

Recommendation Report
Academic Planning Committee
prepared for
President Pete Gallego
June 8, 2021

Chair: Laura Payne

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Introduction

On 3rd February 2021, then Provost, Dr. Robert Kinucan, recommended to Pete Gallego, Thirteenth President of Sul Ross State University, that he form the Academic Planning Committee (referred forthwith as APC or the Committee) as indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.14 of the Sul Ross Faculty Handbook. The mandate may be found here:

https://srinfo.sulross.edu/university-governance/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/final_9_1_19_faculty_handbook.pdf

The initial recommendation and call for formation of the APC were largely based on findings of the Second Century Committee, which convened in October 2020 to examine budgetary measures, both academic and administrative, to improve the fiscal health of the University as it moves into its second century of existence. This committee, co-chaired by Dr. Robert Munoz, Vice President for Administrative Services at SRSU, Rio Grande College, and CJ Aragon, Rodeo Coach, reported its findings to President Gallego on 4th December 2020.

Dr. Kinucan's recommendation for the need to convene the APC was based on fiscal challenges created, in his words, by "the Covid-19 pandemic, static enrollment, a serious budget shortfall, and declining state support." On 13th April 2021, President Gallego convened the APC. Its charge was to "proceed pursuant to the rules of the Faculty Handbook, Chapter 2, Section 2.14 and make recommendations and findings as to the demand for classes in specific academic disciplines, the potential abolition of Department or programs, the appropriate number of faculty positions allocated to each Department or program, and the potential for consolidation of Departments or other academic reorganization."

This is the first convening of the APC in Sul Ross State University's 100-year history. The Committee is comprised of an array of faculty across all Colleges including representation from Alpine, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde. It includes senior faculty who have served the University for decades and much more junior faculty whose livelihoods and families could be significantly affected by any potential actions taken resulting from recommendations made in this report. The decisions derived by the Committee reflect a difficult yet objective realization of the University's fiscal realities. The Committee and its subsequent findings and recommendations presented in the following report focus on bolstering the future health and sustainability of our Institution.

While many of the fiscal challenges occurred well prior to the tenure of the majority of the membership of the Committee, the APC concluded that much of the problematic policies emanating from administrative decisions were powered by academic policies, ultimately necessitating irresponsible fiscal actions in order to sustain these practices. Thus, the Committee identified as its motivating mandate to both broadly and specifically examine academic policies across the university, some of which overlapped with and/or prompted more administrative and campus-oriented discussions, as well.

Following the guidelines outlined in the Faculty Handbook, the intent of the Committee was to examine low-enrollment programs and other inefficiencies at the university and recommend closures or streamlining of some programs, in addition to other cost-saving measures to improve the future quality of academic and administrative instruction for the future benefit of Sul Ross State University students.

The APC met during two multi-day retreats. The first occurred at SRSU-Del Rio, from 9th-10th May 2021, and the second at SRSU-Alpine, 16th-18th May 2021. The APC exhaustively examined data and policies in order to present recommendations regarding areas as outlined in the following patterns of university policies, both academic and administrative, many of which overlapped in our discussions and deliberations:

- I. Policy and procedure recommendations for improving quality of academic and administrative practices for the future.
- II. Academic consolidation of programs.
- III. Academic program exigency resulting in closure or decrease of programs.
- IV. Personnel recommendations.
- V. Other campus and administrative recommendations arising from the initial charge to committee.

As a point of order, the Committee agreed to conduct anonymous ballot votes for any recommendations at request of any member and at any stage of deliberations. In addition, the APC agreed to offer percentage recommendations on items lacking unanimity. Unanimity and percentages of votes are noted as parentheticals in this report. Other points not noted with parentheticals or percentages of votes were discussed as recommendations and were elaborated upon during debate and are included in this report based on non-voting group consensus. Some of the following points are those logically arising from the several days of discussions, and, after review of report, enjoy broad consensus as to their veracity as potentials for policy considerations. To the extent there were substantive reservations, these are noted parenthetically.

The following report is prepared by Dr. Laura Payne, Professor of English and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, serving as Chair of the Academic Planning Committee, for President Pete Gallego and is co-signed by the members of the APC. The report presents the recommendations and conclusions emanating from the Academic Planning Committee's findings with the intention of establishing sound academic and fiscal foundations for the successful future of Sul Ross State University's multiple campuses.

