Report to the SSU Academic Senate:
Curricular Impacts of Continuing Resource Reductions

May 14, 2015
Educational Policies Committee

In light of recent information—that the expected number of new tenure-track hires for 2015-16 may be reduced from fifteen to as few as six positions—the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) expresses grave concern as to the negative curricular consequences of such a reduction. This would come on the heels of a precipitous decline in average headcount of tenure-track faculty at SSU in recent years, from a high of 274 in 2009-10 to 231 in 2013-14 and only 212 as of Fall 2014 (data reported in Senate 4/24/14 by the Provost, plus material from Reorganization Task Force, on their website).

From the proposals coming to our committee, EPC has observed that the negative curricular consequences of this decline are already underway. EPC had hoped that commitment to increased tenure-track faculty hiring, expressed by the University in Spring 2014, would over time begin to slow these negative impacts. We are deeply concerned about the repercussions of reducing the anticipated hires for next year and beyond; there needs to be a much stronger re-alignment of resources to our overall educational mission.

As evidence of the profound revisions to university curriculum that have taken place in the past two years alone, we draw your attention to the following evidence:

1. **Program revision proposals submitted in direct response to resource constraints, both this past academic year and the previous**

Out of twenty-three proposals reviewed by EPC over two academic years, twelve were primarily driven by resource constraints, or **roughly half** of the proposals we approved. They are as follows:

[bold = primarily driven by resource constraints]

Program Revisions Reviewed (2014-15)
- Biochemistry BS
- **Biology BA and BS**
- Business Administration BS
- Cultural Resources Management MA
- Computer Science BS and Minor
- Education, Special Education Concentration MA
- Electrical Engineering BS
- Environmental Studies and Planning (ENSP) Environmental Education and Outdoor Leadership study plans
- Global Studies BA and Minor
- **Human Development BA (2015-16)**
- Human Development BA (2016-17)
- Psychology Minor
- Sociology BA

Program Revisions Reviewed (2013-14)
- Art Studio BA/BFA
- American Multicultural Studies BA and Film Studies Minor
- **Communications BA**
• ENSP BA/BS Water Resources Management Concentration
• Mathematics BA (Pure, Secondary Teaching)/BS (Applied), Statistics BS
• Psychology BA Program Changes
• ENSP BS Energy Management and Design Study Plan
• Liberal Studies ( Ukiah, Napa Valley, Solano ) BA
• Education MA, Early Childhood Education Concentration
• Education MA, ELSE Clear ( Induction ) Special Education Concentration

2. Discontinuance proposals submitted and consultations conducted in direct response to resource constraints

Of the four proposals and consultations for discontinuance our committee heard in 2014-15, three stemmed primarily from resource constraints.

[bold = primarily driven by resource constraints]

Program Discontinuance Consultations
• Kinesiology Minor
• ENSP Water Resources Management Study Plan

Program Discontinuance Proposals – Initial Reviews and Public Hearings
• Capitol Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership ( CANDEL )
• Direct Entry Master Science in Nursing ( DEMSN )

We are concerned that, after many years with no discontinuance proposals at all, we are suddenly seeing a flurry of activity in this area. Furthermore, the revisions proposed this year for the Human Development BA program are being made contingent on a successful hire; if that falls through, the program is likely to be proposed for discontinuance.

3. Program Review Assessment by the University Program Review Subcommittee

The University Program Review Subcommittee’s End-of-Year Report for 2014-15, presented in EPC earlier today, concludes that the lack of resources—specifically the lack of tenure-track faculty—is the most evident theme across the year’s program reviews. It emphasizes the dire consequences of such a lack:

This shortfall in tenure track lines has resulted in stifled growth and in some cases direct attrition leading to program and student loss. Programs continue to be “streamlined” and made “efficient” to the point where students do not have a lot of choices and/or flexibility in the curriculum and scheduling... UPRS would like to echo the universal cry that all departments are making for faculty hires.... The lack of faculty reverberates in program review and has reached the point where it dominates programs’ revision, curricular options or “tracks,” class availability and/or continuance of programs as well as the satisfaction and success levels of faculty and students.

Taken together, the evidence noted above clearly suggests that a tipping point has been reached. The planned new hires (and those already made) are not keeping pace with attrition and growth, which is having major curricular impacts. We fear the impacts will only continue to grow and worsen. **We urge that budget priorities be changed so that additional tenure-track hiring can be made.**

- submitted by M. Milligan, EPC Chair