Academic Program Review

- Thank you to the members of the Academic Policies Committee as they work with faculty, chairs, deans and administrators on reviewing programs proposed for suspension
- I look forward to receiving feedback from Faculty Senate at the April 3rd meeting
- This is not an easy process, but it is well-informed and a necessary component of university continuous improvement to improve academic excellence
- I will thoughtfully consider all feedback from Faculty Senate, especially recommendations informed by data or external factors, such as state workforce alignment or other market factors
- Recommendations will be made at the April 23 BOT meeting
- As I mentioned at our last Faculty Senate meeting, Academic Program Review is about the alignment with the University System of Ohio expectations of The University of Akron

The University of Akron, a STEM-intensive institution, has long focused on the industries that would transform Akron from the “Rubber Capital of the World” to a city and region brimming with potential in polymers, advanced materials and engineering. Over the last decade, it has significantly increased its research portfolio and gained national recognition as an exemplar institution for its productivity in technology transfer and commercialization. A continued strong focus on areas that integrate basic and applied research, entrepreneurial education, intellectual property law and technology transfer expertise is critical to the future of the state, the city and the Northeast Ohio community.
Summit College

- Summit College is an important component of this alignment with the University System of Ohio
- As the President mentioned, I look forward to the recommendations from Faculty Senate related to Summit College at the May 1, 2014 meeting
- For those who are not familiar with Summit College, I will provide some background information
  - 1964-Community and Technical College Created
    - Purpose & identity are clear
  - 2004-Renamed Summit College
    - Purpose & identity are less clear
- Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee
  - Committee membership finalized March 1, 2012
  - Committee charged to “review the Criminal Justice programs and the role of Summit College”
- Faculty Senate recommendations will be informed by the Ad Hoc Committee’s work, as well as the reports from the Summit College faculty
- Administration will consider Faculty Senate recommendations and other factors as appropriate and make a recommendation to the BOT in June
- As Faculty Senate considers options for Summit College, I suggest some of them here and some guidelines to consider:
  - Remaining the same is NOT an option (a. low cost option in Summit County, market conditions; b. market conditions (Stark State); and c. change in law related to SSI for developmental courses)
  - Change the name of the college-grow programs, adjust focus (Purdue-like college)
  - Eliminate Summit College (programs absorbed into the other colleges) (money saving strategy-reduces infrastructure costs)
- Move bachelor’s degrees into the other colleges, and have an associate degree granting entity that could be either a college or a division; regardless, change the name (may save some funds)

**Budget**

As mentioned in the communication to campus on March 4, Deans and Vice Presidents have received preliminary worksheets with proposed budget allocations for achieving a balanced budget.

- We are anticipating a $15 million gap between revenues and expenses. That figure represents 4% of our total general fund budget
- The process of balancing last year’s budget included using some one-time funds; this year’s budget process must reduce ongoing expenses and provide longer-term solutions
- Our Board of Trustees has requested that the budget be balanced without further exhausting limited reserves, and that current budgets be based on revenues exceeding expenses
- We believe it is prudent to be conservative in estimating our revenues and aggressive in controlling our expenses so that we have the resources to invest in our future
- If we can address the budget gap with a focus on improving efficiency and generating new revenue (with increased enrollment and other initiatives), we will be better prepared to invest in growth
- Our budget assumptions are based on realities that we face today. If our enrollment increases beyond projections—*if we bring in more new students and retain the ones we have in greater percentages*—we will adjust our budget projections
Academic v. Academic Support Comparison

- This is a difficult, but necessary process. While academic budgets are being reduced, I have been committed to academic salaries that are comparable to institutions such as The University of Akron.
- Academic units’ compensation increased 22.5% from FY 08 to FY 13. This totals $25.1M.
- Academic support unit compensation increased 16.5% over that same period. This totals $11M.
- While I acknowledge more work is needed to increase the number of full time faculty to improve the institution and advance research, I urge you to stay the course with Academic Program Review and balancing the budget.
- Your efforts are an investment in our students and in our University. The more we prepare our students for academic success in programs that promise a productive future for our students, the more likely we are in ensuring that we generate revenue needed to support future generations of students.
- Remember that roughly 95% of our general fund revenue comes from tuition, fees and state support of successful students. The more students we attract and the more students who succeed to graduation, the brighter our financial future.
- On a positive note, freshman applications for fall 2014 have increased more than 40% compared to last year; while confirmations are tracking nearly even, we are not seeing a downward trend.
- Your interactions with students are more important than ever and can increase the yield of our freshman class.
- Thank you for all that you do to advance this institution.