

Class Exercise
for
EDHI 9050

Team Case Analysis

Dean Wilson reflected that Urbane State College had done well with the new interior design program. It had been started just in the nick of time five years ago when the enrollments in the criminal justice and urban recreation programs had started to plunge. Looking back at that time, Wilson wondered how she would have been able to keep these two programs without the additional credit hours that interior design had generated. Even with them, Wilson had been forced to lay off several faculty members in urban recreation and one in criminal justice. Things had been quite difficult, but were finally looking better.

All of this reflection had been provoked by Wilson's reading the letter her president had forwarded to her from the State Commission for Higher Education. The newly arrived commissioner had announced her determination to eliminate program duplication among the state regional campuses, and the commission had enthusiastically endorsed it. She was apparently starting her campaign without delay, for the letter notified Urbane that the interior design program appeared to duplicate unnecessarily a similar program at Upstate Tech. The commissioner also noted that the other program was both older and served more students. The letter concluded with the announcement that a special panel had been appointed to review the interior design programs and that Urbane officials should be prepared to appear before it to justify the program at their college. The president would appear, of course, but Wilson knew that hers would have to be the major voice in the proceedings.

Looking at the names on the panel provided Wilson no comfort. The names she recognized were those of people she suspected of favoring interests in the northern part of the state. To be sure, they were in the minority on the list, but Wilson had no idea about the sympathies of the others. So far as the number of students in the interior design program was concerned, Upstate may have more, but Wilson felt confident that her college had better. She was not clear about the credentials of the faculty at Upstate, but the faculty at Urbane were solid folks and the program was enriched by the part-time practitioners they had been able to enlist. All this made her feel reasonably good at first blush, but she was troubled about how to proceed. Specifically, she wondered how to approach the interior design business community in obtaining support for the Urbane program and what tack to take with the state commission. She knew she could count on the support of two local legislators, but didn't know how best to use them. Most pressing at the moment were the student reporters who had gotten wind of the panel and who wanted to know whether there would continue to be an interior design program or whether students should start making plans to transfer. If the students were alarmed, she knew the faculty would be not far behind.

How would you advise Wilson to proceed?