in the New York Times this morning, "it looks like you are merely clearing away some of the underbrush. But you are damaging the ecology of the entire institution. And SUNY Albany was a great flagship public institution."

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/10/17/do-colleges-need-french-departments/the-point-of-education>

In that context it is also patently untrue that there has been wide consultation about such restructuring on our campus. We have not had the discussion and debate that is absolutely necessary if we are to know what sort of an institution UAlbany will be after I, and others, are no

longer here. Yet the first steps have been taken toward that restructuring under the pretext of budgetary exigency. The fragile ecology has been irreparably damaged; we have become a national and international laughing-stock. We must know in detail where we are going and why, and not just blunder along. We must begin that discussion here and now, before deactivating particular programs.

Statement to the University Senate – 18 October 2010 Mary Beth Winn
 Let me begin with **campus** numbers and issues:

2038 students are taking the courses offered by the “deactivated” programs THIS SEMESTER of which **140** are undergraduate majors and **21** are graduate students (all but 2 of whom are self-funded). Our courses are taken by 15% of our undergraduate student population. Add to these the **1900** students in the University in the High School programs that we supervise for university credit, and the conclusion is obvious: **THEY** know the value of the languages!

All the deactivated programs offer a range of courses in English that fulfill multiple General Education requirements (especially Humanities, Arts, Europe, Regions Beyond Europe, Writing Intensive, Oral Discourse) for all students. Faculty in French, Russian, and Italian teach courses in both English and the target languages that fulfill degree requirements in the Honors College, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Linguistics, Women’s Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and English. The loss of these programs will cripple the new undergraduate Globalization Studies major and the undergraduate Film Studies minor. At the graduate level, these terminations will deprive students in the School of Education of opportunities to satisfy the New York State-mandated requirements for K-12 teacher certification. The terminations will also effectively end the University in the High School (UHS) programs in French, Italian, Russian, and Latin, thereby depriving the university of significant revenue, preventing high-school students from earning credits for later transfer to the university, and depriving the university of a key tool for recruiting the best high-school students in New York.

Language not only provides the vehicle through which we engage the world but also actually shapes the thoughts we are able to express. In the programs targeted for termination, language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses. Students in our programs are taught “critical language awareness, interpretation and translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception.” They acquire a basic “knowledge of the history, geography, culture, and literature of the society or societies whose language they are learning, and the capacity to do research in the language using parameters specific to the target culture.” They acquire **trans-cultural** competence.

[In 2005, "the need to understand other cultures and languages" was identified by Daniel Yankelovich as one of five imperative needs to which higher education must respond in the next ten years if it is to remain relevant. Only by **re-activating our programs in French, Italian, Russian, Classics and theatre at UA** will the world be “within reach.”]

A University’s primary mission is education -- it is a collective enterprise with multiple strands that are interconnected in diverse and complex ways. Together these strands create an intellectual and social fabric that defines the character of the institution. To think that cutting off a supposedly “weak” strand will strengthen the “strong” is ludicrous -- it will only leave irreparable holes in the fabric. Once the damage is done, patches will not suffice, and eventually the fabric will shred and disintegrate.

That is why I ask you to unite against cuts to the academic program.

Barry Trachtenberg, Associate Professor
History Department

Lost in the current discussions about the cuts in the academic programs are the recent changes in Judaic Studies. Founded as a Department forty years ago this very month, Judaic Studies at UAlbany was a forerunner of the burst in Jewish Studies programs that has occurred over the past two decades. Now, more than one hundred and twenty-five Universities in North America and Canada offer Jewish Studies, and it is a field that is continually growing.

I arrived to UAlbany in 2003 as one of the first faculty members whose line was to be paid through a “public-private partnership,” (a failed experiment that demonstrated how academic speech can be suppressed through such arrangements). I was the fifth member of a vibrant Department that offered classes in many realms of Jewish Studies. While we never had more than 20 majors at any given time, we often served annually more than one thousand students in our classes, many of whom saw Jewish Studies as a vital part of their education. Our recent external review—from 2009—credited us as a “national competitive” program with a staff who is “young and energetic” but which lacks the “non-replacement of departing faculty”.

Now, I am the sole full-time faculty member in Jewish Studies, and I, along with a Hebrew lecturer and a handful of adjunct instructors, have had our Department dissolved and we are now housed in History. We are in the process of suspending admission to the major.

