Introduction

We are all watching and listening to the national and local news and we all know we are in very trying economic times.

Without question we have a challenge ahead of us but we also have an opportunity to prepare our university and our students for the future.

We must find innovative ways to meet the educational needs of more students, do this at a lower cost, AND maintain or enhance the quality of the educational experience while we do so. And that is what we in Academic Affairs will be doing.

All actions will continue to be focused on providing a solid quality education to all of our students AND I assure you that I will not take any action to delay their progression toward being awarded their degrees.

While we have some challenges, the sky is not falling -- the sky may be overcast, but the sky is not falling!

History

We began this budget reversion and restructuring journey in midsummer when on July 16th Governor Kaine’s Chief of Staff sent a memorandum advising all agency heads of a potential revenue shortfall and encouraging them to initiate actions to curtail discretionary spending.

Then, on December 15, Governor Kaine announced a 15% reduction in state funding to the Commonwealth’s four-year colleges and universities effective July 1, 2009. For Radford this resulted in a reversion of $7.55 million.

On December 23rd, members of the Cabinet were told that we should begin creating specific and actionable plans for our reversion targets. Academic Affairs represents about 64% of the entire University budget, so the target for us is approximately $4.85 million or about 7.5% of the total Academic Affairs base budget.

Plans and Responsibilities

We are prompted by budget reversions, but our responsibilities are much greater than that.

Perhaps of greater importance than meeting a reversion target is creating a solid foundation for a University 50 years into the future. Therefore, we have developed two separate but related strategies.

One strategy obviously will focus on our budget reversion. That strategy is a necessary but not sufficient condition in preparing our University for the future. We have begun the budget reversion process and are thoroughly assessing all academic programs and service offerings.
The second strategy is focused on the future. The actions we will take cannot and will not solely be focused on cutting costs or reducing current operational expenses. Ultimately, this second strategy will result in the development of a portfolio of academic programs and service offerings to meet the educational needs of future generations of students.

As we must make hard decisions in response to budget reversions, we must examine our current academic programs. We must strategically determine a future-focused portfolio of offerings and support services, rather than continue the practice of adding new initiatives without critically assessing and eliminating those that have become outdated.

Of course, this will result in shifting resources between and among programs, between and among colleges, and between and among divisions -- because we cannot simultaneously provide sustainable resources to all existing programs and services, meet the $4.85 million reversion target, grow selected programs aligned with 7-17, and prepare our University for future populations of students without fiscal tradeoffs and reallocation of resources.

In preparing for our future, there will be a realignment of Administrative Units and in some cases this realignment will be from Academic Affairs to other divisions and in some instances from other divisions to Academic Affairs. As a consequence of restructuring, some administrative positions may be eliminated.

Our second strategy would be necessary even if we were not facing this fiscal crisis!

Even if there is one or more miracles and the economy instantly turns around or the General Assembly decides to give colleges and universities a lesser reversion, we will continue with these and other restructuring actions and strategies, as they are essential to our university's future.

Budget Reversion

As I said, our reversion target is $4,858,471 or 7½% of our base budget. With more than 90% of our budget in personnel, coming up with a plan to meet our target continues to be challenging. However, I am confident that we will thoughtfully and strategically meet that target in ways that do not disadvantage our students.

Program Review

I assure you that program review and assessment is being taken seriously.

1. Programs, activities and services that are central to the academic mission of the University and are strong on performance metrics will be appropriately supported. Some programs, activities, and services will actually require the investment of new funds, even as resources are reduced in other areas.

2. Conversely, programs, activities, and services that are not central to our academic mission, not aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, 7-17, or are weak on performance metrics will be critically assessed for continuance, significant reduction in scope, or elimination.

Program review will take on greater importance as we prepare to shape our University for the future. I will place the administration of all Academic Program Reviews in the Office of Institutional Research and expand the review process to include all programs -- not only degree programs, but also advising, career services, outreach, etc.

Along with the Deans, I've been working with Dr. Templeton and others in Institutional Research to identify concentrations within majors (both at the graduate and undergraduate level) and courses associated with them for possible elimination due to low enrollments.
I’ve also been working with Dr. Templeton to identify programs whose long-term viability is questionable based on current productivity standards. Using information from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), Institutional Research is looking at national demand data based on the number of degrees conferred nationally. IR is also mining this same data to determine national growth areas as suggested by the number of degrees conferred, as well as newly emerging disciplines that can place Radford on the cutting edge of program offerings. Using the criteria recommended by Institutional Research, a number of undergraduate and graduate programs have tentatively been identified for program review, but the analyses are not yet complete.

