

Minutes, Budget Committee of Academic Senate

Meeting of July 19, 2005 (as approved Nov. 28, 2005)

Present: Stephen Calkins (Chair), Marc Cogan, Ravi Dhar, Charles Elder (liaison), Robert P. Holley (liaison), Celeste Lezuch (liaison), Michael McIntyre, Charles Parrish, Frederic Pearson, Louis Romano, Linea Rydstedt, Vishwanath Sardesai, Assia Shisheva, Harley Tse, William Volz (liaison), James Woodyard.

Guests: Provost Nancy Barrett (first half of meeting); Seymour Wolfson

Absent: No one.

1. The meeting convened at 2:05 p.m.

2. *Provost's Presentation.* The Provost reviewed the case that the Administration will be presenting to the Board of Governors in support of an 18 1/2% (fallback 15 1/2%) tuition increase. Fundamentally, the two factors motivating her, she said, are concern that students are not getting the support they need, and declining faculty morale. She shared with the Committee the "critical needs" that would be funded with the additional revenues that would be generated by the two different increases, including need-based financial aid; academic program enhancements; research incentives/set-ups; graduate assistant stipends; additional advisors/retention programs; building operations and deferred maintenance; and campus safety.

Committee members asked a number of questions and made a number of observations. Several members spoke in support of the tuition increases. One member talked about how useful enhanced stipends had been previously in his department; another suggested that the need might be different in different departments, so it would be better to budget in a way that permits trade-offs. Several members expressed concern that the share of the budget going to schools and colleges has continued to decline and would do so next year. The concern is that the schools and colleges just are not getting increases in the course, but have to petition for increases year after year. The Provost expressed her hope that the schools and colleges can gain an increased share of the budget. She also expressed regret that she had not consulted earlier with the Budget Committee, and said that she hoped she could visit regularly—perhaps once a semester—with next year's Committee. The chair expressed confidence that next year's Committee would be eager to consult with her.

Tuition Increase

After the Provost and Ms. Lezuch left, discussion about the tuition increase continued briefly, largely emphasizing the problem of declining funding for the schools and colleges. The chair noted that Policy had written to President Reid to express its “strong support” of the 18.5% tuition increase, and indicated that he intended to vote in support of it.

University Budget

Consideration of the budget was made more difficult because only a summary was available—the normal budget book had not yet been made available (because, we were told, of uncertainty about the tuition level). Concern was expressed about the proposed budget for the Research Excellence Fund Centers and Institutes, including the following: (1) why was “administrative support” increasing by 50.3%; (2) the text and the budgets are unclear as to whether or not there are specific, earmarked state appropriations; (3) the principles for choosing among the three listed centers were unclear—for instance, one that appeared quite productive was being cut as much as one that appeared quite unproductive.

On other points, one member questioned why indirect costs were forecast as increasing by only 2.1% (noting that unduly conservative estimating of revenues tends to keep down the percentage of the budget available for hiring of faculty); another member wondered why investments weren’t forecast to increase. There was widespread concern about the continued decline in the share of budget going to schools and colleges.

Minutes

The minutes of the June 7, 2005, meeting were unanimously approved.

Annual Report

The chair invited suggested changes to the draft annual report. None were received.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00. This apparently being the last meeting of the year, the chair thanked the committee members for a productive year.

Stephen Calkins