



Information Technology Department

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Laura Fucci, Chief Information Officer



March 29, 2010

Dr. Neal Smatresk
Office of the President
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Box 451001
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1001

Dear Dr. Smatresk,

It has come to my attention that the School of Informatics (Informatics) within the College of Engineering is being considered for elimination due to budget issues at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Eliminating this School would be a short-sighted move for our community and I send you this letter as a plea to consider such actions carefully. I was involved in the initiation of Informatics and sit on its Advisory Board. Informatics was formed to meet the growing demands of our local business community, ensuring the University delivers graduates educated in both business and technology, able to enter the workforce to add value with minimum training involved. To this end, business representatives throughout the community have been intimately involved with curriculum development and class participation. We consider Informatics a true partnership between UNLV and the community for which it serves.

The business leaders of the valley became involved with UNLV to develop Informatics for the following reasons:

- Ensure students graduated with practical knowledge that complemented the academic knowledge so that they could "hit the ground running" when hired
- Provide resources that met the every growing needs of our local businesses which guarantee business and technology alignment
- Encourage UNLV graduates to remain in the area to work and live, thereby enriching our community

In the short period of time that Informatics has been open for business, it has achieved much success:

- Designated as a National Security Agency Center of Academic Excellence (NSA CAE) for UNLV. This satisfies education requirements for federal agencies for national security-related jobs and also provides scholarship opportunities to Informatics majors.
- Informatics faculty have received a President's Research Award and Research Infrastructure Award in the past three years

- Informatics faculty publish in the leading journals and conference proceedings in their field
- Informatics has research projects with the College of Hotel Administration, the Harry Reid Center, and the College of Science
- Several Informatics' courses are compliant with educational standards for major certifications in the Information Technology industry. This is increasingly important for job placement and advancement. We took care to ensure such opportunities were present in the Informatics' curriculum.
- As part of the business/Informatics partnership, all Informatics' majors are supported with paid internships by local industry and government.
- The business leaders of local industry and government regularly meet with the students, giving them an opportunity to share knowledge and learn from experienced professionals.
- Informatics has a 100% retention rate for freshmen, new undergraduate transfers, and master students.

Working in government myself, I certainly understand the issues we face with budget restrictions as we go into this next year. However, Informatics is a revenue-positive school, and as such, its elimination should be reconsidered. The financial benefit to eliminating this School would be minimal as demonstrated by the following highlights:

- No State monies are used in the administration of the School
- Laboratories are built with private donations from corporate stakeholders
- Informatics faculty have produced over \$2 million in external grants and contracts (\$500,000 per faculty FTE) in AY09-10. AY10 expenditures were \$849,215.24.
- Informatics faculty have received notification of \$699,177 in awards so far for AY11.
- There are minimal cost savings that would accrue if the School of Informatics were eliminated: The State-funded expenses for Informatics (including Graduate Assistantships) excluding tenured faculty salaries and benefits are \$131,499.93 in AY10

The benefits to local industry and UNLV with sustaining the School of Informatics are high as this will enable us to further advance the skills of our community as well as continue to improve the partnership between local businesses and UNLV.

Thank you for your consideration of this important topic. If you would like to discuss further, I am available at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Laura Fucci
Chief Information Officer
Clark County

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