Further, based on productivity and program review guidelines and as needed, I will be recommending to the Board of Visitors at an upcoming meeting the elimination of degree programs that are not strong and have little likelihood for growth. This is critical to our future, as we will need to move underutilized resources to areas of strategic growth.

**Invest in the Future**

As I’ve already said, we must invest in our future while meeting our budget reversion target. As most Provosts would say, and I would concur, “While students are our reason for existence, faculty are our most valuable resource.” Using the SCHEV methodology, our credit hour production warrants 423 full-time faculty to meet the educational needs of our current student body. This semester, we have only 376 faculty and will likely lose another 5 to 10 due to attrition before next Fall.

**We absolutely need to invest in our faculty!**

Faculty who have left, or may leave, are not necessarily in the areas of greatest need to position our University for the future, so it is unlikely that we would automatically rehire faculty to these vacant positions even if we had the resources to do so. Our utilization of adjunct faculty is already too great and, therefore, we cannot close the gap in our instructional needs by increasing the use of part-time faculty.

So, recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty in disciplines critical to the future of our university will remain one of my top priorities.

**Restructuring Initiatives**

In addition to reviewing programs, I have identified several restructuring initiatives to increase efficiencies and focus activities toward 7-17 and student learning.

These include:

- **Transferring the operation of Financial Aid to Academic Affairs.** This will bring the last of the three pieces to this division to establish the operations for the Vice Provost for Enrollment Planning and Management. As a note, this new Vice Provost position is absolutely essential to shaping the future of our University. As soon as the Vice Provost position is filled, we will begin a rigorous assessment of the Offices of the Registrar, Financial Aid, and Admissions with the very likely result being a major restructuring and realignment of operations and personnel. So, for now I will leave the Director and Associate Director positions vacant in the Office of Admissions, as there is little to be gained in filling these positions until a Vice Provost for Enrollment Planning and Management is on board and until the Office is thoroughly assessed and possibly reorganized.

- **Reorganizing the Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services.** I will decentralize the majority of Experiential Learning to colleges and departments with oversight and university-wide coordination and sharing of information placed in the Center of Academic Outreach and then rename the organization to better reflect its new role. I will immediately begin to reshape Career Services to better meet the academic advising and career planning
needs of our students beginning the first day they join our academic family. Many models linking academic advising and career planning from other schools have already been explored.

- **Transferring New Student Programs from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs.** This realignment will not create any savings, but will lead to a closer relationship with other Student Affairs operations and services. However, if there are increases in student matriculation fees, the salaries of personnel supporting these functions can be moved to the auxiliary budget resulting in a net savings.

- **Transferring the Learning Assistance and Resource Center from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs.** At many schools, learning assistance programs are within Student Affairs. This move will more clearly focus the relationship between and among all student support services.

- **Transferring International Student Services from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs.** This will not create any savings, but will lead to a closer relationship between International Education and International Student Services.

- **Combining all areas focused on providing academic outreach (internships, faculty/student collaborations and engagement, distance education, international programs, and extended campus programs).** This will increase efficiency in operations and enhanced learning – and differentiate us from our competition. We will focus our academic outreach on strategic initiatives and not on operations. We will strategically identify new markets for existing academic products, new products for current markets, and new markets for new products. By doing this, our academic outreach will significantly grow, and as a result, our revenues will grow as well.

- **Reorganizing the Faculty Development Center (FDC), the Technology in Learning Center (TLC), and the faculty development functions of the Office of Distance Education.** Each of these offices is in the faculty development business. This action will provide much more focused, efficient, and 21st century operations for technology utilization and will provide enhanced development opportunities to faculty.

In addition to these administrative reorganizations, I also will increase the rigor and accountability of all activities within Academic Affairs. These initiatives will include:

- **New Student Testing**
  I am firmly committed to testing all new students prior to enrollment in classes regardless of high school GPA or SAT scores. I want to ensure that the first rigorous screening of students occurs prior to matriculation and that proper placement of students in courses is made, even if that placement is to remedial coursework taught by our faculty or faculty from NRCC. The New Student Testing Program will be implemented in mid-spring. The new student testing center will be located in the Office of Institutional Research; Academic Assessment is already part of IR.

- **Faculty Research Support**
  We will place all faculty research support in the CGPS. Over the years, support for faculty and student research has blossomed but without any overall planning or oversight of all resources being applied to this purpose. Too often faculty and students have to “fish” for the best support from multiple offices. Those offices providing support rarely know of the other requests or amount of support being offered by others. A central clearing house of support services is needed as well as a central point of oversight and policy adherence formed. The CGPS already provides part of this support and has the capacity to include the others without an increase in personnel or costs.
• **Core Curriculum Assessment**

The new Core Curriculum will provide opportunities to achieve greater levels of accountability than at any time in the history of RU. Now that the learning outcomes have been agreed upon by the faculty for courses that may be offered as part of the Core Curriculum, a common syllabus will be required to be developed, approved, and used by any faculty teaching a core curriculum course. Beginning Fall 09 every core curriculum course will be assessed each semester to determine the extent to which students are meeting the learning outcomes. Accountability is and will be my mantra, now, as we deal with budget reversions, and in the future as we build an institution that will be the envy of our competitors.

• **Across the Curriculum Assessment**

My notion of across the curriculum programs in written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information technology/literacy is simple. Each discipline will begin to develop courses that clearly demonstrate an increasing level of expectation for students’ skills, knowledge and abilities in each of these areas and to assure that all RU graduates are prepared for graduate studies and for high level work in their chosen profession. Programs must begin Fall 09.

**Academic Program Changes being Recommended**

I have also identified various areas for transformation within the academic units. Each of these will require BOV approval.

• **Merging Biology and Chemistry.** I recommend the merger of the two programs into a new departmental structure. Further, I propose assessing the development of a new degree offering in addition to the current degrees of Biology and Chemistry: (CIP) 26.0202 Biochemistry. By having these programs together in a single unit we will be able to continue to enhance the focus on the scientific study of the chemistry of living systems, their fundamental chemical substances and reactions, and their chemical pathways and information transfer systems, with particular reference to carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids. This is something our faculty in biology and chemistry already do, but will grow to include instruction in bio-organic chemistry, protein chemistry, biochemical chemistry, bioseparations, regulatory biochemistry, enzymology, hormonal chemistry, and calorimetry. In doing this, we will have undergraduates begin to use expert systems and computer simulations in developing their understanding of the joined areas of biology and chemistry. This would significantly differentiate RU from all but a few other comprehensive institutions. The rationale for this merger was provided by faculty within the departments.

• **Create the School of Environmental and Physical Science (SEPS).** To make this happen we will: Combine the Forensic Science Institute into the SEPS, transfer the two physical anthropologist into SEPS, transfer Geology into SEPS, realign Physics from the Department of Chemistry and Physics into SEPS, and transfer Geography into SEPS.

• With the creation of SEPS and the transfer of the two physical anthropologists to it, I recommend that we cease all new enrollments into our current Anthropology program.

• I further recommend that after the transfers are complete and the SEPS is fully functional, we consider new programs incorporating Anthropology, which might include Physical Anthropology: CIP: 45.0202 -- Physical Anthropology (a New CIP Nationally), focuses on the application of the biological sciences and anthropology to the study of the adaptations, variability, and the evolution of human beings. It could include instruction in anthropology, human anatomy, cell biology, paleontology, human culture and behavior,
neuroscience, forensic anthropology, anatomical reconstruction, and comparative anatomy.

This will complement the reconfigured and refocused department of Biology and Chemistry.

- **We will consider other programs in the School including CIP: 03.0104, Environmental Science** (another new CIP nationally) which would focus on the application of biological, chemical, and physical principles to the study of the physical environment and the solution of environmental problems, including subjects such as abating or controlling environmental pollution and degradation; the interaction between human society and the natural environment; and natural resources management. This program will complement other programs in CSAT and will permit students to have access to instruction in biology, chemistry, physics, geosciences, climatology, statistics, and mathematical modeling.

Many grant opportunities are available in these areas, and we will significantly create a competitive advantage for RU among other comprehensive institutions. It will also result in savings by reducing the number of departments, chairs, and administrative assistants.

