

Harlan Onsrud, Chair
Faculty Senate PCRRC
University of Maine

November 17, 2010

Dear Professor Onsrud,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to hear public input today and recognizing the serious ramifications of the proposed plan. I am a Class of 2010 graduate in public management, and am currently masters in public administration student. We all know these are tough times, and tough decision have to be made here at The University of Maine. It is natural for those of us in programs threatened to be cut to become defensive, and in some cases ignore these tough realities. That being said, I feel that there are legitimate reasons to maintain the Public Administration Department on this campus, many of which have already been addressed by my fellow students, our professors, and the many successful and influential alumni around the United States.

Firstly, I believe that the criteria used by the committee focuses solely on money and statistics, while a real-world view should be used. The Public Administration department is not based on money; it is focused on public service and civic duty. These traits are not quantifiable, but are what set us apart from other countries. If you look at corrupt countries, they are not filled with inherently bad individuals. In America, we have a society and its systems, including the University system, which promotes civic responsibility, ethical behavior, and an intolerance of abusive or inappropriate actions. It is easy to cut a small program with minimal financial benefits, but I urge you to reconsider the APPWG committee's decision and realize the civic duty the University holds as an institution and for the students as individuals. Cutting out the program that teaches civics and the American system of how government should be run is a poor decision.

Furthering this point, students in Public Administration tend to be very active in the campus and surrounding communities. Those interested in public service are usually civic-minded individuals who contribute their time and energy to better their community. Speaking from my experience at the University of Maine, I have become heavily involved both on and off campus. I am a brother of Alpha Delta, the fraternity dedicated to community service, a class of 2010 Senior Skull, and have spent hundreds of hours volunteering for Little League Baseball as an umpire. I also helped to create the class council system at UMaine, serving as Vice President of the Class of 2010. Within the public sector, I have also joined two volunteer boards for the City of Bangor: The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, and the Special Committee on Comprehensive Planning. Many of the students in this field hold this same desire and drive to give back, and the University and community benefit from that kind of attitude.

Finally, the University and State does have a financial benefit for keeping the Public Administration Department. Many municipalities rely heavily on this department to fill their openings, and many former students hold positions across the state. That being said, many public administration degree holders stay in the State, not a statement that can be said about many majors at UMaine. Many of the students in the Master's program are current municipal or state government workers who are furthering their education and abilities in public management. Furthermore, I feel it is bad timing for the University to cut a degree that prepares students to go into one of the only fields in the nation that is expanding, public-sector employment.

Keeping students in Maine, an expanding job market for its graduates, a strong ethical government background, and a sense of civic responsibility, all of these are criteria that should have been addressed in the APPWG committee's decision-making process, not just the financial ones. I urge you to take serious consideration when deciding the future of this important program at the University of Maine.

Sincerely,

Matthew Donahue