Recommendations

I. Policy and procedure recommendations for improving quality of academic and administrative practices for the future.

The APC found that many of the institutional challenges at the university have occurred through years of systemic policy failures. These failures, it has been found by both APC and the Campus Culture and Efficiency Report from December 2020, derive from a lack of clearly codified and followed university policies surrounding and informing crucial practices of the institution. Rather, much of the procedures that have resulted in precarious financial foundations were found to have developed through unclear, opaque historical traditions lacking clarity and transparency.

Thus, the APC (most often unanimously) proposes the following policy and procedural recommendations. Any proposals not unanimously agreed upon in this and subsequent sections will be noted with the percentage votes in parentheses.

- A. The President should reconstitute the Curriculum Council to a Curriculum Committee empowered by the President to begin Fall 2021. The Curriculum Committee will consist of tenured faculty and will serve as oversight of academic curricular planning to better assure economic and successful rotations and offerings across disciplines and campuses. The Committee will be moved away from an Assembly and Senate entity. If the Council wishes to continue as it currently exists (i.e. a review council of forms relating to change requests) that is the prerogative of the Assembly and Senate, but planning and oversight of the curriculum will fall to the President's Committee. Academic Deans serve ex-officio on this committee. It was suggested we follow the Sam Houston State University model.
- B. The Provost should be charged beginning Fall 2021 with direct oversight of DOE, THECB, and SACS accreditation and be in consult with the legal authority regarding TEA. Discipline-specific accreditations would remain at the Dean/College levels.
- C. Graduate Assistant policies should be created by the Deans before Fall 2021 that reflect clear equity and standards. The university needs clear and codified guidelines for hiring practices, job descriptions, and work expectations published in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual. A model for Graduate Assistant allocation of resources – recruitment and institutional imperatives should be completed in this process. This is ongoing via academic Deans with Programs and Departments currently listing course position descriptions at HR. In June, the Graduate Dean will convene other academic Deans to consider and award stipends. This should also be codified as a process in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual.

- D. A Student Employment Policy should be created by the University before Fall 2021 that reflects clear equity and standards. The university needs codified guidelines for hiring practices published in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual.
- E. Both Academic and Administrative Remote Work Policies must be clearly established before 2021-22 appointment letters are distributed. The Academic Deans should create and codify this policy in the Faculty Handbook for academics. The President and Executive Cabinet should create and codify this policy in Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual for administrative personnel.
- F. The University should establish an Offsite Pedagogy Policy before Fall 2021 that establishes stronger protocols for technology classrooms at all campuses—this is of particular concern for RGC offsite student experiences but also will affect Alpine as we transition to one curriculum.
- G. The University should review Department and Chair policies regarding minimum department-size considerations which necessitate that designation. The Deans should consider and recommend restructuring Departments and subsequent Chairs to reduce the array by Fall 2022. In this consideration, Deans will examine the size of a Department and then consider if it instead should be considered a Program with a Director. In addition, stipends should be examined based on size and responsibilities of Chairs versus those of Program Directors. Decentralizing Departmental responsibilities across various Programs could serve to create more equity of labor as service to University rather than focusing all administrative responsibilities to one Chair necessitating stipends. Equity of Departmental size then becomes more consistent and transparent. The merging of curricula across campuses also should be a consideration for possible cost savings regarding stipends and responsibilities.
- H. The University should create standardized minimum Departmental website standards and set updates on the academic calendar as a required task each semester or year beginning Fall 2022. Department Heads will be accountable for ensuring timely updates are made.
- I. A course enrollment shortfall policy/faculty workload policy should be established by Fall 2021. The Deans should codify real expectations such as tutoring hours with verifiable enforcements. As an example, a course is equivalent to ten hours/week tutoring. In addition, faculty assigned to institutes, etcetera, as part of a course-release agreement should not also receive university stipends, as the stipend is, per force, a component of their salary.
- J. Definitions of Faculty Rank with and without tenure must be established and clearly codified in the Faculty Handbook by Fall 2022. We recommend writing clear descriptions of the ranks and expectations for those ranks. In addition, the

University should consider reconstituting long-held faculty policies such as discontinuing tenure-track instructors so the University aligns with the Texas State University System policies and more closely matches the trend of other institutions of higher education. The University should reconsider its history of allowing promotion without tenure, which is not the common practice. Finally, the university should reconsider its policy of separating initial tenure and promotion considerations. The standard is that Assistant Professors are considered for tenure and promotion in tandem; thus, no tenured Assistant Professors would be allowed, which is the current policy at the University.

