

Motion

The Faculty Senate recommends to the Provost, President, and Board of Visitors that the following principles guide the Radford University response to any current or future budget reversions:

1. The protection of academic affairs, and the programs and services it provides, should be the foremost priority as reflected in budgetary and/or strategic planning decisions.
2. Reductions to the academic affairs budget should be proportionally less than reductions required of other units.
3. To promote transparency in decision making processes, changes directly impacting an academic unit should be made only after the faculty in that academic unit have been consulted and given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Rationale

As noted in the *Radford University Mission Statement* and the *RU 7-17 Strategic Plan*, Academics are the primary focus of Radford University. As written in the *Mission Statement*, "First and foremost, the university emphasizes teaching and learning and the process of learning in its commitment to the development of mature, responsible, well-educated citizens." Similarly, the development of the *RU 7-17 Strategic Plan* was guided by the desire to "enhance learning experiences for students, improve faculty teaching and scholarship, improve the academic reputation of the University, and provide educational opportunities for the future citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond." As the unit with primary responsibility for the teaching and learning functions of the University, academic affairs should receive the protections described in this motion in order to ensure the preservation and continuity of the University's academic mission.

The above is written with the recognition that economic realities sometimes make it necessary to reduce the budgets of, or to restructure, academic affairs and its sub-units. While these decisions generally fall under the purview of the Provost or other academic administrators, affected faculty should have an opportunity to provide input into decisions that directly impact the regular operations of their academic units (e.g., program closures, department mergers, revisions of curricula, etc.). This is consistent with sentiments articulated in the *Radford University Internal Governance System* document: "Through a collaborative governance process, individuals and the University can harmonize their goals and set a course for mutual achievement. The willingness to listen to all ideas, to respect competing concerns, to evaluate the merits of many alternatives, and to communicate helps build consensus." Even if consensus is not achieved, the process of consultation yields additional data that may inform decisions and contributes to the legitimacy of the decision making process.