

Notes for open university meeting  
McInnes Room  
November 23, 1995  
Tom Traves

- Review history of rationalization -
  - Education faculty
  - Amalgamation
  - Consortium
- Objects of Consortium in our view 3-fold -
  1. encourage academic cooperation and resource saving
  2. facilitate the delivery of academic infrastructure service through a centralized, money-saving cooperative enterprise
  3. press the government to moderate impending budget cuts in university financing to sustainable levels
- In some ways, this consortium model is a bit of a disappointment in that, in our view, it doesn't go far enough -
  - Academic cooperation and resource sharing outside the business school arrangements is limited.
  - Centralized service delivery model doesn't capture all of the savings identified as possible under the Coopers & Lybrand report.
- On the other hand, the business plan does achieve a number of significant breakthroughs -
  1. The centralized service delivery activities identified will achieve substantial savings that will help us meet a portion of the budget cuts to be inflicted on us.
  2. It will create new models of administrative cooperation between the Metro universities. Once we have experience of working together in these areas perhaps we will be able to move forward into other areas of cooperation.
  3. While the academic arrangements hardly constitute a single amalgamated university, they will facilitate student mobility between the universities and create a structured forum for further discussions about areas of academic cooperation.
  4. The plan identifies a voluntarily agreed framework for the development of business education in Metro. The suggestion of centralizing all business activities into a single program to be located at one university - most likely not at Dal - should no longer be an issue and Dal can plan for the long term development of our business programs within an agreeable, cooperative framework.

5. We are looking to secure a similar outcome for computer science, although to date TUNS has not yet agreed.
6. We have developed a financial plan that incorporates government cuts significantly below those predicted recently by BAC VIII. Simply extending current funding arrangements and assumptions BAC VIII raised the prospect of \$20M worth of cuts at Dal as a result of the new federal government cuts in grants to the provinces. Under the terms of the Business Plan, Dal would receive cuts of \$10-11 million over the next three years. This financial plan has not yet been accepted by the government, but it does provide us with a strong argument that the government ought to support higher education in this cooperative mode by limiting its cutbacks to the university to sustainable levels.

- Let me raise 3 issues that I know are on people's minds because I've been asked about them repeatedly -

1. The Business Plan does not identify in detail how many jobs will be cut, where and when they'll occur and how the plans for the reorganization of academic service delivery will be developed.
  - The plan to this point identifies a direction the universities will travel . It was a hard struggle to get this far in the time available. Now that we know the direction we've agreed on, we need to develop detailed plans identifying how we will organize each unit affected, how much we will spend and save in each area, and when the plan will be ready for implementation. To make these plans we will need to actively consult the people who work in these areas. You know what work has to be done, how we can reorganize it and how we can do it better. We will need to consult you. We will also have to consult your union representatives - in some cases reorganization plans may be in conflict with the terms of collective agreements. If that is the case we will have to discuss how to amend the plans on how to amend the collective agreement. The university cannot and will not act arbitrarily in this case. Finally, where jobs are lost, and with cutbacks in government funding of the scale we are facing that is a distinct prospect, we will deal with the separation arrangements fairly and as generously as we can afford. We will also insist that all of the hiring decisions in the new centralized operations are fair and above board and wherever possible which should be in most cases that hiring comes from within the existing employee groups now on the 7 campuses.
2. How will Dalhousie plan its budgets and make its plans over the next few years? or how will the financial aspects of the business plan work?

- Dal currently gets \$84M from provincial government and we have a process guided by the Budget Advisory Committee that is monitored and approved by Senate and the Board to decide how we spend these funds, as well as tuition fees and other revenues.
- Under the new regime we will get less money, but hopefully at least \$73-74M. We will make our plans to spend these funds in exactly the same way as the past. Through the Consortium we hope to save about \$2.5-3M on some centralized services. The rest of the needed savings will come from all the remaining service and academic units on campus and they will be identified in exactly the same manner as we have done in past budget cutting exercises. Academic deans and administrative heads will get a budget target and they'll have to work with their colleagues in their units to come up with workable plans to deliver their activities within the dollars available.
- In this context I have been asked if there is a total freeze on new hiring at Dalhousie. This matter has not been considered seriously to date. I would prefer not to do that, although it may be necessary at some point. I believe that academic deans and administrative heads who know that they will have to come up with substantial budget savings in the near future will approach each hiring decision with great prudence. There's no point in hiring someone today and laying them off tomorrow, so I presume now appointments will be made in the most pressing cases and only when there are no other options to meet our needs internally.

3. The last issue I want to discuss is academic quality -

I have been asked how the arrangements for academic cooperation and student mobility will affect the quality of our programs. I do not feel that our standards will in any way be compromised by these arrangements. Our students now have the right to take courses from other universities and the new arrangements will only make this possibility bureaucratically simpler. We already welcome students from other Metro universities and under the new arrangements we will continue to do so whenever we have spaces available after serving the needs of our own students. I assume that in all courses students are all treated fairly and they get the grades they earn - no favouritism and no penalties - so quality should remain at current standards. Senate has the right and responsibility to monitor this issue and I assume that it will continue to play its role in ensuring that Dalhousie University offers the highest quality education available in our region.

Finally, let me close by saying that Dalhousie has unique needs and interests. These will not be compromised by this Consortium. We will continue to be able to push ourselves to be the best we

can be. At the same time I think we all recognize that the old order of things is passing away. Whether we regret that or not, we know that we are not going to be immune from the changes sweeping over the hospitals, school boards, city government, CBC and other government departments. We need to find meaningful ways to cooperate and stretch our resources so that the university system in Nova Scotia can continue to serve our region and maintain the high levels of accomplishment that we have achieved. While it isn't perfect, this Consortium represents a reasonable step forward in that direction and I believe we should support it on that positive basis.

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions I would be happy to address your concerns.

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