- K. Tenure and Promotion University Standards should be established and clearly codified and published by Fall 2022. Aspects such as standardized, defined office hours, defined service components (e.g. advising, clubs/organizations sponsorship, recruiting, etc., be outlined), defined research requirements be described, and defined SCH production be explained. In addition, Tenure-Track Standards and Policies must be written, codified, and published in a contractual manner. In addition to the annual faculty evaluation for teaching, we recommend a third-year review for tenure-track faculty be established as a required standard at the university. Consideration should be given to establish professional development standards for all faculty and be included in standard professional development opportunities at the institution (examples would be training for distance education courses, etcetera). This Committee recommends updating pay plan policies for Tenure and Promotion. In terms of College/Departmental Tenure and Promotion standards, they should codify what each College expects, as the standards could differ across the curriculum. Dates for certain tenure steps including initial mentoring meetings and trainings should all be placed on the academic calendar. All of this should be mandated and published in the Faculty Handbook.
- L. The process for Faculty Evaluation Form 3 and Form 4 was reviewed several years ago with recommendations for revisions made by Alpine's Faculty Assembly to Academic Affairs with no resulting action. Along with RGC's Faculty Senate, the recommendations should be reviewed and implemented to allow for a more thoughtful and legitimate evaluation process to occur.
- M. The Post-tenure Review Policy should be reviewed and revised to clearly outline protocols and enforcements of results. This includes three-year review cycles and probation standards.
- N. Non-tenure-track instructional faculty evaluation should be more clearly established and enforced as a method to determine renewal of contracts.
- O. Instructional Appointment Letters should consistently be delivered in July of each year.

- P. The Sul Ross, Alpine, and Sul Ross, Rio Grande, campuses should create and codify a Single Curriculum Policy by Fall 2022 in which all shared programs run from one shared curriculum. This policy will be elaborated upon in Section II, Academic Consolidation of Programs.
- Q. A Contact Hour vs. Student Credit Hour Policy is needed and should be developed by the University Curriculum Committee not later than Fall 2022 (the Texas State University model is recommended).
- R. Administrative and Academic Calendars should be revised, treated separately, and clearly and easily viewed on the University website.
- S. The Summer Instructional Funding Model Pilot for Summer 2021, should be reviewed for viability, revised if necessary, and then set as permanent policy beginning the 2021-22 academic year. The policies should be codified and published in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual and Faculty Handbook and carefully and aggressively enforced.
- T. We must review and evaluate current grade schemas, codifying policy for I and IP grades such to satisfy compliance with DOE for SAP. We should consider establishing grades for thesis completion rather than giving CR or PR grades. Transfer Coursework Policy must also be revised in terms of GPA calculation for SAP and DOE compliance such that the transfer work is treated as credits rather than a component of GPA. Transfer Articulation practices and policies should be carefully reviewed by the newly formed University Curriculum Committee to ensure consistency, transparency, and accuracy.
- U. Faculty Load should be reviewed and codified by Fall 2022 clearly outlining what constitutes 3:3, 4:4, and 5:5 loads. It is suggested that 5:5 be the standard for non-tenure-track faculty and remote faculty, as these faculty will not share the burden of the service component of load (this would be codified in the remote work and tenure/tenure-track faculty load policies).
- V. A Required Faculty Buyout policy should be codified in which faculty taking leave from their teaching load for reasons of research institutes and grants are required to purchase their release from the University.
- W. A policy to pool vacancies to be considered at the end of each academic cycle should be considered so that open positions in departments are not automatically filled; rather, the state of department need versus larger institutional need be considered at the end of the academic cycle in making these future academic planning decisions.
- X. The University should examine its policies and practices surrounding the definition of Rio Grande College as an Instructional Site versus as a College

based on the expectations expressed in the SACSCOC 2018 Reaffirmation of Accreditation. (one member offers reservations)

- Y. The University should create a minimal syllabus standards template that permanently articulates required items and with fields for faculty to add information specific to discipline.
- Z. The University should create a level of transparency and training for Chairs and Deans in which the policies and reasonings for policy making/decisions are best understood in order to create a culture of academic and fiscal responsibility.

II. Academic consolidation of programs.

- A. Consolidating programs across and between campuses can achieve various benefits, including cost savings and program growth. Fully realized consolidation would include aspects of creating one curriculum (introduced in policy recommendations) by Fall 2022. Equalized tuition across all campuses should take effect by this date, which will create ease in advisement and registration. We recommend creating platforms for instruction similar to the RGC model in which courses are designated with a home campus at one of the four sites and then made available via video instruction. For the 2021-22 cycle, we recommend establishing program co-directors to work in tandem to set one academic schedule (with a focus on successful rotations and avoidance of overlaps), establish shared program activities, create strategic plans and student learning outcomes, and map curricula. The consolidation is a value to students, as they will be made to feel a part of a larger and more robust student body. The value to the University is that it will decrease the number of underperforming programs, according to THECB standards, while also allowing departments to pool faculty, staff, and departmental resources that eventually should lead to a decreasing of needed resources while increasing students. (one member offered reservations; the opinion and response to opinion are offered in addendum)
- B. While it is not an issue that was discussed by the full Committee during retreats, it is the Chair's recommendation that, in the same vein of the consolidating of faculty and programs, the University may wish to consider unifying one full faculty assembly to meet once a semester to vote for representatives to a shared Senate body and discuss desired policy agendas. The Assembly's Senate would be the body to meet monthly with representatives from departments and at-large Colleges and Campuses. This recommendation is based on recommended practices by SACSCOC, especially in the case of SACSCOC's expectation of our consolidated programs by Fall 2022. (one member offered reservations)
- C. It is recommended to create cross-over teaching in appropriate disciplines to reduce redundancy in academic requirements. For instance, business, economics,

and statistics courses could be taught in a manner applicable to multiple disciplines.

III. Academic program exigency resulting in closure or decrease of programs.

- A. It is recommended that certain programs declare program exigency and reduce or change their current makeup. According to the Association of American University Professors (AAUP), the protocol for releasing faculty under program exigency is to move according to rank and tenure, keeping the most senior tenured faculty member. Released faculty will be given a year's notice, so the decisions must be published and announced within the Academic Year 2021-22 Appointment Letters. For discontinued programs, one faculty will be retained for one year to teach out the Program of Study. Then, further one-year teach-out plans will be established utilizing consortium agreements or adjuncts as necessary. Any students with the likely inability to complete within two years would be advised to another Program of Study.
- B. The programs recommended for exigency necessitating program cutting, decreasing, combining, or freezing of faculty lines include the following (committee vote percentages are noted parenthetically when deemed necessary by the Committee):
1. Chemistry—Release one chemistry faculty line from the Alpine faculty. Create Chemistry as a support program rather than a major. (unanimous recommendation)
 2. Spanish—Delete the Spanish program from Alpine and RGC. Release one tenured faculty, one tenure-track faculty, and one lecturer. One tenured faculty retired in 2021. (79% majority recommendation)
 3. Fine Arts—Create one Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and delete the Bachelors in Music, Art, and Theatre, as well as the Master of Arts in Art. Decrease the faculty in these programs to one in each discipline, releasing ten faculty lines. (90% majority recommendation)
 4. Psychology—Eliminate Master of Arts in Psychology. Freeze the open line in Psychology. (unanimous recommendation)
 5. English—Release one tenured faculty (retirement in 2021), one full-time and one $\frac{3}{4}$ -time lecturer. Academic planning with RGC should allow for continued robust instruction. (unanimous recommendation)
 6. Agricultural Education—Split the faculty line with education, allowing each program to achieve its programmatic needs with a half-time faculty member. (unanimous recommendation)
 7. Biology—Of the four open faculty lines, fill two with tenure-track faculty and freeze the other two and fill with temporary one-year lecturer positions at the Master of Science level. (unanimous recommendation)
 8. Nursing—The Nursing Program must become self-sufficient via grants and growth within one year of full licensing or declare program exigency with resulting closure. (unanimous recommendation)

