

The University of Rhode Island
Strategic Budget and Planning Council
February 11, 2011
1:30pm - 3:30pm
Ballentine Hall Thomson Board Room

Guest:

President David M. Dooley

Members/Staff in Attendance:

Don DeHayes, Robert Weygand, Peter Alfonso, Abu Bakr , Thorr Bjorn, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Cheryl Foster, Winnie Brownell, Trish Casey, Jeff Johnson, Tom Dougan, Robert Beagle, Ken Kermes, Patricia Morokoff, Nancy Eaton, Steven D'Hondt, Raymond Wright, Ann Morrissey, and Linda Barrett

Members Absent:

David Coates, Ron Jordan, Glen Kerkian, Jack Szczepanski

Meeting Minutes:

1. Meeting called to order at 1:32pm by Council Chair DeHayes
2. Chair welcomed Nancy Eaton, new Chairperson of Faculty Senate
3. President addressed the Council
 - a. Two items in the news are the evolving nature of the faculty and the question: Is shared governance meaningful?
 - b. Reminded Council of his charge to the group, where the words Strategic and Budget are placed first in the title because making or protecting strategic investments in the primary focus for this group, That is, the Council may need to provide advice on both budget increments and reductions with a keen eye toward protecting important priority areas. The Council plays an important role in providing counsel about the difficult budgetary decision at the broader strategic level; the importance of the open and transparent processes that guide resource allocation; in this fiscal climate, our budget must be strategic ; the council must think about what areas of the institution to protect
 - c. Difficult to be strategic during a time of constrained resources; must think critically where we spend our dollars; where to reallocate; difficult challenging task; but, better decisions are made with a participatory process
 - d. The challenge will be how to craft a budget that supports the priorities and still make the numbers work
 - e. This is the first time that the Board of Governors of Higher Education leadership will turn over; this compounds our work; new Governor is expected to present his budget to the Legislature March 10th
 - f. There is a great deal of understanding about the importance of higher education within the gubernatorial transition team; we need to be pro-active and propose solutions; must build a good foundation in FY 2012; thus laying a good foundation for FY 2013 and FY 2014.
 - g. It was a strategic decision to have us actually absorb a portion of the FY 11 budget shortfall at mid year rather than try to find some alternative fund to as a temporary solution. This is a step toward strategic reductions that may be needed in FY 2012; if State Appropriation is held level and tuition and mandatory fees are not increased for FY 2012, URI could face a \$22M shortfall

- h. URI needs to advise the Board about tuition and fee rates for next year; SBPC members are going to be in a position to hear feedback from faculty, staff and students on the tuition, budgets, etc. The work the Council does on behalf of the University is very important. He thanked the council in advance of their work. He offered his support, data, access to data, leadership team, etc. He asked the group to make their recommendations in such a way that the numbers add up and that serve the goals and priorities of the university. The Council's recommendations must reflect the priorities in the Academic Plan. How do you do that AND make it all add up? Despite the uncertainties, President stated that he continues to believe we have a good path forward, and there is a lot of understanding about the importance of higher education as a way to further benefit the State of RI.
4. Question about why the Council was formed and if it was a "focus group". Chair DeHayes indicated that the Council was formed because management wanted more transparency; President indicated he intended to create the Council shortly after arriving at URI as he observed that budgetary decisions were not transparent.
5. "Strategic" does not only apply to new initiatives; reductions must also be strategic.
6. Discussion on enrollment; Vice Chair Weygand mentioned that the university's goal is to increase the fundraising overall by 15% annually; it was recommended that the University stipulate such a goal in the Foundation/University contract; it is necessary to increase scholarships to support the enrollment of quality students, to stay competitive in realizing our enrollment goals, and to ensure a revenue stream into the institution.
7. Chair DeHayes mentioned that the NEASC report has been circulated to all SBPC members as well as posted on the web; it was a positive review overall.
8. Minutes of December 14, 2010 were approved
9. Linda Barrett presented updates on the FY 2011 Mid Year Review and the FY 2012 Tentative Allocation. The FY 2011 Mid Year Review included the use of prior year fund balance for several unanticipated one time only capital projects. In addition, all areas of the University were asked to reduce their budgets.
10. The Academic Plan should be the guide as budget reduction principles are applied.
11. Chair DeHayes indicated that he does not support across the board reductions; reductions must also be strategic.
12. Chair DeHayes mentioned that we need to focus not only on the freshmen class; but, on our graduation rate. We were in the mid 50's and are now at a 63% rate; this has a recruitment benefit. We had a much lower student aid discount than our peers and that contributed to the shortfall of out of state students from our enrollment target.
13. Concern about in-state students being able to afford a tuition increase; past practice has been to increase the aid for these students commensurate with the increase in tuition. The current model proposed would increase aid to IS students if IS tuition is increased.
14. We knew years ago that a continuing increase in enrollment is not sustainable. We need to explore other revenue sources. Discussion ensued about how the council shall best accomplish its work strategically:
 - a. Openness/Transparency
 - b. Clear justification for budget reductions
 - c. How are budget increments and decrements distributed across the institution?
 - d. Budget principles will serve as foundational for decision making
 - e. Budget cuts must be strategic; protect high priorities; must be driven by The Academic Plan and the President's vision and goals.

- f. Consideration must be given to communicating with the campus community and to managing the message; must be sensitive to morale
 - g. Benchmarking and data analysis are cornerstones for better understanding our effectiveness as an institution
 - h. It was suggested we also discuss how to rescale the campus around quality.
15. Meeting adjourned at 3:35pm

Required Action Items:

1) Members to revisit the charge given to the Council by President Dooley last February.

<http://www.uri.edu/budget/sbpc/SBPC%20charge%20-final1.pdf>

Information Requested: None

Next Meeting Date: February 25, 2011; 1:30-3:00pm; Ballentine Hall Thomson Board Room

See SBPC website for meeting and agendas

Minutes by Caroline Natale, Business Analyst, Budget & Financial Planning