As part of my responsibility to oversee Judaic Studies—soon to be officially a program—I am to create an interdisciplinary major out of the faculty located across the University, following the model that exists at most other schools. Such a task was already going to prove difficult. Since the Judaic Studies Department was the site where those faculty with an interest in the topic were housed, there are only a few faculty at the University with either the training or the interest in mounting classes and making the long-term commitment to teaching them on a regular basis.

Now, with the plan to cut the programs in Theater, Classics, Russian, Italian, and French, I fear that my job may be impossible. At least three of the five programs have faculty with an interest or clear affinity with Jewish Studies. Take the work of French Professor Brett Bowles, for instance, who works on antisemitism in French film. One could also point to Professor of Russian Henryk Baran, who researches the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. As well, faculty in the Theater Department are currently preparing a production of *Dear Harvey*, a play on the life and times of the civil rights activist Harvey Milk. The absence of these programs will be devastating to my efforts to rebuild the Judaic Studies major.

Just as the creation of the Judaic Studies Department in 1970 augured future developments in the discipline, the decision to permit its attrition over the past few years has likewise presaged the recent news about the tragic cuts. I strongly suspect that had we not lost our faculty to retirements or to other Universities, we too would have been terminated, rather than only downsized.

As the Faculty Senate weighs its decision regarding the termination of these five programs, please consider that the cuts impact constituencies far beyond those immediately affected. It is devastating and shameful that these programs are to be terminated. The effects of these ill-conceived decisions will extend far and wide throughout the University and degrade us all.

My name is Brett Bowles. I am an Associate Professor of French Studies from the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures. I would like to speak to the issue of governance; specifically, the breaches of governance that have been committed at every stage of what President Philip has repeatedly asserted was an “extensive, inclusive and on-going” consultative process [<https://portal.itsli.albany.edu/myuadocs/EP-BUDGET-100710-MessageFromPresident.pdf>] I would like to clarify today exactly to what extent faculty in the Humanities and in the “deactivated” programs were consulted.

Affected faculty attended large “Town Hall” meetings that addressed in general terms the ongoing budget crisis, the necessity of making cuts across the university, and the principles that would guide these cuts. Within the College of Arts & Sciences, there were also meetings of all the department chairs convened by the Dean. At this level the discussions were also general, emphasizing the necessity of cuts and identifying general principles for making them. In none of these collective meetings was the principle of eliminating degree programs authorized. However, on April 28, 2010 the Dean invited chairs to submit confidential lists of departments they considered expendable [http://www.albany.edu/cas/chair_council_minutes.shtml]. To date the results of this polling have not been made public. This is exactly the sort of “cannibalism,” or pitting departments and faculty against each other, that President Philip deplored in his opening remarks today. I join him fully in that sentiment and ask why one of his administrators is using exactly that tactic as a mechanism of governance.

The next phase of consultation consisted of three ad-hoc committees, known as Budget Advisory Groups. These groups were composed of faculty members whose participation was solicited individually by the Dean of Arts & Sciences and the University Provost. Of the 39 members on the third Budget Advisory Group, there were 7 representatives from the College of Arts & Sciences. Of these 7, there were none from the 4 Humanities departments with the largest number of faculty: English, History, Philosophy, and Languages, Literatures and Cultures. In its public meetings, none of the Budget Advisory Groups authorized either the principle of program terminations or generated a list of programs to be terminated [<https://portal.itsli.albany.edu/myuadocs/EP-BAG3-Report-Final-Report-for-campus.pdf>].

At the end of the spring 2010 semester the Dean of Arts & Sciences presented the third Budget Advisory Group in writing with three possible scenarios for handling budget cuts to her college: the first was based on a 5% reduction (\$1.9 million), the second on a 10% reduction (\$3.8 million), and the third on a 15% reduction (\$5.7 million). The third scenario was the only one in which she envisaged program deactivations. The actual cut that she was given to enact was \$2.84 million (slightly less than 7.5%), yet she recommended the deactivation of five degree programs anyway. When I questioned the Dean about this decision and these figures at the October 15, 2010 meeting of the University Policy and Planning Committee, she was unable to provide specific numbers to support her claim that program deactivations were the only possible way to reach the \$2.84 million figure. She responded only that “there was nothing else to give.” She then stated explicitly that she did not consider French, Russian, Italian, Classics, or Theater “central” to the College of Arts & Sciences or to the university.

I call on the Dean to provide a specific, itemized budget that will explain the discrepancy between the scenarios she presented to the third Budget Advisory Group and the recommendations she made to our Provost and President. I call on her to prove her statement that these program deactivations are the only mechanism for balancing the budget in the College of

Arts & Sciences. I call on all our administrators, the Senate, and my faculty colleagues to suspend the program deactivations and open a dialogue that is truly “extensive, inclusive, and on-going” in order to balance the budget without “deactivating” degree programs.

