

RESPONSE TO THE PPP RANKINGS & REPORT



On October 9 the Administration presented the Program Prioritization Process (PPP) Task Force Report and rankings to the University of Guelph Senate, and then presented these to the wider university community the following day at a Community Open Forum. Both the PPP results, and the Administration's proposed budget cuts which were revealed at the same time, raise very serious concerns for all UGFA Members.

Analysis of the PPP rankings reveals that an overwhelming majority of administrative programs finished in the top three quintiles, while an even more overwhelming majority of academic programs finished in the bottom two quintiles. The shape of these rankings is as follows:

	Quintile					
	1	2	3	4	5	
Undergraduate Major	13	20	17	24	23	
Undergraduate Minor	0	3	6	12	25	
Master's	13	14	13	9	18	
PhD	3	6	13	13	8	
Instructional Total	29	43	49	58	74	
Research	13	5	9	4	5	
Total Programs	97	102	99	96	98	492

UGFA Members assume that teaching and scholarship are the university's primary missions. Yet with approximately 100 programs in every quintile, the majority of those in the top two quintiles are not at the heart of these missions. What does this say about the purpose of the university?

From the PPP's first announcement, the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) argued that ranking academic and non-academic programs together in the same process represented a flawed and unfair methodology. The rankings which have resulted from the PPP demonstrate that the criteria which the Administration chose, without consulting Faculty, were skewed against academic programs from the beginning. Yet the Administration has used them to help justify its proposed budget cuts.

President Summerlee has insisted that the PPP was never intended to assess "quality," but only "cost-effectiveness." In launching the PPP, however, Dr. Mancuso suggested that this was a means to ensure that the university's resources would go to programs that are mission critical. In the memo of October 2 which accompanies the Task Force Report she states, "Faced with government requirements to do more with less, we must do better what we do well, and to leave to others what we cannot sustain at a level of quality we can be proud to associate with the Guelph name." The student who spoke out at the Community Open Forum expressed the opinion shared by the majority of the university community that the PPP rankings do in fact represent an evaluation of quality (albeit a flawed and biased one), and that the survival and reputation of academic programs which finished in the lower quintiles have been placed at risk.

Beyond the PPP rankings, the AIC believes that the Task Force Report's recommendations also have worrying implications for UGFA Members. With regard to curriculum, the Task Force observes that common core courses on the main campus could be streamlined and taught in "non-traditional ways" and that "the use of technology for efficiencies should be continually investigated." Its recommendation with regard to specialized foundational course also refers to the incorporations of technology. The AIC contends that this implies that the Administration is considering the expansion of on-line learning at the University of Guelph, at the expense of in-class instruction, as a way of cutting costs.

The Task Force also recommends that Colleges explore their current models for the Distribution of Effort (DOE) with the aim of "unlocking resources that could contribute to the teaching where required." It suggests that "there may be potential teaching resources hidden in underutilized service and research components of the DOE." If some Faculty Members have research DOEs that approach 80%, the Task Force argues, "it would stand to reason that a teaching DOE could approach 80%..." This recommendation suggests that the Administration intends to impose additional teaching on Faculty Members. The UGFA is presently awaiting the outcome of an arbitration regarding the Administration's attempt to alter a Member's DOE in order to require that Member to teach an additional course. The Task Force's recommendation also suggests that the Administration intends to create two distinct streams of research and teaching faculty. While many UGFA Members currently hold CRC or URC positions, the expansion and consolidation of such a two-tiered hierarchy is antithetical to the UGFA's definition of Faculty as professionals who not only teach but who are also engaged in research programs and who perform service activities. It is this definition which distinguishes university professors from college faculty or from secondary school teachers.

What are the implications of the PPP and the Administration's proposed budget cuts for the future of the University of Guelph and its academic mission? Their questions and comments at the Open Community Forum demonstrated that students believe the rankings and the budget cuts threaten their programs and the university's educational priorities. The AIC agrees. The proposed budget cuts target Colleges, and therefore

academic programs, rather than administrative units. Moreover, the fact that the Administration intends to cut the budgets of some Colleges more drastically than others is further demonstration of its intention, on the basis of short-term and possibly fluid financial concerns, to fully embrace the call for post-secondary institutions to specialize. Despite the University of Guelph's once proud reputation as one of Canada's finest comprehensive universities, this intention will transform it into a narrow technical institute.

The President has suggested that those opposed to the PPP, and to the draconian budget cuts offered by the Administration, are "opposed to change." The AIC responds that UGFA Members are not opposed to change, provided that it protects and strengthens the university's core educational and research missions. They are merely opposed to the kind of change, and the corporate values which inform it, proposed by the Administration.

Members who have opinions or information to share regarding the PPP results or the implications of the proposed budget cuts are invited to contact:

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