

Provost's Advisory Council  
Summary of October 29, 2009 meeting

Bert Garza	Kathy Dunn	Susan Gennaro
Pat Byrne	Anna Rhodes	David Quigley
Pat DeLeeuw	Brian Jacek	Dick Clifford, S.J.
Marilyn Matelski	Amy Hutton	Tom Wall
Lillie Albert	Hassan Tehranian	Ce Shen
Elyse Purcell	Francine Cardman	Callista Roy
Colleen Griffith	Jim Russell	Kevin Bedell
Rosanna DeMarco	John Spinard	Don Hafner
Katie O'Dair	Jenny Baglivo	Anita Tien
Ana Martinez Aleman	Gilda Morelli	

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1. The summary for the meeting of September 2009 was approved and will be sent to the President's Office.
  2. Executive Vice President Pat King joined the Council to review the Long Range Financial Plan (LRFP). He observed that last year's economic downturn affected the FY2009 budget less than might be expected because the budget had already been set and the funding set aside. However, the impact on budgets in subsequent years will be significant.

As a result of last year's downturn, the University endowment finished the fiscal year down 23% from the previous year. Increases in tuition and fees were the lowest since 1974, and financial aid was increased significantly.

The University is reviewing all assumptions and elements of its base planning model. Major assumptions of the long range budget planning model include:

- x tuition increases at the consumer price index (CPI) + 2% (and tuition remission/financial aid rising at the same rate)
- x capital campaign continuing for the same duration (to 2015) and with the same goal (\$1.5B), but early cash influx slowing
- x endowment return has historically been 9%; it seems prudent to reevaluate for a lower rate of return.
- x salary increment pool at CPI + 1%
- x fringe benefits at CPI + 4%. However, in the last decade, increases in fringe benefits have exceeded this rate, with health benefits rising 8-9% yearly.
- x strategic initiatives at 2% plus increment, approximately \$5 million yearly

It was noted that this budget planning model has been a "conservative" model, and that its elements have served the University well in the past.

Two hypothetical, boundary setting variations with differing sets of assumptions for budget planning were described:

- x A high-revenue, low-expense variation, which would lead to a projected surplus of approximately \$30 million by FY2015 and \$100 million by FY2020. Under this model, there would be no strategic initiatives or capital expenses incurred.
- x A second variation, with low revenue and high expense assumptions, would lead to a projected deficit of \$61 million by FY2015 and \$100 million by FY2020. This model assumes the implementation of all strategic initiatives and capital expenses, with tuition increases remaining at CPI.

Between these two extremes is a difference of \$100 million by FY2015 and \$200 million by FY2020.

In December and again in February, the Treasurer will discuss the assumptions governing these models and will review the LRFP. Tuition, financial aid, and capital projects--the areas with greatest impact on the budget--will be reviewed with an eye toward maintaining the strategic goals of the University to continue academic momentum, have a balanced budget, meet enrollment targets on a need-blind basis, and meet the full demonstrated need of students.

- x Patrick Rombalski joined the Council to discuss the opening days of the school year, before classes begin. A small committee includes members from Student Affairs and the Provost's Office has been constituted to examine the opening days. Recent innovations include an "Opening Welcome" by the University and weekend programs to help students make the adjustment to college and to promote positive transitions and socialization. The goal is to ensure that these initial days on campus are conducive to student learning. Dr. Rombalski noted that this year's programming represented an inaugural effort, and that programming would be expanded and likely refocused in future years, perhaps to include discussions on academic integrity, workshops on issues of diversity, and conversations about the role and value of the Core. It was observed that this year's programming did not begin until 5:00 pm, a time that was helpful in discouraging negative behaviors in the evening, but that left students on their own during the day. Day activities could include faculty-led excursions to cultural and historical sites of interest in Boston.
- x It was observed that the portion of summer Orientation sessions includes an opportunity for parents to hear from a student panel. It has been observed that there is very little academic content mentioned to the students--no mention of faculty, of an advisor, of classes, of reading.
- x It was suggested that some of the time for students could be spent in proximity to faculty. Others noted that it may be intimidating for new students to be around faculty.
- x One possible approach was suggested--to take successful programs (such as PULSE) and appropriate them as models for implementation during opening days.
- x It was suggested that information about mental health and wellness for students could also be presented during these days.

Members are asked to send additional comments about the opening days and student programs directly to Patrick Rombalski.

3. Leo Sullivan and Bob Lewis joined the Provost's Advisory Council to provide information about the University's negotiations with the Service Employees International Union,