

308 Old Main
Slippery Rock University of PA
Slippery Rock, PA 16057-1326
PHONE: 724/738-2001
FAX: 724/738-2918
philip.way@sru.edu

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Dr. Patrick Burkhart
President, SRU Local APSCUF
Campus Mail

Dear Patrick:

You have requested clarification on the proposal that I made on behalf of Management at last week's M&D. As I stated, I hope that we can find "a third way" or a win-win solution to the very real problem of SRU suffering a decline of approximately 10 percent of its enrollment by FY 14-15 while being financially unable to maintain complement due to falling tuition revenues, stagnant state appropriations, small increases in tuition rates, and significantly rising costs.

Options

- For Management only to draw on unrestricted net assets – which it is not permitted to do – to avoid rightsizing the University would be perceived as a short-term win for APSCUF and a loss for Management (although frankly it would be a loss for the entire institution).
- For Management to retrench faculty while keeping unrestricted net assets intact would no doubt be seen as a win for Management and a loss for APSCUF (although again it would be a loss for the University).
- A third way that would provide mutual gains would involve two strategies.
 - First, in addition to not replacing departing faculty and not filling faculty vacancies unless absolutely necessary, we would need to reallocate faculty who would otherwise be retrenched from declining or low-performing or non-mission-critical programs to those in need of faculty replacement or enhancement.
 - Second, we would need to work together to increase the net revenues accruing to the University.
 - Throughout, we would abide by the CBA, but would attempt to grease its operational wheels. In this sense, there would be no givebacks by APSCUF. Management would also retain its prerogatives under the CBA, notwithstanding the cooperation on matters within its control.

Reallocation of faculty

Management believes that there is scope for reallocation within related disciplines of most of those who would otherwise be retrenched. If departments were to agree on reallocating qualified faculty other than the potential retrenches, that would be acceptable. Retraining is an option where appropriate. Repatriation to the faculty members' former departments would be possible if and when circumstances reverse and openings occur. Positive votes by sending and receiving departments would be required before October 24, 2013. Later, should circumstances change, and further reallocation is required, we would engage in the same cooperative behavior.

Increase in net revenues

Recruitment

- **Quality of programs**

SRU prides itself on the quality education it provides. Data from a PASSHE-commissioned study shows that prospective students primarily make their decisions based on the quality of academic programs. It therefore behooves us to ensure that the already extensive steps being taken to maintain or increase quality are permeated throughout the University. This would include:

 - Peer review of the design of online courses
 - Teaching evaluations in all courses for formative assessment and personal reflection and improvement
 - Advising evaluations for formative assessment
 - Assessment of student learning outcomes in programs

- **Delivery of programs**

Increasingly, our students are not the typical undergraduates we have grown accustomed to. SRU needs to be there for students at different stages of their lives, when they desire to attain post-baccalaureate qualifications of various kinds. They may need to attend courses at other locations and using other modalities such as the flipped classroom and wholly online learning. As an institution, we need to embrace this change, and, working within the CBA, ensure that we are versatile in delivering a quality education.

- **Recruitment efforts by programs**

While Enrollment Services provides the core recruitment services, faculty need to be ready to add peripheral high-value activities.

Retention

It is easier to retain a student than to recruit one. We need to increase our attempts to keep capable students at SRU through, among other things:

- Use of the Early Alert Program
- Outstanding advising

Grant income

The more faculty who can win grants that cover all or part of their compensation, the fewer retrenchees there will be. We are looking for a commitment to apply for more funding than hitherto.

Cost-effectiveness

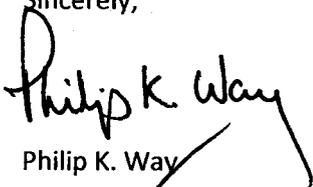
PASSHE is paying increased attention to program viability. In SRU's precarious financial situation, we need to do the same, considering costs and benefits, broadly defined.

- Academic programs need to conduct self-analyses of their viability, and produce plans to correct any shortcomings.
- We also need to review other programs and activities where we allocate significant resources. A case in point is sabbaticals. Such opportunities for faculty, and afforded by the CBA, can be advantageous to the faculty member and the university. While the CBA posits quality as a criterion, the process at SRU does not always yield quality sabbatical decisions.

It should be noted that following our discussion last Friday, we are taking the postponement of sabbaticals off the table. Although this would not have changed the total number of sabbaticals awarded over the medium term, only the timing, we recognize the sensitivity of the issue.

In conclusion, the proposal consists of a commitment to assist in the reallocation of faculty in the short term and longer term efforts to increase our net revenues. I see this as the acceleration of a change in culture that is already evident. If we grasp this opportunity – the third way – together we can build bridges to the future where a new-style SRU can prosper. We will continue to review progress in the implementation of this agreement, and update the effect of additional attrition, in determining whether we need to keep the retrenchment letter on the table.

Sincerely,



Philip K. Way
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs