



Planning and the Reallocation of Resources

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Categories : [Strategic Planning](#)

Date : June 2, 2009

My recent email about how the School's changed budget circumstances are likely to affect our strategic planning generated an important question. *"A premise of your message seems to be that the School's general overall allocation of resources ought to remain the same as it is now."* In other words, the portion of the School's resources devoted to any particular area will remain the same and if the folks working in that area want to do something new they will have to eliminate or change something they are doing now. There is another option for people who want to do new things, and we need to change the School's culture and embrace it—a much greater focus on generating new forms of revenue. This might include more grants, contracts, and various fee-for-service arrangements. It might include providing more high-demand services that will generate greater receipts from public officials. The upcoming budget roundtables will show that we must rely less on state money (not that we are going to have any choice) and more on other revenue sources to maintain and expand the School's work.

Even if we explore other revenue sources, however, the email question raised a key issue. *"At what point, and how, does one consider whether within the overall School budget [a particular area] deserves a higher priority and we should shift some resources from another area . . . for that purpose?"* This is a challenging question for a couple of reasons. We are not good about deciding to reduce or end our work in particular areas, and we have tended to do it only when a faculty member leaves the School. The resources that get shifted under those circumstances are the state money in a vacant faculty position. If we decide as a part of this planning process that one area is a higher priority than another because it will have a much greater impact, the "resources" available to be shifted most likely are faculty members paid with state funds. We should be open to making this kind of shift, which could involve a faculty member shifting emphasis or changing fields. There is precedent for this kind of change, though it typically has been initiated by the affected faculty member.

With this background in mind, here is how I would modify my earlier email. If someone comes up with a terrific idea for how we might increase our impact and cannot identify resources to support it, the DAC will consider whether it is a high enough institutional priority to justify shifting resources from one area to another. I will not recommend this kind of institutional reallocation to the DAC without a very good reason to believe that the new or expanded area will have a greater impact than the existing area. This is a call that ultimately I would make after consultation with the DAC and others inside (and possibly outside) the School. The bottom line is that the DAC and I will



welcome all proposals for increasing our impact, but a proposal will have to be especially compelling to justify this kind of institutional reallocation of resources. It certainly is possible, however, and it should be, don't you think?