Comments by Martha Rozett, Professor & Collins Fellow
English Department

Four points:

1. We all understand that the university has to cut its budget. But we haven't been told whether units that are not directly connected with teaching are being reviewed and redesigned. Has any substantial rethinking of the university taken place comparable to the suspension of whole areas of study that are central to a liberal arts university's mission? Or are these units losing a staff member here and there but remaining essentially unchanged in terms of the services they provide, the research initiatives they support, and the organizational hierarchies they have come to depend upon?

The Theatre Department is dear to my heart; I have taught Shakespeare to generations of theatre majors and minors, including nationally well known writers and actors like Stephen Adly Guirgis and John Ortiz. The university is proud of these alumni and others, as you can see from the posters prominently displayed on the podium. Our theatre majors and minors have long received academic credit for the time-consuming work involved in mounting campus productions. Many of them won't be able to afford the luxury of doing so on an extracurricular basis, and without an academic department, they won't have the necessary material resources and staff support. I can imagine a university without a baseball team – UC Berkeley has just announced that it will cut 5 sports, including baseball -- but I can't imagine a university without student performances of plays.

The foreign language programs that are being proposed for retrenchment have small faculties, much smaller than they once had, because they have been allowed to wither through attrition. This did not have to happen. Had our administration made a coordinated effort to deploy small departments in the teaching of General Education courses we would have more students satisfying their Diversity requirement, for example, in courses taught by the language departments and fewer enrolled in Growing Up in America, the English department's most popular course, which is taught exclusively by TA s and adjuncts. Departments and programs with relatively few majors can play an important role in general education, but when popularity is the main factor in allocating resources, large departments tend to flourish at the expense of small ones.

Finally, if these retrenchments do occur and mid-career faculty members lose their jobs, then we have a moral obligation to insist that they be given teaching positions elsewhere in the SUNY system. In this terrible economy, they will be competing with thousands for a small number of openings. We cannot, in all conscience, allow them to become unemployed. I call on Nancy Zimpher, with her staff of 500 well-paid administrators downtown, to make sure this happens.

Richard S. Fogarty, Comments to University Senate, 18 October 2010

I want to address the Senate as someone from outside the affected departments, but who sees profound implications for all of us who work across the university.

I am aware the budget crisis is real, and that painful cuts must be made, and any cuts will have their critics.

But these program deactivations will have devastating affects upon related departments, graduate training, undergraduate education and opportunities.

Beyond that, there are larger issues, and in the brief moment I have, I'll focus on the cuts to language education.

1. Far from an impractical luxury, language training beyond the introductory level is of great practical importance: in business, government, national security. 2 examples: the US Army had recently set up a new command for Africa, where French is one of the most widely spoken languages, and the CIA and State Department have identified poor language training in this country as a serious threat to our national security and the future of our economy.
2. Languages in particular and humanities in general—all of them—are critical to the mission of any serious institution of higher learning, let alone a major research university. They have been central in these kinds of institutions since the Middle Ages, and a crucial part of producing educated and productive citizens for far, far longer.
3. Finally, these deactivations will have a damaging effect on the reputation of the university. The mere proposal of them has already attracted negative attention from, for example, the faculty and president of Harvard, the New York Times, and many leading figures in American education and culture. I myself have heard from colleagues across this country, and in Canada and across Europe, some of whom I do not even know personally, who express deep concern about just what kind of institution Albany is.

No one is more passionately committed to this institution or its future than I, and I firmly believe that these departments must be an important part of that. Difficult times like these force us to ask more acutely than ever, what is a university? We must answer that question carefully.

My name is Jackie Hayes, I am a doctoral student in the Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies Department. I also currently have about \$68,000 in student debt, all from SUNY schools.

President Philip in his Op-Ed in the Times Union this morning stated, “Regrettably, there is erroneous and misleading information in wide circulation about these actions. Critics, without corroborating the facts, have quickly and incorrectly concluded that UAlbany no longer values the humanities.”

First off I would like to express to President Philip and the Faculty Senate that we are not “critics” as President Philip has said, we are not some insignificant, pessimistic, others that exist wholly outside the University. No, we are not mere critics, we are the students, faculty, and staff who care deeply about this institution, who care deeply about the quality of education provided on this campus, the ones who have invested years, lifetimes even into this University. The ones who work day to day with students to carry out the mission of this University through a million small acts that collectively make up the heart and soul of this institution, acts that apparently go unnoticed by a President who refers to us as merely “critics.”

