

Humboldt State University
University Budget Committee
Friday, October 27, 2006
Meeting Notes

Co-Chair: Saeed Mortazavi

Voting Members: Lumei Hui, Mark Larson, Wayne Perryman, Laurie Sheppard, Glenn Sonntag, Brandon Hemenway

Proxy: Wayne Perryman for Michael Thomas, Saeed Mortazavi for Judith Little

Ex Officio: Carol Terry, Karen Earls

Observers: Anda Webb

Agenda: Review of HSU Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals

Before addressing the main agenda, Saeed reminded the UBC that when the HSU budget policy and procedure was approved by the President, the Academic Senate stated their intent to review the budget policy and procedure in the Fall of 2006. Saeed asked the committee for recommendations on the possible task force members who would undertake such a review.

After further discussion, it was generally preferred that the President determine the appropriate members for this evaluation process. Saeed will suggest this approach to President Richmond at their meeting on Tuesday, October 31.

The UBC then turned its attention to an examination of the keywords emphasized in the HSU Mission statement as presented in the 2004 – 2009 Strategic Plan. Beginning with the words “comprehensive” and “residential”, what emerged for the group was HSU as a holistic academic community. To serve in this capacity, the campus would not only provide a wide variety of educational programs and options, but would also offer the basic domestic services for students such as housing, healthcare, and safety as well as cultural and social activities.

It was recognized that a balance is required between the concepts of “high quality” and “affordable”. The concept of “affordable” raised suggestions of a strong financial aid infrastructure, incorporating the ability for students to earn money in conjunction with financial aid and also maintaining a reasonable fee structure. “High-quality education” was assumed to imply small class size and diverse programs. The question to be asked may be “What are small class sizes worth to our students?” Saeed mentioned the concept of “excellence fees” whereby certain courses may command higher fees to maintain the low student to faculty ratio.

Brandon mentioned a quantitative survey being conducted by the Sociology department to assess the “student voice” on budgetary preference. He believes the data-gathering will be complete by the end of the semester, but not necessarily analyzed.

The committee agreed that natural resources, the environment and the arts were not only programs of primary focus for HSU, but were also more expensive than most. Our cost per full-time student is much higher than the other CSU campuses we selected for comparison. Carol described the financial model where high-cost programs could possibly be subsidized by well-

attended, low-cost programs. However, being dependent on multiple high-cost programs is a difficult model to maintain. Will the “concentric circle” approach endanger our cash cows, i.e. will non-strategic programs with high enrollments be subject to reduction because they do not fit in the “inner circle”?

Laurie commented that any program with low enrollment should be considered potentially extraneous even if they belong to our “strategic” identity.

And what about non-academic programs? Academic support services should be evaluated in relation to the concentric core. Are the support services provided of high quality and responsive to the needs of the students, faculty and staff? Saeed suggested that an optimal re-balancing of the organization may create cost-saving efficiencies, consolidating or expanding certain cost centers without necessarily eliminating them.

Mark Larson described an evaluation method called the “Q-Sort” where each participant assigns a score (1 -3) to each program. The program scores are accumulated and the highest ranking are given priority in the evaluation process. However, he also wondered who would be the most appropriate participants to perform an evaluation of this kind.

After more general discussion, the action item for next week’s meeting will be to review the university cost centers and familiarize the committee with the many programs that currently make up the University and their objectives. This includes ALL cost centers, not just academic programs. The review is intended to learn more about each program’s alignment with the core mission of the university as identified in the Strategic Plan.

The next UBC meeting is called for Friday, November 3rd from 2 – 4pm in the Corbett Conference Room.

Agenda for next meeting: Review university cost centers.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Mortenson