

2006-2007 Academic Year Final Report

**Prepared by
Faculty Council Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee
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INTRODUCTION

In this academic year the Committee has focused on two areas, our annual review of the proposed budget for FY2008 and participation in the Chancellor's Strategic Planning effort as members of the individual subcommittees.

A new approach was proposed for the budget review process and is described in greater detail below. In essence it largely abandons the unit-by-unit approach taken in recent years. The Committee decided that rather than presenting budget recommendations before final administrative decisions are made; we would identify a set of priorities to act as a framework within which decisions on the budget allocation might be considered. To this end we developed a Budget Priorities working document (also given below) that was largely drawn from our general concerns sections of our prior year's report.

Our approach is to then review and comment on the budget allocation decisions of the administration regarding the extent to which they addressed the Committee's Budget Priorities framework. The hope is to recommend either a redirection of funds where the relationship to priorities might be more concomitant or at least arrive at a better mutual understanding of those decisions not seemingly as closely related to the identified priorities.

One or more Committee members attended the budget hearings of most of the units as they were presented in late May and throughout June. These hearings were generally quite informative with respect to the requests being made and quite sobering from a standpoint of need and available resources. The cooperation of the administration in allowing our attendance at these hearings is greatly appreciated and supports efforts to make the budget setting process more transparent. The Committee is now awaiting the budget decisions to review and offer our perspectives. We are meeting with the Faculty Council Executive Committee, Chancellor Motley and key members of the administration to begin this review process.

It is quite clear that without a major infusion of additional funding, or substantial reallocation of existing funds, most of the priorities identified will not be adequately addressed. Our review will highlight these conclusions by identifying funds that are mandatory (increased energy costs, infrastructure maintenance and repair) that will unfortunately consume most of the new money arriving on campus. The reports of the Chancellors Strategic Planning Subcommittees are consistent with the priorities identified as part of the BLRPC Committee's Budget Priorities document. To the extent possible the BLRPC will continue to provide an independent faculty perspective on the budget setting process in these difficult and ongoing times.

Finally the Committee has agreed to work with Vice Chancellor Ellen O'Connor as participants in her proposed University Resource Council, which will serve as an advisory group to Vice Chancellor O'Connor and the Provost on "matters relating to the budget and allocations of new and current financial resources." Part of the Council's efforts will, for example, address the issue of establishing reasonable staffing levels for the various units on campus and establishing criteria used to evaluate such requests in the future, a general concern the BLRPC has repeatedly identified as a need to promote a more transparent and justifiable decision making process in this important area. The Committee looks forward to supporting such an effort in increasing the transparency of the budget process.

FY 2008 Review Process Document

Proposed Budget Review Process for FY 2008 Long Range Budget and Planning Committee April 29, 2007

In general we are proposing that we provide the administration our perspective of the most important needs/suggestions identified in last year's general concerns section of the Long Range Budget and Planning Committee (LRBPC) FY 2007 Final Report. Last year we provided a detailed review of the budget requests from all units. This year we are proposing a somewhat different process that will focus on a budget review as it impacts the needs we identified in last years report referred to above.

We propose to revisit the general concerns identified in last year's report and provide a prioritized list of the general concern issues to the Faculty Council Executive Committee (FCEC) for forwarding to the administration. We hope this information would be considered by the administration as part of their decision-making process when considering each individual unit's request. After the administration and individual units have reached initial agreement on budgetary decisions, we would like the opportunity to review the decisions in the context of our prioritized list of concerns and report to the FCEC our findings. In some cases we might offer alternative funding recommendations reflecting faculty perspectives on the extent to which the proposed funding might be more effectively used in addressing University needs. The results of this review, and any responses to our subsequent recommendations, will be presented in our final budgetary report to the Faculty Council. To this end the (LRBPC) will undertake the following tasks.

Task 1

Review general concerns issues raised in last year's budget review process and set priorities for transmittal to the Faculty Council's Executive Committee and, after review and revisions if necessary, to the administration.

Task 2

Members of the LRBPC will attempt to attend at least some of the presentations by the units during the budget review process. Before budget decisions for the units are finalized, the committee will review the administration's proposed funding scenarios in the context of the general concern priorities identified in Task 1. As in past years, we anticipate needing access to budget requests to fully inform the committee on the nature of the requests and their justification. We would anticipate this need only for units where significant change in funding occurs or in some cases where the LRBPC identifies units where it thinks adjustments should have been made to address general concern issues.

Task 3

Present the results of the review in Task 2 to the FCEC for their review and forwarding (after revisions if necessary) to the administration.

Task 4

Meet with the administration to discuss recommendations made by the committee in Task 3. Such a meeting will allow a better understanding of the rationale and perspectives for decisions made in the case of differences in opinion. We hope this can serve both the LRBPC and the administration to make the dialog between the two as constructive and productive as possible.

Task 5

The LRBPC will prepare and publish its final report on its review of the FY2008 budget including assessment of progress made in addressing outstanding critical need issues identified in prior years as well as additional ones identified in this review.

Budget Priorities Document

Faculty Council Long-Range Budget and Planning Committee Recommendations on FY 2008 Budget Priorities

Introduction

We believe that there is a need to improve communications between administrative and academic functions on campus to enhance the operation and efficiency of the campus mission and to promote reachable goals in the planning process. This applies to all of the

priorities listed below and deserves attention in the formulation of the budget at all levels in the University structure.

Specifically we suggest that there be a better use of Faculty Council Committees to problem solve rather than administratively chosen ad hoc committees. Changes in faculty buy-out policies, return of overhead scenarios, space allocation and library studies among others have been assigned to ad hoc committees rather than existing Faculty Council committees that could, and should be, addressing such questions in a more collegial fashion. The potential to energize involvement of an all too complacent and apathetic faculty warrants investment in such a process.