His statement highlights the real crisis underlying the consistent defunding and devaluing of public higher education. It is not a budget crisis as Governor Paterson or Chancellor Zimpher or President Philip would have you believe that is starving Higher Education of public funds - it is a crisis of priorities. It’s that New York State and the SUNY Leadership continue to protect their administrative salaries, war funding, Wall Street, while leaving the public Universities open to be ravaged by market forces. And we have seen the brutal impact of these decisions- the announcement of the cutting of French, Italian, Russian, Theater, and the Classics alongside the elimination of 160 positions. These are short-sighted, short term solutions that will not address the root problem and will only create deeper, long-term problems.

What is the best way to solve the current crisis? Invest in SUNY, it creates jobs, training, an economic boost. It’s estimated that for every dollar invested in SUNY there is a \$6-8 return to campus communities. Investing in SUNY is a smart, responsible, long-term solution. Aside from having direct, sustainable economic outcomes, investing in Public Higher Education is about investing in who we are and what we care about. We need to ensure that President Philip and New York State understand deeply that education is a fundamental right, that education helps build vibrant, functioning democracies and that affordable, accessible, quality public education is a value that must be upheld and protected. Therefore I would strongly encourage you not only to vote down any endorsements of the current cuts, but also to put forth a counter solution, a vision for moving forward. I would strongly encourage you to mobilize and endorse all mobilizations that call for full state support of the State University of New York System.

Comments Regarding Planned Deactivations of Programs

R. Michael Range, UAlbany Senator

October 18, 2010

It is remarkable how much agreement there is across the university about the university's CORE MISSION [*Expanding knowledge and transforming minds to shape the future of our community and our world*] (Strategic Planning Comm. Report) and our CORE activities/areas, "*defined as undergrad education; scholarship/creative work; graduate education*" (BAG 3 Report).

Similar statements appear in earlier planning documents. It is critical that we do not lose sight of our core mission, especially in times of shrinking budgets.

To suspend new admissions to programs with "low enrollments" in response to budget cuts invariably will lead to the deactivation of these programs within a couple of years followed by the retrenchment of any faculty who have not moved elsewhere by that time. How else could savings be generated?

It is difficult to understand how these particular decisions to suspend admissions and eventually deactivate programs could be based just on enrollments (*This decision was based in recognition that there are comparatively fewer students enrolled in these degree programs*, Pres. Philip 10/1/10 message), when there are other programs/departments within the College of Arts and Sciences whose enrollments are as "low" or even lower than those in the French program or in Theatre. Also, there are programs in other schools/colleges at UAlbany that have lower student/faculty ratio than some of the targeted programs. In terms of state tax dollars per student FTE, some programs are much more expensive than the targeted programs – up to four times (\$8000 versus \$2,000 per student FTE, just to use round figures from the planning metrics shared with BAG3.) Yes, graduate education is more time consuming and expensive, but the data and the outcome suggests that other factors are involved than just enrollments, and that choices have been made based on other considerations.

There certainly are situations when programs are no longer viable. In the past the affected units have responded accordingly, taking the bitter medicine. Most recent examples are the suspension of admissions to graduate programs in Geology in 2007, the deactivation of the MA and the Advanced Certificate in Russian last spring, and the recent closing of the Judaic Studies Department. However, these actions were programmatic choices, not driven by budget cuts, and they did not entail involuntary job terminations. Why not handle other programs that are no longer viable in analogous ways?

No matter how one spins the situation, the planned elimination of five programs in the Humanities - the only responses to the budget reductions that have been explicitly identified, and thereby naturally became the focal point – has become a public relations debacle for the University that may end up harming the University far more than its descent into the lowest ranking tiers.

Aside from the anticipated faculty losses in these disciplines, the reductions entail further reductions in teaching faculty at UAlbany while student enrollments are at an all-time high. This surely does not support our core mission and activities. It will land UAlbany in the lowest rankings. (Pres. Philip, 10/1/10 town hall meeting)

I believe that there are alternatives to the continuing decline in teaching faculty. This would require a broad look at the whole university, including administrative and programmatic restructuring, and the all-funds budget.

From 2005/2006 to today (including the latest planned reductions), the UAlbany state budget allocation increased by 15.3%. (Note: After factoring in increases, such as negotiated salary increases, tuition increases, etc., and the actual cuts imposed by the state, this “increase” really reflects a substantial reduction in resources to the university. F&B estimates that without the reductions in state tax dollars UAlbany’s base state budget should be \$192,756,700.)

