Where did all the furor go?
The Academic Plan for the University of Missouri—a result of the controversial Role and Scope, or evaluation, or Institutional Reappraisal as the program was variously called—was approved by the Board of Curators in August. Around Campus, the final version has generated little conversation.

Yet, two years ago a tentative Role and Scope proposal resulted in the largest faculty meeting ever held on the Columbia Campus. Some 1,000 persons jammed Jesse Auditorium to decry what they thought was to be the dismantling of the Columbia Campus. Later, the Faculty Council fought a Doctoral Center plan that would have moved some of the administration of existing doctoral programs away from Columbia. As late as this summer, faculty representatives met with the Alumni Association’s Executive Committee to voice further concerns about some aspects of Role and Scope.

Although the Missouri Alumnus reported on the progress of Institutional Reappraisal from time to time, alumni never got very excited about it. And, as finally approved, the “Academic Plan 1975-85” really doesn’t seem to change things very much.

The Columbia Campus remains intact as the flagship campus of the University. It was not dismantled. There is a University-wide doctoral faculty, but there are no “doctoral centers” as such. Few new programs are indicated for Columbia, but in the face of the fiscal realities in Jefferson City, that would be true in any case. And, actually, “fiscal reality” was what Institutional Reappraisal was all about.

“This University needed to shift gears,” says President C. Brice Ratchford. “When I became president in 1970, we theoretically were operating under a long-range plan that was assuming skyrocketing enrollments and limitless funds.

“That, obviously, is not the case. We are now a ‘solid-state’ University. Enrollments have leveled off. There is considerable fluctuation in the number of students within disciplines—engineering is up, education is down, for example—but overall, we cannot expect much of an enrollment increase. And, of course, we aren’t going to get a large amount of money for new programs. We’ve asked the legislature for a $20-million increase in appropriations for 1975-76. Very little of that can be used for program improvement. Inflation and other mandatory costs will take almost the entire amount.”

Studies across the country indicate that the public is tired of hearing and reading about the financial plight of higher education. After all, almost every business and every person have money problems of their own. But the financial plight is real and it’s something University officials have to deal with every day. Ratchford believes that Institutional Reappraisal has helped the University change gears, that the Academic Plan has established parameters that all campuses will work within to establish priorities.

University administrators and members of the Board of Curators have repeatedly said that the Academic Plan is “not set in concrete,” that it will be reviewed and updated periodically. For example, each of the hundreds of degree programs offered on the four campuses was placed in one of four categories: I-A, a primary candidate for develop-
ment, to III-A, a candidate for reduc-
tion. But this doesn't mean that a pro-
gram in I-A will automatically get in-
creased funding, or that one in III-A can't
move upward. These categories aren't
really that meaningful at this point.

On the Columbia Campus, Chancellor
Herbert W. Schooling says that priorities
will be identified largely on the basis of
enrollment, market demand for gradu-
ates and the importance of the program
to the overall Campus offerings. "It's
possible," he says, "that a program now
in III-A will be able to make a strong case
for increased funding."

Paraphrasing a World War II army
proverb, Ratchford says that, "The plan
itself means little. Planning is every-
thing." He means, of course, that the work in getting ready for the outside
evaluating teams that looked at every
degree program, as well as the gather-
ing of data for the Academic Plan, forced
faculty and administrators to take a hard
look at themselves. And the result has
been beneficial. Planning, therefore, is a
continuous process.

There are still initial reappraisals to be
completed in the areas of research, ex-
tension, and administration. But the first
phase of Institutional Reappraisal, cover-
ing the degree programs, is finished.

For the record, the Academic Plan sets
forth the general role and scope of each
campus as follows:

"The University of Missouri-Columbia
(UMC) will continue to provide a broad
spectrum of programs in the arts and sci-
ces and a number of professional
schools, including the Schools of Medi-
cine, Law and Nursing. UMC will have
the University's only College of Agricul-
ture and Schools of Forestry, Home Eco-
nomics, Journalism, Veterinary Medi-
cine, Library and Information Science.

"The University of Missouri-Kansas
City (UMKC), the primary source of uni-
versity education in the Kansas City
metropolitan area, will provide a broad
spectrum of programs in the arts and sci-
ces and have a number of profession-
al schools, including the Schools of Law
and Medicine. It will emphasize the
health sciences and necessary related
fields, the performing and fine arts, pro-
grams unique to a metropolitan campus.

UMKC will have the University's only
Schools of Pharmacy and Dentistry.

"The University of Missouri-Rolla
(UMR) will emphasize engineering and
science-technology and be considered
as the location for establishing selected
technological programs. The arts and
science program must complement engi-
neering and provide opportunity for the
baccalaureate degree in arts and sci-
ces, as well as potential for an Asso-
ciate of Arts degree.

"The University of Missouri-St. Louis
(UMSL) will have a broad spectrum of
programs in the arts and sciences, sev-
eral professional schools and programs
unique to a metropolitan campus."

Alumni and all Missourians can ex-
pect less duplication and more coopera-
tion among the four campuses as the
result of the Academic Plan—and this is
good. It also seems good that Columbia
remains a community of scholars with a
wide range of interests and abilities. Miz-
zou can better serve students and the peo-
ple of Missouri by continuing to develop in-
terdisciplinary opportunities for teaching
and research. — Steve Shinn

"Our flag was still there"