

# **REPORT OF THE BINGHAMTON CHAPTER VISION SURVEY**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Based upon the current political climate in the State of New York and among the Board of Trustees of SUNY, the UUP Chapter Executive Board at Binghamton University felt it imperative that we identify the:

- Essence of scholarship and professionalism
- Optimal characteristics of our student body
- Ideal work environment

This report looks to the future of our university and stakes out a clear position on the direction the campus should take. We hope this provides insight on the feelings and concerns of the UUP community at Binghamton.

**In many ways, the results of our survey mirror the plans the current administration is implementing. In some important ways, however, our campus constituency is diametrically opposed to current plans. We hope this information acts as a guide for action to the current administration and a map for future ones to follow.**

## ***OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS***

The Chapter Executive Board appointed a committee composed of Jim Dix, Karen Fennie, Fran Goldman, Ed Kokkelenberg, Bob Pompei and Darryl Wood during the summer 2003, to look at the future of the campus. Identifying the vision our members have of Binghamton University was our prime objective – five to ten years into the future was our time frame. This committee met a number of times during that summer confirming the process we would follow in meeting this goal. Throughout these discussions, the committee reviewed the plans with a Binghamton faculty member well versed in survey design and implementation. He agreed with the basic plan and suggested several modifications that were implemented.

The Committee utilized a series of focus groups to determine the framework of the survey – please see Appendix A for the letter announcing the process. We invited a stratified sample of UUP members to these meetings where a series of open-ended questions were raised. These sessions were tape recorded for a post review. Three sessions were held with a total of twenty-seven attendees representing all areas of the university. The following factors were used in choosing the participants:

- Vice presidential area; within Academic Affairs, Academics were segmented by school
- Length of service
- Academic rank or SL level
- Gender

- Full-Time/Part-Time status
- Appointment status; Temporary, Term or Continuing/Permanent (tenured)

Questions asked of the focus group participants are included in Appendix A. These open-ended questions highlighted the participants' views of the issues facing our campus.

Based upon their responses, the committee drafted a survey that was then reviewed and confirmed by a consultant from the Survey Research Institute at Cornell University's Industrial and Labor Relations School. With recommended changes, we sent out an email informing all UUP members of the impending distribution of the survey instrument. This was followed approximately two weeks later with the cover letter and survey document. Two avenues for responding were provided – either by returning the paper document or accessing a web-based version. Two reminders were also sent. In order to increase the response rate, in late Spring 2004, phone calls were made to those who had not yet responded. Copies of all these documents are included in Appendix A.

### ***SURVEY ANALYSIS***

Almost fifty-one percent of the 1313 surveys were returned, including approximately fifty percent Academics and fifty percent Professionals. Demographic data provided in the surveys was compared to member demographic information to ascertain how representative the sample was. Both the percentage response rate and the demographic analysis indicate the sample strongly reflects the UUP membership at Binghamton. For a complete discussion of the sample and the UUP population, please see Appendix B.

## ***SURVEY RESULTS***

The survey was divided into ten areas. The first, 'Demographic Information,' was reviewed in the previous section. The following is a review of the other nine: Vision, Size and Mix of Student Body, Size and Mix of Faculty and Professional Staff, Resources and Infrastructure, Identity, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Service to Student Body, Workload Mix and Additional Comments.<sup>1</sup>

### **VISION**

This section identified how the university's vision should be created and changed as well as the attributes of a future president. **UUP members expect to provide significant input into the creation and revision of Binghamton's vision.**

Question 1: *Five to ten years from now, Binghamton's President will have identified his or her vision for this campus. I believe that vision...*

A significant plurality, forty-four percent, of UUP members noted it should be 'clearly understood' – see Appendix B. One third indicated it would have 'some relevance to what I do.' Sixteen percent indicated it 'should be clearly followed.'

Question 2: *Five to ten years from now, the vision of Binghamton should be created by...*

Nearly sixty percent stated the president should consult widely with 'individual members' of the campus community when creating that vision – see Appendix B. Almost twenty-five percent said the 'campus community' should create this vision and present it to the president.

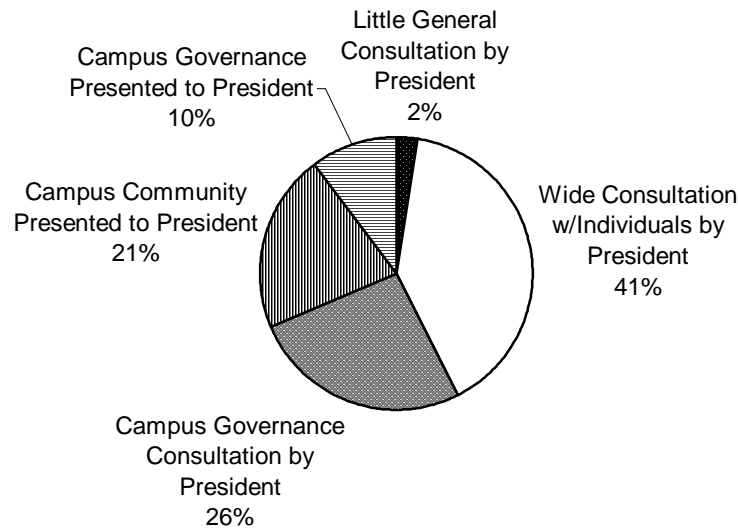
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<sup>1</sup> All responses were broken out to reveal differences between Academics and Professionals. Since a significant number, twenty-two percent, of the respondents did not identify themselves in one of these categories, an "Other" category was created for their responses. Where all three categories – Academics, Professionals and Others – were consistent in their responses, only a summary is reported. Where there are differences, this is clearly noted in the text and graphs. All graphs note only the major answers to each question on the survey. Graphs for all questions are included in Appendix B; where appropriate, they, or a summary, are also included in the text. Where respondents were asked to rank order their responses, answers were collapsed so the results below indicate all individuals who chose any of the rank order choices, i.e., first, second, third, etc., choices were added together to provide a single response.

Question 3: *Any changes to the vision of Binghamton should be made...*

There were differences among the groups – Academics, Professionals and Other – in their responses to this question – see Appendix B for a graph representing those differences. Graph I, below, summarizes these responses. Nearly forty-one percent felt the president should consult widely with individuals, mirroring the response to Question 2. A significant portion felt the campus community should present these changes to the president. A review of the broken out data in Appendix B illustrates the differences between the three groups; almost half the Professionals compared to slightly less than a third of Academics and over a third of Other indicated the president should consult widely with individuals before changing that future vision.

**Future Vision Changed: only after Wide Consultation with Individuals & Campus Governance**



**Graph I**

Question 4: *Please identify the most important characteristics you would like to see in Binghamton's President five to ten years from now*

Results were as expected; that the president should be communicative and collaborative – see Appendix B. It is interesting to note that the least popular responses were Forceful, almost three percent, and Directive, almost four percent.

## **SIZE & MIX OF STUDENT BODY**

This section identified opinions regarding the appropriate size and mix of the campus' future student body. **UUP members believe we have the right number of students. If appropriate funding is available, the student mix should change to increase the percentage of Graduate students.** (The current mix, 2002 data, is seventy-nine percent Undergraduate/twenty-one percent Graduate)

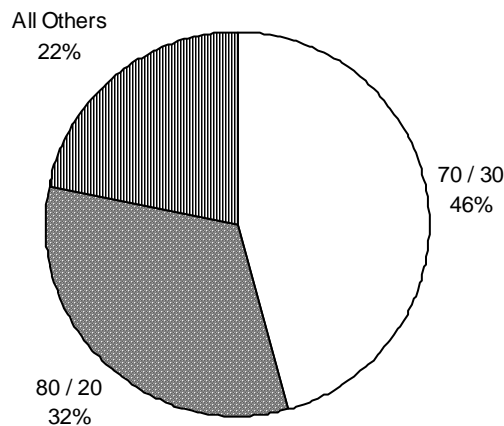
Question 5: *Without considering the effect of number of students on revenue or expenditures, what do you think the enrollment of Binghamton University should be five to ten years from now?*

Over half of the respondents believe that the university is the right size, between 12,500 to 15,000 – see Appendix B. A significant minority, over twenty-seven percent, wanted the campus to grow to 17,500. Most of the remainder wanted the campus to grow even larger.

Question 6: *Without considering the effect of students on revenue or expenditures, what do you think the mix of students should be five to ten years from now?*

Graph II represents the ideal mix if funding is available.

**Ideal Mix of Students:  
70% Undergraduate/30% Graduate**



**Graph II**

Question 7: *With current funding levels, what do you think the mix of students should be?*

When funding levels were considered, the current mix was most preferred; interestingly, **almost thirteen percent believed we should dramatically decrease our Graduate enrollment if funding is not available.**

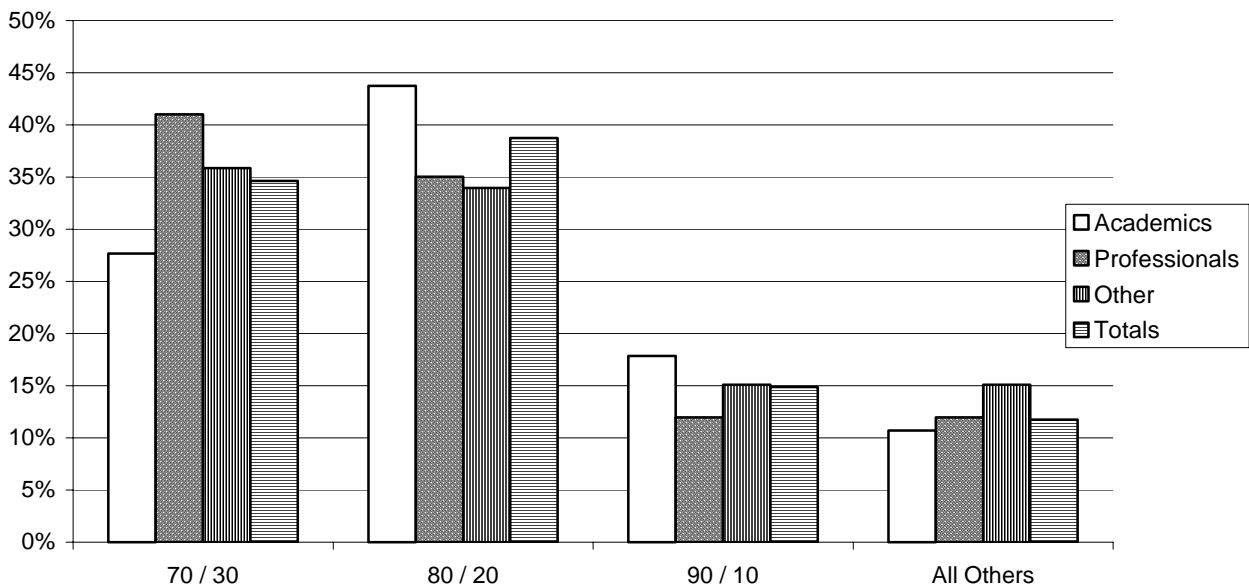
## **SIZE & MIX OF FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

This section mirrors the questions in the previous section with an emphasis on staffing levels. **In all funding scenarios, respondents felt that more Full-Time Academics and Professionals are needed. They also stated that Student to Faculty ratios should drop dramatically.**

Question 8: *With current funding levels, what do you think the mix of full-time and Part-Time academic faculty should be?*

Responses to this question are summarized in Graph III below and in Appendix B. (The current mix, 2002 data, is sixty-eight percent Full-Time and thirty-two percent Part-Time.) There were differences between the responses of Academics, Professionals and Others regarding the appropriate mix of Full-Time vs. Part-Time Academics: almost sixty-two percent (adding those who wanted 80/20 to those who wanted 90/10) of the Academics indicated we should increase the percentage of Full-Time Academics from under seventy percent to at least eighty percent, decreasing the reliance on Part-Time Academics; forty-one percent of the Professionals felt the current mix was right; among all groups, a substantial minority wanted only ten percent Part-Time Academics.

**Mix of Full-Time vs Part-Time Academics with Current Funding:  
More Full-Time**



**Graph III**

Question 9: *With current funding levels, what do you think the mix of full-time to part-time professional staff should be?*

The three groups responded consistently regarding the appropriate mix of Full-Time vs. Part-Time Professionals – see Appendix B. Only one third felt the current mix of Full-Time vs. Part-Time was correct while more than fifty-five percent indicated there should be more Part-Time Professionals – this result is not congruent with those of Questions 10 and 13 below which asked where additional funds should be deployed.

Question 10: *With a significant real increase in resources to hire more faculty and professional staff, what do you think the mix of full-time academic faculty and full-time professional staff should be?*

Even though there were differences between the responses of the three groups, see Appendix B, the results indicate that, overall, more Full-Time employees are needed.