The data and percentage changes for the major divisions from 05/06 to 10/11 (including preliminary targeted reductions in 2010-12) are shown in the spread sheet below.

It should be noted that Athletics, IT, F&B, and Student Success have substantial additional revenues outside the state budget. The spread sheet gives relevant 2009-10 information about the all-funds budget. No *historical* all-funds budget data has been made available to UPPC. Looking at these numbers, it seems to me that there are significant opportunities to revisit the allocations of the latest round of budget reductions so as to better protect the core mission of the university and without taking extreme measures that would ultimately result in the retrenchment of faculty.

	2005-06	2010-11 7/1/2010 base allocations	2010-12 Preliminary reduction targets for 2010-12	2010-11 After preliminary reductions	% increase		For Comparison:
					05/06 - 10/11 Includes preliminary 10-12 reductions	2009-10 ALL FUNDS BUDGET	
Total State Revenue (incl. tuition and SUNY grad. stud. support)	\$138,111,267	\$159,794,800		\$159,240,600	15.3%		\$439,000,000
Expenditures (State Budget)							
President's Office	\$1,950,886	\$2,194,697	(\$218,600)	\$1,976,097	1.3%		\$2,331,200
Academic Affairs	\$90,490,470	\$107,265,887	(\$9,320,400)	\$97,945,487	8.2%		\$114,360,118
Athletics	\$3,390,212	\$4,748,679	(\$474,400)	\$4,274,279	26.1%		\$13,711,500
IT	\$5,882,225	\$6,432,959	(\$641,600)	\$5,791,359	-1.5%		\$12,191,700
F&B	\$15,831,691	\$16,544,069	(\$1,637,600)	\$14,906,469	-5.8%		\$33,900,100
Research	\$2,796,572	\$3,829,613	(\$339,000)	\$3,490,613	24.8%		\$7,817,000
Comm. and Media	\$1,276,700	\$1,533,278	(\$152,400)	\$1,380,878	8.2%		\$1,524,900
Student Success	\$3,204,278	\$3,970,549	(\$394,000)	\$3,576,549	11.6%		\$15,108,700
University Development	\$2,677,389	\$3,564,714	(\$355,200)	\$3,209,514	19.9%		\$3,827,200

Timothy D. Sergay, Assistant Professor
Languages, Literatures and Cultures

A budget crisis, like any crisis, is inevitably a point at which an institution reassesses very intensely exactly what it is, what its values are, what it intends to be in the future. In this connection, I would urge upon the Senate that it take up the task--perhaps when some of the dust settles--of finally articulating a "mission statement" for UAlbany. At present, we simply lack one: a visitor to our website who searches for "mission statement" can find only some rather offhand remarks by Susan Herbst to the effect that we don't need one of these fancy "mission statements"--we simply do EVERYTHING excellently. Excellence, of course, is the term of art in such mission statements. We have all read plenty of them, and certainly they tend to be weaves of cliches and pieties, very indeterminate and logically unconvincing. I would also remind Senators of the critique of the term "excellence" in Bill Readings' book "The University in Ruins" (1996). "Excellence" is not enough: it is a place holder, a kind of zero, where real content needs to go. But we certainly have enough talent and commitment here to come up with a substantive statement for the University, based on more than invoking the term "excellence."

On the technical side of the decision to deactivate programs, and our investment of hopes in the PHEEIA (Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act), I have three questions: (1) What is UAlbany's present relationship to the Delaware Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, and were data from this study crunched and consulted in connection with the decision to deactivate programs? Similarly, was there any consulting of findings from the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity, and Accountability? (2) Regarding the PHEEIA, have proponents of its "semi-privatization" component reckoned with former U-Wisconsin Madison chancellor John D. Wiley's perspective on the fallacy of "scaling up" the privatization model to public universities? Wiley laid out the case against a "privatization" model for the future economics of public universities in an essay, "Why We Won't See Any Public Universities Going Private" (in Ehrenberg, ed., What's Happening to Public Education, 2006) and in a presentation to Baruch College in 2006, available here: <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/dml/engine.php?action=viewMedia&source=category&mediaIndex=477&listPlace=2&rootCategory=107&genreFilter=8&typeFilter=0>. (3) Did the notion of the net profitability of the humanities argued in the exchange between Robert Watson and Mark Yudof (<http://www.today.ucla.edu/portal/ut/bottom-line-shows-humanities-really-155771.aspx>) ever figure in the thinking behind the present program eliminations? Debate on this question continues in the recent New York Times blog by Stanley Fish (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/category/stanley-fish/>).

