

## Preparing for the Impending Review of RCM

*"Ask yourself, 'Are you better off now than you were four years ago?'"*  
Ronald Reagan

RCM will be reviewed this spring. Three years ago, this approach to budgeting was rolled out with great enthusiasm by our then newly chosen President. I wish that I could argue either that it has been a resounding success or a dismal failure, but I cannot make those or any other judgments. I have my own impressions. But, even though this system was presented as having the virtue of nearly total transparency, that transparency has not been uniformly forthcoming. While, for some colleges at least, the financial numbers have been more fully shared with faculty groups than in the past, this has not been true in all cases. In addition, there seems to be significant confusion among various faculty groups as to the meaning of the "hold harmless" part of the plan.

At this point, I can only comment upon my impressions of how this process is performing, and my impression is that as schools and colleges scramble to responsibly manage their resources, increasing pressure is brought upon faculty to

- Increase productivity through larger class size, elimination of laboratories, and heavier teaching loads.
- Approve new programs which may or may not be in the best interest prospective students or of Temple's reputation, but which can put "butts in the seats" in order to subsidize our more traditional offerings.
- Encourage the use of ever more contingent faculty, especially adjuncts, in our undergraduate programs.

None of these effects is necessarily in the best interest of our students, nor the reputation of our schools and colleges, especially those with national reputations for excellence.

However, these are only my impressions, based upon informal discussion with colleagues. I would like to suggest that we, as faculty, need to begin preparing *now* for the upcoming review of RCM. To this end, I would recommend that we do the following:

- Let the Faculty Senate leadership begin negotiating now with the administration about the manner in which this review will be carried out. In particular, we should have input into the amount of direct faculty involvement, the ways in which fact finding will be pursued, the measures of success to be used, the form of the final report and whether minority reports should be included, and the nature of the final report and recommendations.
- Do all that we can to ensure that one of the options on the table is replacing RCM with something else, in the event that simple "tweaking" appears to be inadequate.
- Begin now to develop our (the faculty's) own objective data as to the effectiveness and limitations of RCM as it is currently implemented.

I am not prepared to suggest, at this point, that RCM was a poor decision. I frankly do not know if we are better off than we were three years ago. But I would like to know, and I would like to know based upon the faculty's effort to find measurable answers.

I would very much like to see the Senate take leadership in this endeavor, but if any of you, my colleagues, have other ideas as to how we can proceed to prepare for this spring's review, I would be pleased to hear from you – whether for publication or not.



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