Question 11: *As of 2000, the student-to-faculty ratio was 19.4 to 1. With a significant real increase in resources to hire more faculty, what do you think the student-to-faculty ratio should be?*

Although fewer than twenty percent of the respondents provided information regarding the ideal ratio, there was overwhelming agreement from those who did. Nearly ninety percent of those who did respond stated it should be significantly less than the current 19.4 to 1. Most of these responses, fifty-six percent, clustered around 15 or 16 to 1 as the ideal ratio.

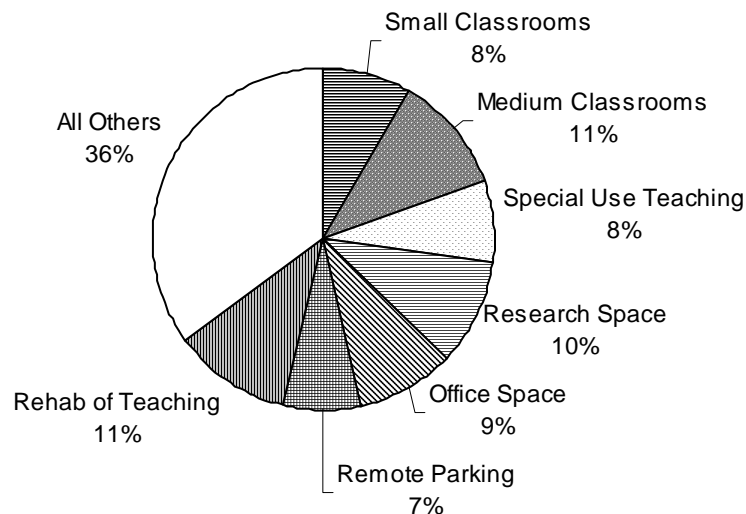
## **RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE**

This section reviewed the other types of resources available to the university, capital (construction/renovation) funds, Supplies & Expense as well as personnel. **Specific types of teaching spaces were top priorities for any capital funding and Full-Time Academics and Professionals were priorities for non-construction funding.**

Question 12: *If there was a large infusion of additional construction fund (capital) resources to Binghamton University, what areas do you think the university should invest in?*

As indicated in Graph IV, the three types of respondents – see the complete responses in Appendix B – would allocate capital funds differently. Academic's top three responses were 'Rehab of Teaching Spaces', 'Medium Classrooms' and 'Small Classrooms'. Professional's top three were 'Medium Classrooms', 'Rehab of Teaching Spaces' and 'Office Space'. Others ranked 'Research Space' first with 'Special Use Teaching' and 'Rehab of Teaching Space' tied for second. While the Others group clearly ranked 'Research Space' as a top priority, all other primary responses revolved around providing more/better teaching spaces. The least popular responses were Huge Classrooms and Athletic Facilities, both under three percent.

**Construction Fund Priorities: Med. Size Classrooms, Rehab. of Teaching Spaces & Research Space**

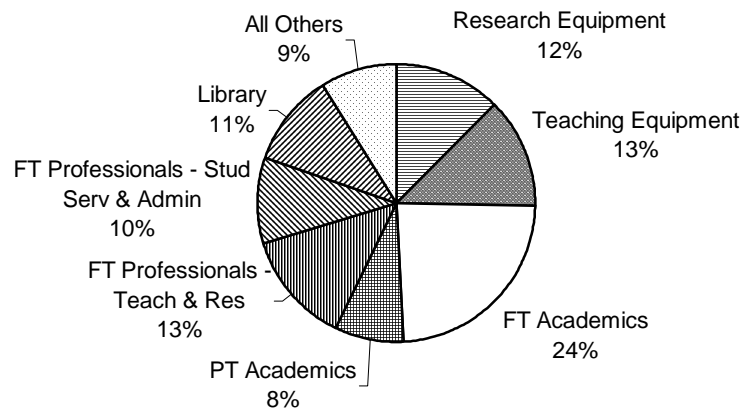


**Graph IV**

Question 13: *If there was a large infusion of additional (non-construction) resources to the campus, what areas do you think the university should invest in?*