IV. Personnel Recommendations

Beyond the above recommendations, various other personnel issues were discussed and voted on regarding personnel recommendations to achieve immediate cost savings while sound academic planning processes based on above policy initiatives may be realized. They include the following (with vote percentages noted in parenthetical when deemed necessary by the Committee):

- A. Consider further merging of departments—creating concentrations, tracks, emphases, minors and decreasing majors when advisable (recommended above with BFA, as an example).
- B. The Committee recommends encouraging all faculty eligible for retirement to be offered a “Made-whole” retirement plan in which faculty would retire and be hired back for a negotiated period of time at a \$4200/course rate adjunct salary not to exceed 8 courses per year. The course will only be taught if it “makes” at the rate deemed by the institution as constituting a “made” class. Beyond the “Made-whole” contract, the faculty may continue according to the needs of the program. When possible or appropriate to the needs of the program, residency requirements may be waived. (unanimous recommendation)
- C. Reduce course array—Archive any course not taught in the past five years. Strive to achieve programs with less specificity and more general focus appropriate to a university our size and which will allow for fewer faculty whose specialties are so specific to the achievement of overly specific majors.
- D. Require published mapped course rotations that will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee annually.
- E. Consider creating a single Education Preparation Program for all campuses, thus combining Education and eventually decreasing the number of faculty on all campuses. (one member offered reservation)
- F. Consider needs at all campuses when lines are open to achieve residential balance and equity on all community campuses for faculty representation. If a campus fails to offer residential representation, consider transferring faculty from one campus to another.
- G. Expand Programs of Study [including online] to all campuses to eventually grow recruitment and retention while decreasing faculty. As recommended earlier, immediately require blended programs for advisement, student affairs, curricular mapping and scheduling, and faculty development, readjusting faculty need based on further expansion of blended programs.
- H. Decrease the number of Deans, Chairs, and Program Directors by combining responsibilities as a method to save costs via the administration of the academic

side of the university. The initial creation of so many Deans was believed a cost saving initiative, combining full-time faculty with a Dean's stipend. As this has been proved inconsistent with system policy, we now have uneven salary costs at the Dean level. Possible recommendations are combining the Dean of Research and Sponsored Programs with the Dean of Cultural and Educational Resources, the Dean of LASS with the Dean of Graduate Studies, and various Chairs with Directors/Program Directors.

- I. An aspirational goal was set to cut overloads and adjuncts by 75% at the discretion and careful recommendations of the academic Deans, according to programmatic needs and thoughtful academic planning.
- J. Release all non-tenure-track faculty. Programs may appeal to the Executive Cabinet for any reinstating of these lines according to programmatic needs. Filling needs with adjuncts whenever possible is recommended. (95% recommendation)
- K. Formalize any and all course releases into codified and published policies in the Faculty Handbook. Audit and establish protocols for endowments: Endowed faculty figures need to transfer funds meant for faculty salary to the University to pay said salary rather than use for administrative costs at the Centers/Institutes in question. For other releases, codify required criteria – an example would include the number and quality of publications, etcetera, for a research release.
- L. Create a clear and codified policy for how many and at what stage thesis direction constitutes a course release. For instance, would this mean five students and only accrue at the semester of the student's completion? This should be clearly published in the Faculty Handbook.
- M. Evaluate all faculty job descriptions to determine programmatic needs to focus future academic planning.
- N. Discontinue Freshman Seminar in its current rendition, which necessitates salaries. Re-work as run by other already salaried areas or as a component of Lobo Days.
- O. Reduce the number of librarians or library staff by three. (unanimous recommendation)
- P. Reduce the number of personnel in President's office. (unanimous recommendation)
- Q. Reduce the number of personnel on the communications team. (unanimous recommendation)

- R. Freeze all non-essential positions (e.g. archival librarian, CBBS position).
(unanimous recommendation)
- S. Freeze introducing any new non-essential faculty or administrative positions.
(unanimous recommendation)
- V. Other campus and administrative recommendations arising from the initial charge to committee.**
 - A. Consider vocational and technical programs to be re-initiated on the Alpine and RGC campuses. Charge a Committee for creating a model of recommendations for instituting programs for which resources already exist—e.g. welding, OSHA certificates, EMS and other health science training via nursing facilities. Recommended Robert Munoz lead this committee.
 - B. Initiate certificate and continuing education opportunities. This may include adding degree certifications programs (e.g. creative writing to an English degree), offering camps such as a summer writers’ institute, establishing an enhanced audit figure allowing for a continuing education model to stack into already offered academic courses (e.g. \$500/course versus the current nominal regular audit figure of approximately \$50).
 - C. Entities such as museums and research institutes and centers should embark upon a three to five-year plan toward financial self-sustainability. As noted in earlier policy and faculty personnel sections, faculty attached to these entities must buy out their salary components focused on the entity apart from University instructional load, as University salaries are considered tuition-based and should not pay for non-instructional salaries such as those. (unanimous recommendation)
 - D. Minimal Indirect Costs (IDC) on Contracts and Grants need to be established so the University receives value compensation for housing and supporting these entities. Review existing policy to ensure alignment.
 - E. Consider the value of Managed Services Agreements versus in-house administrative staff. What administrative positions and services (e.g. registrar, financial aid) would serve the University more efficiently and effectively if outsourced?
 - F. Consider/petition to discontinue San Houston State University outsource agreements such as Bearkat Buy.
 - G. Decrease the QEP budget by 75%. It is recommended by the Committee that the QEP should be a mandated idea, an initiative requiring the service of faculty.
(unanimous recommendation)

- H. Decrease University-wide budgets allowing the departments and areas to self-determine areas for cutting, as they know best their needs.
- I. For administrative personnel eligible for retirement, offer a one-time \$300/year-of-service incentive to retire. Then, create SRSU as an LLC so we can, if needed, hire back the personnel as a 1099 contract employee.
- J. Reevaluate Federal Grant Programs as they come up for renewal. Are they offering value to the University's strategic plan and mission versus what they cost us in facility and staff supports? Consider discontinuing.
- K. Expand MOUs to Consortium Agreements, where possible.
- L. Reduce University Fleet.
- M. Remove University programs located at Centennial Building to Alpine campus and rent out that space.
- N. Create Student Affairs at RGC to expand its sense of University identity. Also develop the SRSU brand, presence, and Lobo image more publicly on all three campuses (as well as at Midland and Odessa Colleges) and within the communities.
- O. Hire a campus administrator for SRSU-Eagle Pass to expand its identity.
- P. Consider the potential to outsource University Police Department: Would it save money? What are the pros and cons?
- Q. Close the Child Care Center by August 2021 and consider housing Nursing in this location.
- R. Sell Pierce Clinic.
- S. Consider the future of the Mountainside Dormitory.

Conclusion

The Committee agreed the process of the Academic Planning Committee deliberations, while difficult, proved invaluable to its members' better understanding the intrinsic tie between academic and fiscal policies and the need of better understandings of the intricacies between the two. With sound policy planning and continued discussion, best practices across the University may be achieved from the bottom up—the goal of any University with shared governance.

The recommendations made were not easy to determine and offer, as often they conflict with what we spiritually believe the intention of the Academy should be—a place of culture, combining the arts with the sciences and humanities. We, as a Committee, wholeheartedly and sincerely support the academic and community-based value of each of the programs we have discussed and recommended for changes in this report; yet, we also acknowledge the University cannot currently function as their sole financial supports while the programs' enrollments fall well short of providing financial self-sustainability. This concept applies to all disciplines across the University. The hope is that, through deliberative pruning, these programs will, indeed, grow in the future; however, this growth must occur organically from a place sustainable from the bases of the University we love.

While our efforts yielded significant corrective actions as recommendations to particular Programs of Study within the Academy, only Spanish studies was recommended for elimination. Ultimately, this Program has not currently or historically been found to be a popular focus of interest for students at the University. Sul Ross is a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), one which robustly celebrates the Mexican-American culture and heritage inherent in our border locations. The Spanish Club remains one of the most significant student organizations on campus, and Mexican-American Studies courses enjoy stable enrollments; however, this has not translated into enrollment in Spanish language and literature as a popular academic program.

It is hoped the recommendations put forth in this report will allow Sul Ross State University to streamline its academy and administrative support structures with the intent of careful systematic growth. We sincerely and firmly believe the future of Sul Ross remains bright and it will continue developing into the best small public university in Texas.

