On Monday, Sept. 24, the University took an important step toward maintaining the quality of the education we offer both now and well into the future. We released a report to faculty, staff, and students that recommends where University resources should be focused in future years without increasing our overall budget.

We believe that to strengthen the University during uncertain economic times we must reduce the scope of what we do. In order to improve our competitive position, and to meet our students’ financial needs, we intend to reallocate our budget by reducing the number of programs we offer and by providing better support to our priority programs.

The report is called Foundation of the Future. It contains recommendations that were formed by two University task forces—an Academic Programs Task Force composed of all faculty and an Administrative Programs Task Force composed of faculty and staff—that spent more than six months reviewing and prioritizing 253 academic and administrative programs. Their recommendations state whether a University program needs more investment, should be maintained as is, needs to be restructured, or should be divested.

This is not a budget reduction plan; it is budget neutral, with the goal of determining where to reallocate and focus the University’s resources within the existing budget. Additionally, the report contains recommendations, not decisions. We devoted the month of October to listening to the wider University community’s response to the recommendations, while University officers looked at any new, relevant data, considered projected budget implications, and assessed the recommendations within an institutional context.

During this consideration phase, we knew that circumstances might become apparent that would make a recommendation not feasible to implement. In November and early December, we will develop an implementation plan for the recommendations that are adopted and announce that plan by the close of this fall semester.

Our goal is that implementation and reallocation will take place over the next five years. No matter what the final plan looks like, it will affect no current students. All students in an impacted program will be permitted to complete their current courses of study.

Additional information on Foundation of the Future, including links to Frequently Asked Questions and the recommendation lists, can be found at www.hartford.edu/FOTF.

Many universities around the country are considering focusing their offerings; we are certainly not unique in this effort. What is unusual in our approach is that it has been planned through a community-wide effort, and the recommendations have been developed solely by faculty and staff, not the senior administration. That doesn’t mean the recommendations have been universally well received. As I write, there is a good deal of serious discussion on campus, and the officers and deans are listening carefully to reactions and views.

The goal of Foundation of the Future is to build on the current strengths of the University in order to make it even better.

The 2012 Donor List is available at www.hartford.edu/giving.