Comments by Walter Little
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology
Director, Institute for Mesoamerican Studies

The humanities, particularly language training beyond basic levels for anthropology undergraduate and graduate students, is an important component of their training and intellectual development. It is necessary for skills development related to research projects and being able to command the scholarly literature beyond English. For undergraduates, getting into a competitive graduate program in anthropology depends on strong foreign language skills.

There are several funding initiatives from the National Science Foundation and the US Department of Education that presume that research universities have a well developed languages department. Not having such a department will make it next to impossible to win this funding.

Finally, in reference to President Phillip's Op-Ed in the Times Union newspaper (Oct 18) that anthropology offers a substantial humanities component, this reflects a misunderstanding of anthropology and erroneous assumptions about what anthropologists do. Certainly, cultural anthropologists integrate humanities perspectives into some of their research. However, the cultural anthropologists who would teach classes that include a humanities component are fewer today than they were a decade ago, with two losses over the last two years. I myself was the lone replacement of three cultural anthropologists (due to two retirements and a death) when I came to U Albany 7 years ago. Furthermore, we simply are not humanities professors; we are anthropologists who have different disciplinary ways--methods, theories, and research questions.

The proposed cuts to the humanities are economically shortsighted and damaging to the university's reputation as a research center that concurrently teaches and integrates students into research projects. It illustrates a lack of understanding of disciplinary inter-connectivity, in which it is the combined endeavors and complimentary roles of faculty in different disciplines that train our society's next generations.

My name is Eloise Brière I teach Francophone studies in the French program. I'm going to start on a positive note because it has truly been a distinct privilege to work with many generations of students at this great university.

Year in, year out, it has been pure delight to see young minds broaden as they open up to the cultures and literatures of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, North Africa and of course that of our neighbor to the north with its nearly 10 million French speakers.

The actions of our administration deeply pain me, not because I will be denied the privilege and pleasure of interacting with students, for this is not about me, it is about *you*, it is about us *all* and the re-direction of the core mission of this university.

We have been told that in these times of scarce funding selective investment must be made in areas of strength. However one need only look at the recent NRC ratings to wonder about the wisdom of such a policy which in essence pits department against department, colleague against colleague.

In accepting the re-shaping of the University at Albany we are allowing insufficient funding from our New York state tax dollars to become the justification for denying our students the kind of education we as parents would want for our own children.

Most of all, I am deeply saddened by the treatment our students have received at the hands of this university's administration. Under the guise of concerned advisement from Deans and other administrators, Ph.D. candidates, M.A. students, [most of whom are self-funded] language majors, language minors intended majors and students who just have a passion for French, have in fact been *bullied* and intimidated into finishing degrees by May 2012. Which other students on this campus have received such an ultimatum?

As a result the desired outcome is happening as students seek ways to transfer to other schools. Besides, their majors have already been expunged from the SUNY central website.

In closing I would like you to remember that the scenario of student exodus concerns us all for as the university's reputation suffers, today's trickle of theatre, classics, Russian, Italian and French majors away from our campus could very well grow and swell until it engulfs us all. Let us join together to protect our students and their right to public education!

Deborah LaFond's Comments at Senate meeting – 10/18/ 2010

My name is Deborah LaFond. Please note my French Canadian last name. My father, William Henry LaFond, was a devoted father and a Medic in World War II. I invoke my father's name today because our family lived first hand with the ravages of war. Having survived the war, my father quietly suffered but as a family we were aware of the psychological costs and trauma of war. Both my father and mother taught us to try to prevent war. This is why, as a solid working class family, my parents supported all their 6 children to enroll in college and pursue careers that would "study war no more." This is also why, I was a devoted student to language study for approximately 10 years (French, Italian, Spanish, Persian, Arabic) through public universities. I learned so much through travel, via language study and I hoped that by studying language, cultural literacy would contribute to educating against violence, broadening the notion of world neighbors/global citizens. I believed that once you know you are neighbors, you are much less likely to want to drop bombs on neighbors or scapegoat any culture through war. I believe the university should be a space for those who envision NO WAR and pursue cross-cultural dialogue, non-violence education, and understanding! Without language study there is no understanding of culture. Misunderstandings and scapegoating of any culture costs lives, create violence, and cause trauma for years to come. This trauma often translates into more violence. Let's break the cycle!