Again, as noted in Graph V below, the three groups responded with different emphases regarding how these resources should be allocated – see Appendix B for the complete display. While all three groups emphasized the need for ‘Full-Time Academics,’ second and third priorities differed. Academics ranked ‘Library’ and ‘Teaching Equipment’ next. Professionals ranked them ‘Full-Time Professionals – Student Services’ and ‘Full-Time Professionals – Teaching and Research’. Others ranked them ‘Full-Time Professionals – Teaching and Research’ with ‘Research Equipment’ and ‘Library’ tied for third. Overall, the least popular responses were ‘Part-Time Professionals – Student Services, Administration, etc.’, just over four percent and ‘Part-Time Professionals – Teaching and Research,’ just under five percent. **While ‘Teaching,’ ‘Research Equipment’ and ‘Library Resources’ are important, more Full-Time employees are essential for Binghamton.**

**Other Resources Priorities: Full-Time Academics, Full-Time Professionals, Teaching Equipment & Research Equipment**



**Graph V**

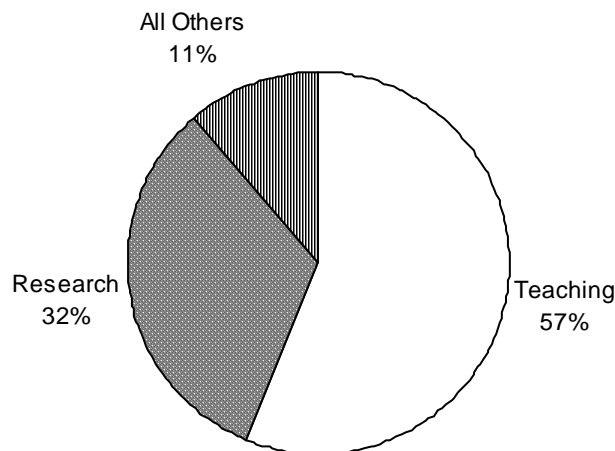
## IDENTITY

This section asked several questions regarding how current Binghamton Academics and Professionals wanted our campus to be viewed five to ten years from now. **Teaching and Research are primary in that identity. While the sciences are very important, many indicated the Humanities are also essential research areas.**

Question 14: *What do you want Binghamton University to be primarily known for in five to ten years?*

Teaching is what we want to be known for – see Graph VI below and Appendix B.

**Binghamton Should be Known for:  
Teaching**



**Graph VI**

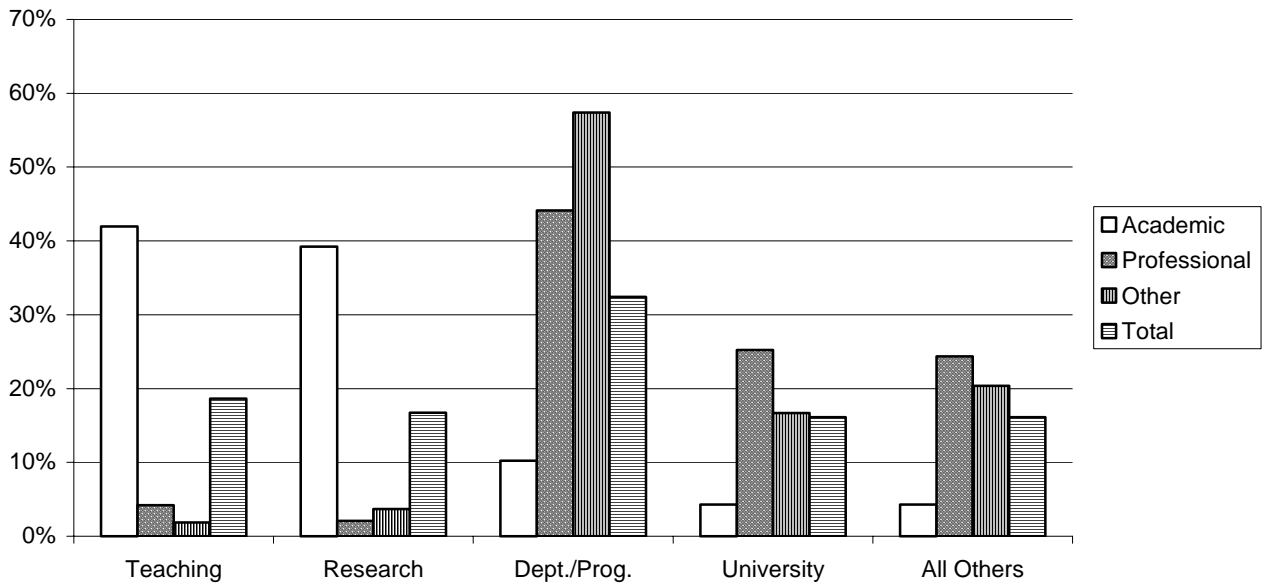
Question 15: *Regardless of your response to the previous question, if Binghamton University's identity is to be research, what research area should it be known for?*

