Budget Committee Meeting  
Department of Sociology  
October 8, 2020 @ 10am

ATTENDEES:  
Provost Michael Bruno, Dean Denise Konan, Ashley Rubin, Barbara Joyce, David Johnson, Diane Chang, Jaret Leong, Jennifer Darrah, Katherine Irwin, Krysia Mossakowski, Le Lin, Laura Lyons, Manfred Steger, Nandita Sharma, Velma Kameoka, Wei Zhang, Wendy Pearson, Yean-Ju Lee

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Budget Situation  
We are facing a short-term and long-term budget crisis in the State and at the university. The Governor intends to borrow $750 million from the federal reserve in the current fiscal year 2020-2021 (FY21) to address the State’s current budget shortfall; this loan must be repaid by the State within 3 years beginning July 1, 2021. The State and unions are currently in discussions related to possible furloughs (two days per month = 9.23% pay cut) for State employees over the course of the next four years. All University E/M employees will receive a pay cut beginning November 1, 2020.

While the University has not yet received its budget allocation from the State, we are confident that we will be in a good budget position for FY21 due to the current freeze on hiring, travel freeze and strong restrictions on equipment and other expenditures. However, we must plan now to position the University to withstand the future budget cuts and move away from furloughs and the painful cuts currently in place.

Process  
The University cannot continue as a premiere R1 research university with four years of pay cuts and freezes; this is not sustainable. We must start now to identify cost-saving efficiencies and increase revenue, primarily through enrollment growth. Mānoa Budget Committee members began meeting with Deans in March/April to examine budget reduction scenarios of 5%, 10% and 15%.

The Committee suggestions to academic units are not intended to be top-down mandates. The suggestions were based on external reports, information and data on hand, and are intended to be provocative and provoke conversations. The Committee is committed to meeting with highly impacted departments, listening to their thoughts/feedback, and working collaboratively to best position programs, departments and the University for success.

Cost-saving measures will not come on the backs solely of the academic side of the University. On the administrative end, Phase 2 of the Mānoa reorg is currently under development and identifies for elimination approximately 12 E/M positions that will result in significant cost savings for the Mānoa campus. Additionally, a blue ribbon committee is currently reviewing the Athletics program to assess the current program and identify a sustainable future. We are also looking for efficiencies in other programs such as student housing, facilities, auxiliary services, bookstore, and other areas of administration.

Review, approval and consultation with unions and affected stakeholders will continue through Spring 2021, it will take time to implement these plans. The aim is to be transparent and collaborative throughout the process as we continue to work to identify cost-saving efficiencies and increase enrollment revenue. Mānoa Staff Senate representatives will participate in these meetings as staff are also affected.

Provost Bruno has been meeting approximately twice a month with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate Executive Committee, the Mānoa Staff Senate chair, and the UHPA Executive Director to discuss the budget situation. In the spirit of transparency, Provost Bruno will engage biweekly with consultative stakeholders (The Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, UHPA, HGEA, UPW, ASUH, GSO, Kuali‘i Council) on the plan for a reimagined UH Mānoa; all parties are appreciative of these efforts.
**Background**
Sociology is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

The Department ranks 3rd in the college with respect to enrollment, with 245 majors on average, behind Political Science and Psychology. The Department currently has 12 faculty members, and appears small in comparison with Political Science and Psychology with 21 and 20 faculty members, respectively. Since 2011, four faculty and four junior faculty positions have been vacated. The Department has filled three positions, but they are still down faculty positions.

**Details**
The Committee suggested a merge between the Human Development & Family Studies (HDFS) and the Department of Sociology (Department).

The Department shares that they have worked hard over many years to create a strong sense of solidarity, integrity, unity and purpose that goes beyond pedagogy, teaching and research. They are a small department, eager to grow but also concerned about capacity given the current hiring freeze. The Department would like to recruit more faculty particularly in the field of advanced statistics and big data analysis; these positions will contribute in areas like medical sociology and can help to strengthen the department and college. There may be opportunities to collaborate with the medical school, Cancer Center, Computer Sciences, etc. to support this effort.

Faculty are proud of their high enrollment, undergraduate majors and distinctive focus on society and social structure. The Department values the coherence within the program and its synergistic partnerships with units outside of the department, such as Center on Family and the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. There is consensus throughout the faculty that the department’s name and brand is very valuable; it should not be easily discarded in the event of a merger.

Dean Konan met with the Department and assured them that, as subject matter experts in their disciplines, they are in the driver’s seat for deciding the best path forward; the faculty were relieved to hear this.

Some felt they would be punished in the future if they did not go along with the Committee’s initial suggestion. Provost Bruno made it clear that there will be no repercussions for changing or refusing the suggested changes. If faculty do not feel a merger would lead to innovation and scholarship, then the suggestion is off the table. The Committee’s suggestion was intended to spur people to talk to one another and think about opportunities that might give rise to new program areas of intellectual inquiry and scholarship.

Faculty indicate that cost savings and efficiencies of a proposed merger were not provided, so it is unclear what the fiscal impact will be. The Committee confirms that we cannot know the financial impact of a possible merger without first discussing alternatives, getting buy-in from faculty in each area and having a proposed construct.

In this resource-constrained environment, the unit is working to be creative, exploring areas of multidisciplinary opportunities in areas of strength and interest. The Department is working to collaborate with the State Department of Human Services and the Department of Health to develop a health policy and help the State through the current pandemic.

Many feel that the main criteria to inform any proposed merger would be the intellectual merits of such a merger. While faculty are excited to grow their program and welcome new faculty to the department, after careful review of the HFDS program and the faculty CVs, the Department was convinced that these two programs are not a good intellectual fit and is therefore not in favor of the suggested merger.

**Outcomes:**
The Committee no longer supports the merger of the Department of Sociology and Human Development & Family Studies (HDFS), based on the department’s feedback and in part due to the associated services via HDFS’s relationship with Center on the Family and 4H programs within CTAHR.

The Committee is excited to hear the Department’s thoughts on strengthening work across different areas of sociology, noting that the Committee’s recommendations were focused largely on opportunities for increased enrollment, program development, and impact for the Department as opposed to cost savings.

Additional Items for Discussion / Next Steps:
- Department agrees with suggestions on working to increase undergraduate opportunities in research, community college articulation, and online programs.
- The faculty are very open to collaboration, and will continue to explore opportunities with other units on campus (e.g., the medical school and Cancer Center who are interested in getting involved at Mānoa) on data visualization, big data analysis, etc.
- The faculty is open to opportunities for adjunct or joint appointments and collaboration on curriculum development and instruction across life sciences (JABSOM, Natural Sciences, etc.)