

University Senate Budget Committee (SBC)

Final report to University Senate 2015-2016

This report reflects activities of the Senate Budget Committee in 2015-2016 AY

Charge and Responsibilities of Senate Budget Committee:

Defined by UO Senate Bylaws:

“5.4 The Senate Budget Committee is charged with informing itself and the University Community about University financial matters. It shall advise the University President, other University administrators, the Senate President, the Senate and the University Community on budgetary policy and long-term financial strategies. The University Administration shall provide all financial information requested by the Committee in a timely fashion. The Budget Committee may initiate the study of financial issues. The Senate Budget Committee shall make recommendations to the Senate for Senate action.”

Membership:

John Chalmers, Finance (Chair); Jane Cramer, Political Science; Paul Dassonville, Psychology; Angie Davis, Accounting; Tim Duy, Economics; Ali Emami, Finance; Marina Guenza, Bill Harbaugh, Economics, Chemistry, Gordon Sayre, English;

1. Introduction

The SBC serves dual roles. First, we provide a sounding board for the Finance and Administration office. We have agreed that we are available to be helpful to the UO Administration and will respect the requests of the administration to maintain confidentiality of the information provided to us in the role of sounding board. We also agreed that our participation in that process should be conveyed to the UO Community in a manner consistent with this role. That is, we are willing to receive information and offer *ad hoc* reactions to it, but our involvement does not provide any sense of approval of administrative decisions.

In our second role, we serve ready to fulfill our charge from the Senate to help provide a better understanding of important financial issues that affect the university. This role will have a continuing reporting/educational component and a special projects component.

2. SBC activities in 2015-2016 Academic Year included:

- a) December 2015: the administration asked me to convene a meeting to get the SBC's thoughts regarding providing students with a guaranteed four year tuition plan. The complexities of that plan were discussed. Ultimately, it became clear that guaranteed tuition was probably not something that a majority of the SBC or the administration favored given the multitude of issues that it would raise.
- b) February 2016: We convened a meeting of the SBC and invited Andrew Marcus and Bruce Blonigen to provide details concerning the budget cutting process in CAS. They

both attended and helped us to understand the issues they faced and how they attended to them in going through the budget adjustment process.

- c) April 2016: We held a meeting to discuss the state of the UO budget and how planning is going to work going forward. We included in the discussion the role of the SBC and the processes for identifying priority areas for investment at the university.

3. Possible Items for Next Year's Agenda

Issues to be considered for study next year include:

- 1) Should the UO consider changing class scheduling to 90 minute blocks rather than 2 hour blocks? This could free up substantial additional classroom space without requiring additional buildings.
- 2) Should the UO change its billing practices and require tuition be paid at the beginning of every quarter? This could improve our working capital management and increase available funds.
- 3) Conduct a study to evaluate the UO's expenditures on administrative, CBA related and public relations related expenditures relative to UO peer institutions.

We thank Jamie Moffitt, Brad Shelton, and Daphne Joubran for their hard work and participation that allows the SBC to function.