Only about half of the respondents indicated their preferred Research Area. Most of these responses mirrored the current focus of the campus administration, Science and Engineering, with responses like: Bio Technology, Biology, Engineering, Sciences, Technology, etc. Significant numbers, however, spoke to areas like: Environmental Science, Humanities, Social Science, etc. **While some version of Bio-Tech/Engineering/Medical was the most popular specific response, the second most popular was Humanities.**

Question 16: *I most strongly identify with...*

When queried, the three groups differed – see Graph VII here and in Appendix B. Academics, as might be expected, identified ‘Teaching’ and ‘Research’ as most important. Professionals also responded as one might expect, identifying ‘Dept./Prog.’ and the ‘University’ as most important. Others responded like Professionals, but with more emphasis on ‘Dept./Prog.’ and less on the ‘University’. **It is noteworthy that over seven percent identified with ‘No particular part of the university.’**

**I Most Strongly Identify with:  
Academics - Teaching & Research; Professionals - My Dept./Prog.**



**Graph VII**

## INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Question 17: *What activity should the university implement to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction?*

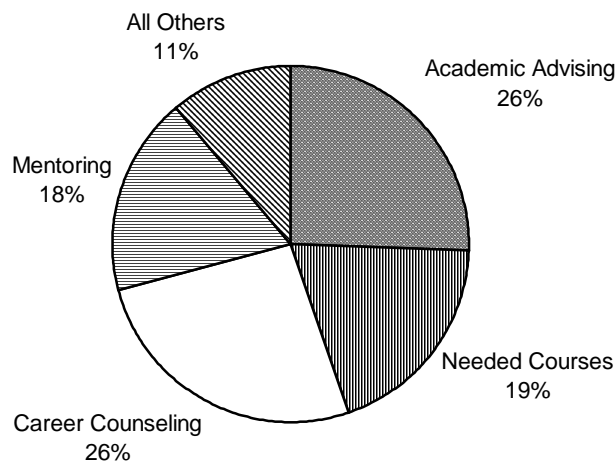
**Almost half of the respondents indicated the university should offer some type of incentive** – see Appendix B. Fewer than eight percent indicated there was 'No Need' for the university to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction.

## SERVICE TO STUDENT BODY

Question 18: *What area do you consider most important to increase service to the student body?*

Differences appeared here between the three groups, Academics, Professionals and Others – see the summary in Graph VIII below and the differences in Appendix B. **Academics felt that ‘Career Counseling’ and ‘Academic Advising’ were most important. Professionals felt that ‘Academic Advising’ and ‘Career Counseling’ were most important. The group, Other, noted that ‘Academic Advising’ and ‘Courses Needed to Graduate’ as most important.** Fewer than two percent indicated that there was ‘No Need to Increase Service to the Student Body.’

**Most Important Student Services to be Added:  
Career Counseling & Academic Advising**



**Graph VIII**

## **WORKLOAD MIX** (and other issues)

These four questions asked how Academics and Professionals viewed their workload. **Service to the student body is very important to the respondents. Travel and training are essential for continued professional growth as well. And, hiring of Professionals should utilize internal searches first.**

Question 19: *Binghamton University's broad mission is to teach students, conduct research, and provide service to the university and the larger community. What should be the percentage effort faculty and professional staff should devote to each part of this mission?*

Unfortunately, responses to Question 19 were not usable so no comment can be made regarding this issue.

