

Humboldt State University
University Budget Committee
Friday, October 13, 2006
Meeting Notes

Co-Chairs: Saeed Mortazavi, Rick Vrem

Voting Members: Lumei Hui, Nancy Kelly, Mark Larson, Judith Little, Wayne Perryman, Laurie Sheppard, Rosemary Smith for Susan Dodson, Glenn Sonntag, Michael Thomas, Sarah Wood for Brandon Hemenway

Ex Officio: Carol Terry

Observers: Rob Gunsalus, Anda Webb

Agenda: Background and discussion of pertinent financial data

Following up on last week's meeting, Rick advised the group that the Academic Senate will take up the issue of the UBC membership structure at its Oct 24th meeting after which their recommendation will be submitted to the President. The UBC will continue to meet with its current membership until it is determined otherwise.

Public reaction to last week's meeting raised questions about the appropriate policy for speaking directly to the press. Dr. Vrem commented that while it was certainly acceptable to respond directly, he encouraged members to direct inquiries to our Public Affairs office. Members were also advised that UBC meeting notes are posted on the University Budget website.

It was noted that President Richmond's campus email made no specific mention of the UBC in the proposed strategy to address the budget deficit. Dr. Vrem stated that the committee recommendations would go directly to the President, as in past years. The UBC remains responsible for the budget process especially in areas of cross-divisional concern.

Saeed described the Academic Senate's wish to broaden the task force given input to the strategic plan. Rick reported that Academic Affairs will be starting its divisional budget and will be reviewing programs. Nancy reminded the UBC of the open meeting with the President and VP's called for Monday, October 30 to discuss the outline of the 07-08 Strategic Plan.

After this initial discussion, the membership turned its attention to the financial handouts provided by the University Budget office. The first handout described the FIRMS program codes as a method to classify expenses according to their related campus activity. Carol emphasized the importance of applying our expenses to the most appropriate category and program code to enable an accurate comparison with other campuses.

Other handouts reviewed included the 06-07 budget categorized by FIRMS program code and an 04-05 actual expense comparison with Sonoma and San Luis Obispo by FIRMS program code. These campuses had been selected because of size and program mix respectively. Rick requested that the group review the data and bring questions and perceived issues back to the next meeting.

The UBC discussed the issue of relevant comparisons and decided that three required factors would be rural environment, similar program mix, and size. The campuses identified were:

Rural: Chico, Stanislaus,
Program Mix: Cal Poly Pomona, San Luis Obispo
Size: Sonoma, Bakersfield

It was also suggested that we identify another campus outside the CSU system with similar characteristics to use as a benchmark as well. This additional campus has yet to be determined.

Saeed suggested that we gain an overall picture of our expenditure pattern over time through the use of ratios in comparison to other higher education institutions. He would like to answer why the number of administrators and staff has increased over time and yet enrollment remains similar to years ago.

Michael noted that various university support services are charged out and included as expenses within other departments. A report placing the actual expense where it was originally incurred was suggested to better determine the efficiency of the service.

Mark stated that we need to define who we are before we can evaluate what we can afford.

Rick pointed out that it would be good for the committee to review the current strategic plan but that it may not be as specific the committee may need. He sees the need for comparative data on majors, sections, and SFR to assess our curriculum's efficiency relative to other campuses.

Carol reminded the committee that while financial comparisons are good, that the UBC shouldn't get too mired down in the details, as the Committee's responsibility was to discuss and make policy level recommendations.

The committee decided that they need a better understanding of HSU's core mission before comparisons and evaluations could be made. University Budget will provide copies of the mission statement and our core values at the next UBC meeting.

Mark Larson made a motion that a broader body than just the UBC be engaged to participate in this cost reduction evaluation. Nancy Kelly seconded the motion.

Judith Little moved to table the motion until the next meeting. Michael Thomas seconded the motion and it carried with 1 nay and 1 abstention.

The next UBC meeting is called for Friday, October 27 in the Corbett Conference Room.

Agenda for next meeting: Discussion of the University's strategic plan

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Mortenson