President Phillip, I'm very glad that you shared the information and concern for the workers in facilities who have been cut. Many of us may not have been aware of this. We don't want a war on this campus. Many have spent years building community on this campus. We don't want to pit one group against each other as Eloise Briere, several students, and others have eloquently stated here today. This is what we don't want but we see the deactivation strategy as doing this.

War supports division. What is this division doing to us as a community? At a previous Senate meeting, one of our own faculty members and a member of the Senate was censored for trying to articulate his opposition to PHEEIA. Our SUNY Web site is covered with pro-PHEEIA statements. Where is the Web space for dissenting voices in this community?

We need a public open hearing where we have access to information, and all are invited to the table to raise solutions to defend public education. I hope we can do this!

Cynthia Fox, Associate Professor
French Studies

I would like to comment on statements made in the Times Union by President Philip on October 18 about the foreign language offerings on campus and the reasons for the deactivation of degree programs in classics, French, Italian, and Russian languages (<http://www.timesunion.com/default/article/UAlbany-will-continue-to-excel-710832.php>).

President Philip states that we offer instruction in 13 languages (Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, Hebrew, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish). However, many of these languages are offered at the beginning or intermediate level only. With the deactivation of French, Italian, classics (Latin) and Russian, our undergraduates will be able to do advanced work (major) in Spanish, Chinese, or Japanese, and to minor in Korean, Hebrew and Portuguese. Arabic and German are indeed offered, but for four semesters (240 instructional hours), only; while Dutch is offered for just two (120 hours). Note that the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center regards Arabic (together with Chinese, Japanese and Korean) as a Category IV language, which means that they expect a student who is a native speaker of English to spend 64 weeks in classes that meet six hours a day for five days a week (1920 instructional hours) in order to achieve “limited working proficiency.” While less difficult for native speakers of English to learn, German and Dutch are Category II languages that require 35 weeks (1050 hours of instruction) to achieve that same level. (<http://www.dliflc.edu/generalcatalog.html>)

As justification for the deactivations of programs in which students are able to use their advanced language skills to explore a rich array subject areas (literature, film, art, history, linguistics), President Philip cites the 2006 [Modern Language Association](http://www.mla.org/pdf/06enrollmentsurvey_final.pdf) survey of U.S. colleges in which it is reported that “language enrollments beyond the introductory level drop off dramatically.” However, the authors of that survey in no way suggest that this is a reason to stop providing language instruction beyond that level. Rather, they argue that “retaining students in upper-level courses is a challenge many fields share and is made more acute by the growing curricular choices now offered to students in fields that did not exist a few decades ago.” (http://www.mla.org/pdf/06enrollmentsurvey_final.pdf). Indeed, the overall results of the MLA survey were that between 2002 and 2006, enrollments in language classes expanded by 12.9%, and that the data show an upward trend: more languages are being taught, and more students are enrolled in language classes. The report in fact concludes that “as the need for foreign languages and cultures intensifies, the need for starting language learning earlier and for sustained language learning becomes apparent. From K-12 through college, students should have the opportunity to learn languages, including those that are less commonly taught.”

Faculty who are involved in the teaching of languages are used to having to explain to students why languages are important, and that learning one requires a sustained effort over several years. We don't expect to have to be telling this to people who have been entrusted with running a university.

Reed Hoyt, Chair
Department of Music
Senate Chair, 2007-2008

- The reputation of the University is a stake. We are rapidly becoming Albany Tech. We already have an image problem that slogans and public relations cannot solve. These actions have been decried by many in the field. The public perception of our university needs to be enhanced by the delivery of our curriculum.
- Are we taking a dollars and nonsense approach to education? Departments should not be regarded as fund-raisers. That attitude falls into line with the view of the state government that SUNY is a bank to be used to balance their budget on the backs of our students and their parents.
- As Professor Leiva said, and as I have said before, we must present a united stance: not one view from SUNY Central and another from the unions.
- As Professor Eloise Briere said, we could be next.
- Are there other areas that are less central to the educational mission of the university that could be cut?
- The value of languages: our students need them for graduate school, and some of our undergraduates need courses in Theatre and the languages. Opera, for instance, began in Italy where they speak Italian.
- It saddens me to see a department (Theatre) that I once chaired go down the drain.
- Keep in mind that when a program is discontinued, courses in that area cannot be taught for five years after the discontinuation. This is a good rule because it prevents administrations from getting rid of a program because they don't like the people in it. They cannot just cancel it and restart it with new faculty.