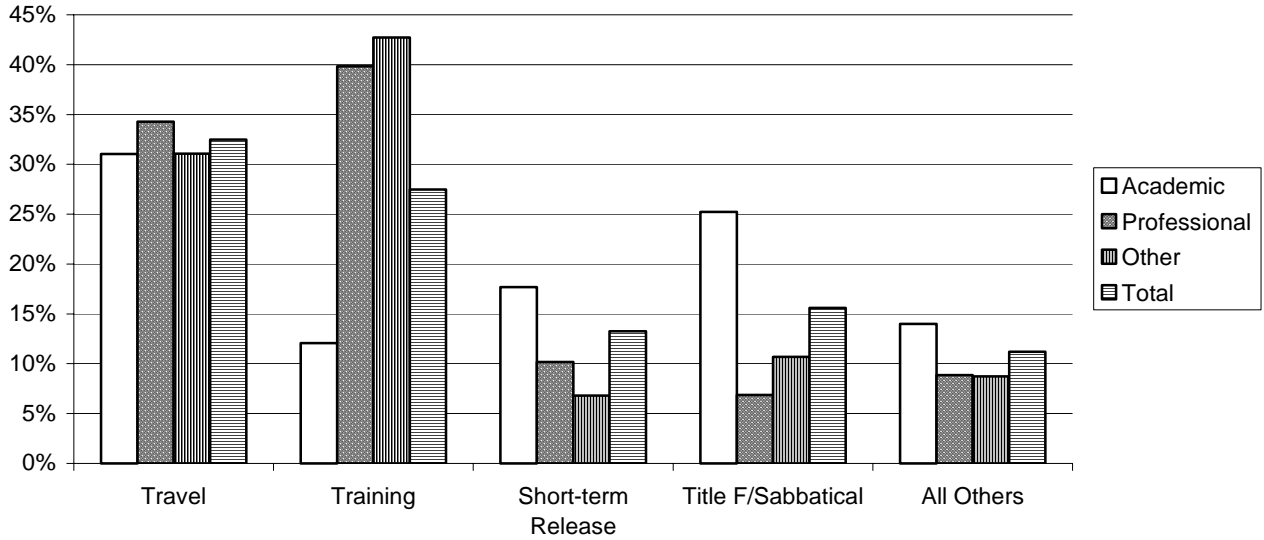
Question 20: *In your opinion, what is the most important part of the service component of the university's mission?*

When asked about the service component, differences appeared between the three groups – see Appendix B. While it may be intuitively obvious for Academics to identify ‘Service on Departmental Committees’ as most important, it was not as obvious that their second most popular response was ‘Service to the Student Body,’ twenty-seven percent. On the other hand, Professionals indicated ‘Service to the Student Body’ as most important. Others noted ‘Service to the Student Body’ and ‘Service on University-Wide Committees’ as most important. Almost ten percent felt we should provide ‘Service to the Community through volunteer work.’

Question 21: *Select the type of support that you consider most important for your continued professional growth.*

Academics, Professionals and Others differed in their responses regarding support for professional growth – see Graph IX and Appendix B. Academics see ‘Travel’ and ‘Title F/Sabbatical Leave’ as most important. Professionals noted ‘Training’ and ‘Travel’ as most important. And, Others saw ‘Training’ and ‘Travel’ as most important.

**Continued Professional Growth Needs:  
Academics - Travel & Title F/Sabbatical; Professionals - Training &  
Travel**



**Graph IX**

*Question 22: How should the university hire new or replacement professional staff?*

It was **overwhelmingly** clear that new and replacement Professionals should be hired via a process of 'Internal Search Followed by External Search,' ninety-two percent, vs. other processes – see Appendix B.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

One hundred six individuals included comments on their survey form. A synopsis, reflective of the survey responses, is included in Appendix B.

## ***CONCLUSIONS***

The response rate, the number of additional comments, the diversity of respondents and depth of feeling expressed all indicate UUP members are very concerned about the future of our university.

They see the importance of maintaining the core of what made Harpur College great. There is also a clear understanding that the university must branch out from there to respond to the current environment and changes in funding opportunities, but not at the expense of that core mission. There is great concern about the teaching mission of Binghamton with respondents seeing Full-Time Academics as essential to furthering that mission. They also express concern about the move to Division I Athletics as having damaged the university's basic mission of teaching and research.

There are clear statements regarding the necessity of devoting additional capital and other resources to teaching and research. Consultation is essential if the university is to succeed as a first rate institution. While growth is seen as good, the mix of students must be considered in light of available resources, especially Full-Time Academics.

The Committee feels that if Binghamton is to maintain its reputation, these issues must be addressed in the near future. Neglect will lead to further erosion of the magnificent qualities here. Now is the time to act if success is our goal. A concerted effort on the part of all constituencies of the university, a cooperative move with a common set of goals and an understanding that the impediments to triumph are external are all necessary for Binghamton.