Signed on this day, the 8th June 2021,

Laura Payne, Chair

Oguzhan Basibuyuk

Eric Busby

Jimmy Case

James Downing

Jim Goodman

Chris Herrera

Matthew Moore

Miriam Muniz Quiz

Robert Munoz

Patricia Nicosia

Michael Ortiz

Galen Privitt

Sarah Roche

Mark Saka

Kathy Stein

Mary Elizabeth Thompson

Barbara Tucker

Bonnie Warnock.

Addendum to Report:

Comments of reservation by one member of the Academic Planning Committee.

One faculty member, in his commentary on the Report, lodged certain long-held reservations regarding, especially, items in Section II. They are presented here, along with responses by the Chair of Committee.

The faculty member commented that he did not remember motions and votes on some of the items about which concerns were voiced. The report clearly notes that percentages are offered when specific voting deemed necessary or occurred. Other items, including those cited here and those not specified by the faculty member, were ones discussed and agreed upon as broad consensus. As the consolidation of programs is a SACSCOC mandate, a vote was not deemed necessary.

The faculty member felt a platform was not fully given to discuss some philosophies, as they were not put forth as motions. While the Chair shares the view that open discourse regarding sweeping visions of the Strategic Plan and Mission of the Institution should and will continue (with the hope that the APC reconvene throughout at least the academic year 2021-22 in order to further plan and rebuild the University), it is the contention of the Chair and various other members consulted that all members were given equal and open time to comment on any and all points—at any stage of our several days of discussion. In fact, much of the philosophical reservations elaborated as draft comments to the initial reaction to the Report had been eloquently presented during the final day of the APC retreat in Alpine.

As an academic philosophy, the faculty member holds reservations regarding the practical methodology for consolidation of SRSU's programs, as outlined in Section II, Part A, of the Report. The draft comments are as follows:

“The RGC model does not designate a home campus. Many / most RGC faculty make an effort to rotate among campuses rather than always teaching from one site. Not everyone does this, but when I began work here I was told that the expectation was that I would see all my students face to face on a regular basis. I take this seriously, and I don't think the students are well served when it's neglected. It's hard to imagine doing it fairly with Alpine in the mix.

“What I fear is that, rather than increasing support by bolstering instruction here at the remote campuses, with faculty residing in and teaching from these communities, the university will continue to take the easy way out and offer more and more video courses with no expectation of having instructors in the classroom, which might solve some short-term problems but would be an insult to the students here and fail to capitalize on our great growth potential. I also doubt many students matriculate to the Alpine campus hoping to get video instruction from Uvalde, etc. I fear our whole university [is] merely settling into a new status quo with our new (very low) enrollment, rather than taking advantage of the great opportunities it has.

“There are a host of possible unintended consequences that I would want to debate before subscribing to several of the recommendations in this paragraph. A fairly broad vision is described here. My subscription to it is qualified. I agree with parts and disagree with others. I

understand that not every committee member may be in agreement with every recommendation made by the committee, but, to the best of my recollection, several of these items were never advanced as motions, debated, or voted upon.”

The faculty member’s commentary is provided here as the most significant reservations held by any member regarding the contents of the report. The member was the only member lodging substantive reservations in draft commentary. Subsequent draft discussion occurred between the faculty member and the APC Chair. While conceding the SACSCOC mandate, the faculty member sincerely encourages the University to thoughtfully execute its shared curriculum, as anything less than distinctly careful and thoughtful curricular planning may result in unintended pedagogical consequences. The faculty member cites his main concerns as the quality and equity of instruction for all Sul Ross State University students.

The Chair feels the draft comments should be offered here as a method of transparency. Other comments of members were, when possible, incorporated as revisions to the final report. This addendum notes the faculty member’s reservations regarding consideration of reconstituting Alpine’s Faculty Assembly and RGC’s Faculty Senate to one body (Section II, Part B). Part B has been revised to clarify that this recommendation was not a public discussion from the retreats; rather, it emanated from the concept of consolidation of programs as mandated by SACSCOC and the subsequent and potentially developing need for further shared-governance, which were revealed during the preparation of the report as a logical sequence. All members had the opportunity in draft comments to pose concerns about it and all other statements made in the Report. As most of the faculty member’s other comments are more far-ranging philosophically regarding University structures, they cannot be entered as direct revisions. Instead, they respectfully are offered as reservations.