- **Create a School of Theater and Dance.** Dance and Theatre can be combined to create an even stronger performance-based program, increasing their attractiveness to new students. The concentrations under each will be reduced to two (Dance and Theatre). Coincidentally, this reconfiguration will improve conditions for the accreditation of the Dance program. I have a list of impressive universities in which Dance and Theatre are structured in a “school” configuration that I would recommend for RU.

- **Transfer Recreation, Parks & Tourism from the WCHHS to the CEHD.**

- **Transfer Foods and Nutrition from the School of Nursing in the WCHHS to the Department of Exercise, Sports and Health Education in the CEHD.**

- Dean Linville has recommended changing the name of the Waldron College of Health and Human Services to the Waldron College of Health Sciences to better reflect the emerging and planned foci of the College.

**Other things being considered**

Additional investments in other areas in Academic Affairs are needed to enhance student learning and the prominence of the University. Some of these include:

- **Production Media.** We should use the School of Communication as a centerpiece for production in new and emerging media. We should produce students who are not merely consumers of media but producers. Video technology, sound technology, and internet technology will, I assume, continue to converge. By investing in the relevant technology, primarily from the production end, we can leverage "state-of-the-art" collaborations between CHBS and the other colleges: the visual arts, performing arts, teacher education, Marketing and ITech are probably the most likely collaborators, but I think there are many others. An investment here would also put us in a much better position to "broadcast" the best work we do on our campus.

- **Alternative delivery models for mental health services.** One of our faculty members has a grant for working with computer technology to provide therapy for people with brain trauma in remote locations (in this case rural Virginia). Aside from training counselors and others, we could position ourselves to develop the alternatives for populations who are likely to be under-served for the foreseeable future. An investment here would put us in a great position for external funding and allow us to leverage collaborations, primarily
via CHBS and the WCHHS, but also through media production and instructional technology, with the larger health care industry.

- **Innovative teaching spaces.** Eventually we will want more innovative, flexible teaching spaces (there are models available) that will allow mixes of large-group and small-group instruction, which would allow us to integrate disciplines and better manage productivity and teaching loads. We have already taken a first step in creating such spaces with the Renovation of Young Hall. Ultimately, I think it would be best if some of these "future classrooms" were integrated with student learning communities. I would like to use University Core A as a "laboratory" for developing and cultivating the new pedagogies.

- **Student research.** I believe this area is already an area of strength, but with additional funding we can create more opportunities for students to present their work beyond our campus and create more opportunities for them to collaborate with faculty.

**Conclusion**

While we have serious and critical challenges ahead of us, as I said in my opening remarks, I assure you the sky is not falling.

I am confident that Radford University will emerge from these difficult economic times as an even stronger institution.
Actions to be recommended by the Academic Affairs Committee

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Walter Rugaber and seconded by Mr. Thomas E. Fraim Jr. that the following actions be approved. The motion carried. These actions will be recommended by Mr. Randal J. Kirk, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, for approval by the full BOV at its meeting in Richmond on February 4, 2009.

**Action:** The BOV endorses the continued rigorous program review process being undertaken by the Provost.

**Action:** The BOV requires assessment of the new core curriculum and all support programs; and that a report be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOV annually for their review and comment.

**Action:** The BOV approve the merging of Chemistry and Biology into a single department and the consideration and assessment of a new degree program in biochemistry.

**Action:** The BOV approve the creation of the School of Environmental and Physical Science.

**Action:** The BOV approve the combining of the Forensic Science Institute into the new School.

**Action:** The BOV approve the combining of Physical Anthropology into the new School.

**Action:** The BOV approve ceasing new enrollments in the current Anthropology program.

**Action:** The BOV approve the merging of Physics, Geology, and Geography into the new School.

**Action:** The BOV approve pursuing two new degree programs: one in Physical Anthropology and one in Environmental Science.

**Action:** The BOV approve the creation of a School of Theater and Dance and merge the two existing departments, Theater and Dance, into the new school.

**Action:** The BOV approve the transfer of Parks & Tourism from the Waldron College of Health and Human Services to the College of Education and Human Development.

**Action:** The BOV approve the transfer of Foods and Nutrition from the School of Nursing in the Waldron College of Health and Human Services to the Department of Exercise, Sports and Health Education in the College of Education and Human Development.

**Action:** The BOV approve the name change of the Waldron College of Health and Human Services to the Waldron College of Health Sciences.

**Action:** The BOV expects that the Provost continue assessment, review, and recommendation for substantive change to the operations of academic program and support operations.