

College of Arts & Sciences
Budget Advisory Committee
MINUTES
Tuesday, November 25, 2014

Present:

Voting members: Professors Bryan Sebok, Eric Tymoigne, Janis Lochner and Rishona Zimring
Ex-officio: Gary Reiness - Associate Dean of the College, George Battistel - Associate Vice President of Finance

Guests: Katherine Shallenberger - Budget Accountant, Mark Figueroa - Associate Provost for Institutional Research and Planning, plus Rebecca Lingafelter, Todd Lochner and Julio de Paula – faculty members on the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

Absent: Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell – Interim Dean of the College, Carl Vance – Vice President for Business and Finance and Professor Štěpán Šimek

Recorder: Anne Boal, Administrative Coordinator

This was an open-forum meeting for the CAS faculty members.

Chair Zimring summarized the concerns shared at the open forum last week and said that her goal is to send a report to the administration at the end of the academic year. Professor Todd Lochner reiterated the concerns about the financial aid discount rate of 50% for the current incoming first-year students, and for subsequent years.

Mr. Mark Figueroa spoke about the models used to predict if students will return to LC year after year. He now has a cohort-by-cohort model prediction method, with which he is more comfortable. Retention prediction models use a 3-year trailing average for the different groups. The model is built on the assumptions of a certain discount rate for financial aid; it does not predict the discount rate.

Professor Elliot Young said that since 1997, when he joined the faculty, the college has never had a capital campaign. He has asked numerous times about this, and would like more information on when one will happen. Also, he is concerned about the tuition benefits from the 5-college consortium, the Northwest Independent College Tuition Exchange, which is scheduled to be eliminated. He has not seen a resolution on this issue from last year, but sees that it is being phased out. He would like the committee to look into this.

Associate Dean Reiness agrees on having a capital campaign. However, even a successful campaign will not help in the short run, since only 10% of the endowment is used for Financial Aid over a 4 year average. So a campaign will only help in four years. Professor Young noted that money is found and used right away for initiatives such as the new Entrepreneurial Program. How does this happen, and why can't this happen for our departments? Mr. Battistel commented that the Board of Trustees raised \$14M a few years ago, but this did not contribute to the operational budgets. Some donors specify exactly which fund will receive their donation. Professor Broide expressed frustration with the Board of Trustees and their seemingly inability to act as the faculty would like.

Professor Janis Lochner explained that at last week's meeting, Mr. Carl Vance had said that a campaign consultant has been hired to work up a feasibility study for a campaign. Last year the BAC spoke to Mr. Hal Abrams, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, about fund raising. At that time, the Board approved some fund raising. Chair Zimring thought that we should clarify to the Board how spread thin we are in resources, time and benefits.

Professor Mitch Reyes sees the problems of the size of the endowment, the discount rate, and the funds that we can only bring in for specific programs. So, can we change things for the short term, by increasing the

retention rate? Also, the discount rate does not seem to be projected correctly since Mike Sexton, the previous Dean of CAS Admissions, left the college.

Professor de Paula noted that Whitman College tried focusing on keeping the discount rate at a lower level. This caused a decrease in diversity, that everyone noticed and there was a backlash against this method. However, with a higher discount rate, we probably will see larger classes, which will negatively impact our faculty to student ratio.

Mr. Figueroa noted that we cannot compete with colleges with huge endowments, and we need to prioritize what we want to pursue, be it, prestige, diversity, gender, etc.

Professor Sebok wondered if we could reorient admissions to focus on students who will stay here for four years. Could that be a priority? Mr. Figueroa noted that a Dean of Retention was hired, but we see students leaving for many various reasons. However, the quicker new students connect to faculty and other students, the more prone they are to stay.

Professor Ken Clifton noted how hard it is to connect to students as his class sizes increase. Professor Molly Robinson Kelly thinks that the student faculty ratio is very important to preserve the quality of teaching. A commitment to the faculty and teaching is vital.

Professor Young has heard from students that they feel a disconnection to the administration. These are the students who want to connect but feel like they cannot. They feel repressed in the residence halls. Professor Reyes understood that the extra week at the end of the year for seniors was to encourage community, but it was cut for budgetary reasons. This seemed counter-productive. Professor Sebok has spoken to his students about their feelings of animosity towards authority and the administration. He shares some of their feelings, and encourages them to look at what positive things they do have here at the college.

Professor Broide commented that it is very hard to obtain approval to add faculty positions, but has seen positions added in administration very quickly. Professor Sebok replied that Mr. Carl Vance had said that administrative positions are collapsing into fewer positions. Professor Young interjected that he has noticed the national trend of more money going to administrative positions. Ms. Margo Black noted that extra money is spent to run the national searches for all those administrative positions, which have high turnover. Professor de Paula said that it would be good to see the number of FTE's and amount of money spent on administrative versus faculty positions.

Professor de Paula said that concerning a capital campaign, he can wait the four years for the money to help the budget, but needs something to be started, so that we have a bright future to look forward to. The Board approves campaigns and smaller initiatives, which is a complex process, but it would be good for everyone to be involved and know what's going on.

Professor Todd Lochner asked Professor Tymoigne to talk about what he said last week, about our business model being non-sustainable. Professor Tymoigne said that the gap between our revenues from tuition and net tuition is increasing dramatically. The net tuition remains flat as the tuition increases. He said that we must find other sources of revenue.

Professor Young said that he is paid to teach, not raise money. Professor Todd Lochner replied that we better have a say in what happens, so that negative changes aren't implemented that affect us. Professor Tymoigne said that small cuts to department operational budgets do not make the difference. We would need to cut entire programs to make a real difference, without outside funding.

Chair Zimring announced the close to this meeting, and that she would obtain the requested data to work on these issues.