Statement against Deactivation of Humanities Programs

Lana Cable

The move to shut down the French, Italian, Russian, Classics and Theater programs is an assault on all Humanities programs at this university. But the move is not isolated. In the October 15 edition of *The New York Times*, Sarah Lyall shows how British universities are enduring a similar assault that could leave only elite institutions—Oxford and Cambridge—fully intact. Paul Cottrell, policy head of the University and College union, says that British global reputation will suffer in consequence: loss of foreign students and loss of international faculty standing means loss of prestige for the nation as a whole. The United States and Britain appear to be working in tandem to deplete their public sectors: Education, the Arts, Social Services, Transportation and more. So in this broader context, assault on the Humanities implies assault on the common good, instantiating corporatist priorities that trump democratic freedoms.

Scholars of the Early Modern period are familiar with how decimating the commons profited burgeoning empire. My Drama of Empire course begins with William Davenant's *Essay upon Universal Monarchy*, written decades before Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Beginning with the earliest empires and tracking their successors to his own day, Davenant lays out the stages by which empires rise and fall. The same four stages organize every empire on record, each of which is ushered in by claims that "this time will be different."

So how does concern for the Humanities fit into this picture? Like this: empire planners neglect to consider unintended consequences, whereas Humanities disciplines examine precisely those consequences. They will continue to do this difficult job so as long as consequences are still seen to matter. The Humanities explore the ways in which all parties to human action—winners and losers alike—discover what goes *not* according to plan. In the case of empire, that means examining grievous injustice as well as justice, irreparable loss as well as profit, degradation of individuals and families and societies and cultures and natural environments as well as demonstrable progress. These serious considerations do not meet bottom-line corporate demands, but they are fundamental to educational systems that actually embrace training in the liberal arts. Such systems recognize that the greater human enterprise stands to gain from this kind of critical intelligence, that without it, the human enterprise is doomed.

The Humanities disciplines cannot be reduced to a mere set of skills, however sophisticated—specific language expertise and ability to analyze texts and situations, retain vast amounts of data, or organize and prioritize on demand. These are skills for which corporations readily pay cash. But such compartmentalized skills are no match for an imaginative grasp of human interconnectedness, of what it actually *means* to live and work and achieve in a global setting. And unless such meaning is made part of it, university training will produce not educated human beings but robots. If the University at Albany depletes the Humanities by deactivating culturally integrated core programs like French, Italian, Russian, Classics and Theater, it be demonstrating for all the world to see that "The World Within Reach" is to this university no more than what that drastic action makes it sound like: an empty marketing slogan.

Dear Colleagues:

All of us are upset by the recent decision to stop allowing French, Italian, Russian, Classics and Theater to admit majors. Although these programs have not (yet) been cut, and no tenured faculty have been removed from their positions, this is exactly what would happen under the proposal the President has presented to the University Senate. We need to speak forcefully against this proposal.

The President stated in his October 7th e-mail to the campus community that this decision “does not eliminate our commitment to sustain our offerings in the humanities, including, as possible, instruction in the French, Russian or Italian languages.” However, even if this is legal (and it is not clear that having retrenched programs, the University would be allowed to offer courses in the eliminated departments), it seems likely that instruction in these languages will be seriously curtailed if the programs are phased out. The reputation of the University at Albany may be irreparably harmed as a result, especially if other SUNY schools, such as Binghamton and Buffalo, are not dismantling their foreign language departments. The University could conceivably lose its Phi Beta Kappa chapter, if students are unable to take courses at an intermediate level in the languages they began in high school, which for many is French, German, or Latin. If we aspire to be a first-rate undergraduate university, as well as a university with excellent professional schools, this is not the way to go about it.

The problem, as I see it, is not with the transparency of the decision-making process, or with the judgment of the faculty members who served on the Budget Advisory Group, or with the Dean’s recommendations in light of the millions of dollars she was asked to cut from her budget. The problem is that the College of Arts and Sciences is being asked to cannibalize itself.

A crisis is an excellent time to crystallize fundamental values. Should we be cutting academic programs, but retaining Division 1 football, for example? When the University moved from Division 3 to Division 1 in football, a skeptical faculty was told that this would generate revenue from alumni. But former president of Harvard University, Derek Bok, has argued, and many economists agree, that only a very few universities gain revenue from their football programs. In most places, it is a considerable drain. The faculty deserves to see the budget numbers for football and athletics in general. It may be true that Athletics has already suffered worse cuts than the College of Arts and Sciences. But it may also be true that they ought to suffer far worse cuts before we start to dismantle entire academic programs.

It is my hope that this letter, or some version of it, could be sent on behalf of the faculty to President Philip and Provost Phillips.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Steinbock
Professor, Dept. of Philosophy