

The Strategic Budget and Planning Council CHARGE

The University Budget and Planning Council shall provide a new, transparent and inclusive process for the planning, budgeting and assessment of university strategic directions, investments, and facilities. The Council shall be advisory to the President. It will ensure that the University's strategic plan and mission guide resource allocations and investments.

Guiding principles:

- An open, understandable, transparent system is important to the process of defining strategic priorities and allocating the resources of the University.
- A strong linkage must exist between the budget and the strategic priorities of URI.
- Budget recommendations shall be guided by the university's mission and strategic plan and connect financial investments, strategic priorities, and expected outcomes.
- Shared governance entails shared responsibility for the health and vitality of the institution.
- Council members operate from a university-wide perspective and must have the capacity to both inform analyses and understand the implications of the Council's recommendations.
- Annual evaluation of plans and budgeting allocations is an important component of the planning and budgeting process

In regard to Budgeting, the Council will:

- Expect that each Division and Athletics institute a process for planning and budgeting that ensures collaboration, most effective use of resources, funding of priorities, and transparency. Internal priorities are identified through divisional planning aligned with the overall University strategic plan and the academic plan. Potential resource allocations and reallocations within the Division's are recommended using a set of budget guidelines, principles, and procedures; these processes lead to a set of priorities from each major unit (e.g., divisions) that are forwarded to the university-wide Council.
- Review budget proposals by divisions, including Athletics, of the University, make budgetary recommendations for developing the University's annual budgets that address strategic priorities, obligations, and other important initiatives deemed important to the University's success and future.
- Develop and implement a budget planning cycle for decision-making that corresponds with Board of Governors' and State budget cycles.
- Conduct evidence-based analysis of the priorities and allocations emerging from the divisions and Athletics; effectively, this vetting process examines internal priorities within units through the lens of institutional needs and directions and establishes indicators to assess outcomes.

- Recommend to the President a proposed university budget including potential institutional investments, funding recommendations (allocations and re-allocations) and rationale for proposed actions.

Process and Functions:

In regard to Strategic Planning, the Council will:

- Oversee the development of university-wide strategic priorities through a collaborative planning process
- Devise and report Key Performance Indicators to facilitate the evaluation of progress and the accomplishment of URI's goals

In regard to Assessment, the Council will:

- Conduct an annual retrospective assessment of previous investments in the context of the strategic plan and make related recommendations for modification for future budgeting and planning.
- Make recommendations as appropriate for modifications of the strategic plan that reflect emerging priorities and opportunities.

Council Membership:

The Council shall have balanced representation from the University community, while maintaining a size that is workable and ensures functionality. Composition is as follows:

(See enclosed membership list)

Notes for Consideration

1. While it is clear that the allocation of general funds will be examined through the proposed process, it is also possible that aspects of the utilization of other funds, such as overhead, fee-based, and some auxiliary funds, could be considered as well.
2. The State's ever changing budget situation presents a challenge to effective planning. The Council will need to address the vagaries and constant changes within the State's budget cycle and will need to be responsive to immediate budget requests.

To address this challenge, the Council should work to develop a multi-year budget planning horizon that continuously looks ahead. Also, a set of clearly articulated budget principles that guides the budget process and decisions will help focus the Council's work and create predictable expectations.

3. Given the financial climate, it is likely that there will be relatively little new money for investment in the short-term. As such, reallocation may be more likely than new allocations as a mechanism to support emerging priorities.

Fundamental to the work of the Council will be consistency of process between Divisional budgeting and planning and university-wide planning and budgeting, including open lines of communication within and between Divisions. It will be helpful to have established a set of financial efficiency guidelines that enhances the quality and efficiency of functions.