Faculty participation on Faculty Council Committees needs to be recognized by both faculty and the administration as making a valuable contribution to campus well-being. In addition we encourage all units on campus to involve faculty and staff in the formulation of budget requests by the unit for the next fiscal year. Unit members are most aware of the needs of the unit and the Budget and Long Range Planning Committee (BLRPC) would find it useful if deliberations of such committees were made available as part of the unit's annual budgetary request.

It is important, however, that those faculty who invest their time and effort in these activities feel their efforts are appreciated. More meaningful experiences in such endeavors will encourage more active participation by faculty who currently feel they cannot make a difference. Unit heads should more explicitly encourage and reward such efforts.

Specific recommendations regarding budget priorities, identified by the (BLRPC) as relevant to the general concern issues raised over the last several years, are described below.

Faculty Support - Priority IA

The Committee expressed concern last year about faculty support in terms of hard money, return of university overhead on research funds, and start-up funds. While all of these sources of funds should be examined when considering faculty support as a whole, we found that university criteria for judging the adequacy of support for faculty in terms of hard money ranging from basic supplies to staff support were lacking. This proved particularly frustrating because different units requested additional support for their faculty using a variety of rationales and justifications because there was no overall agreed upon university guidance. As far as we are aware, a base-level structure for faculty support has still not been established at the university level. **Therefore, in lieu of the development of such criteria this year, we recommend that when viewing budget requests the administration keep in mind such criteria as:**

- **the number of students served by the unit and the level of engagement (e.g. degree of student contact -- teaching, frequent or infrequent advising, graduate dissertations, etc.)**

- **the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty in the unit (we assume that units with relatively high ratios need more full-time faculty support because part-time faculty are usually not able to advise doctoral students, handle personnel matters such as hiring and promotion and tenure review, AQUAD, etc.)**
- **the ratio of junior to senior faculty in the unit**

These are but a few criteria identified to enhance the transparency of the budget process and begin to improve equity in terms of the distribution of such funds across units at this time. Units requesting additional support funds for faculty or proposing the development of new programs should be asked to develop proposed criteria for minimal faculty support that demonstrates the need for such funds.

Finally, in order to avoid this need to rely on temporary guidance in the 08-09 budget year, we applaud the administration's efforts to form a committee composed of faculty and relevant administrators to develop a more permanent guide for providing baseline and supplementary faculty support that can be applied on a university-wide basis. The BLRPC is willing to play a role in the development of the criteria that will be used in the permanent guidance document.

Faculty Recruitment - Priority IB

The BLRPC wishes to reiterate its concerns about faculty recruitment expressed last year. **In addition to providing a guide for hard money faculty support that potential candidates could be informed about during the recruitment process, we also would encourage the administration to think innovatively about how to provide sufficient start-up funds for all faculty.** For particularly expensive research areas, such innovation could involve the fronting of significant start-up monies with some of the overhead from research production dedicated to paying back these monies as the new faculty member procures research monies. In other words, start-up funds should not be artificially limited by particular fiscal year constraints as this could hinder the recruitment of top candidates who could pay back in overhead many times the initial investment in start-up funds required to attract them to UMB.

Student Recruitment and Retention - Priority II

Retention and recruitment of both undergraduate and graduate students are campus-wide issues, and as such, require a well-thought-out and carefully designed and monitored action plan that includes the participation of faculty and staff at all levels. A coordinated effort involving departments, colleges, and University staff should begin with an open and frank discussion as to best practices and which activities are best initiated by the different units. While we acknowledge that a more clearly articulated plan for recruitment and retention (one that defines the specific roles of units) is needed, we need to act now in this new budget cycle. We suggest that units (departments and colleges) should play a stronger role in recruitment and retention than they have played in the past. **Therefore, preference should be given to carefully planned unit requests for support of student**

recruitment and retention activities that are both unique to the unit and complementary to the activities of the larger University. Overall, a minimum amount of support should be provided to all colleges to engage in similar types of activities with the expectation of assessment of success of results.

At the undergraduate and graduate level we support budget allocations towards the following activities:

- **Enhancement of the admissions process to promote outreach to potential students, especially those who have already identified potential career paths. In some cases this activity should intimately involve faculty and staff of units to assure attraction of the best and brightest.**
- **Revision of the graduate admission process to promote electronic submittals and rapid transfer of applications to the web to allow early review of graduate applications at the department level. Individual unit web pages have assumed immense importance in recruitment at the graduate level.**
- **Expansion of and publicizing the honors program to tap underutilized resources to support such students by advertising opportunities on our web site**
- **Make access to university information for prospective undergraduate and graduate students more user-friendly. For example, non-matriculated students who are considering taking a course at UMB should be able to easily identify available courses using the “search courses” function on the University’s home page. Despite the BLRPC noting the difficulties in the use of this function it remains unchanged and essentially of minimal value to potential new students and does little to encourage prospective students.**
- **Increase and/or establish new and innovative “collective advising” at the department level to provide greater opportunities for establishing and sustaining student connections to the campus**
- **Provide instructional support activities for faculty and a supportive environment in the classroom to assist at-risk students**
- **Provide resources to implement student-centered academic and non-academic enrichment activities at the departmental level to augment activities provided by the Office of Student Life. Such activities would be designed to build a sense of community among students who share common career/academic interests, and in so doing, strengthen both inter-student and student-faculty connections.**

An important factor that contributes to recruitment and retention of students is the physical environment of our campus – those sites where teaching, learning, and advising take place. It is imperative that as the University moves forward in its strategic plan to refurbish, rebuild, and build anew, that we ensure that the physical environment is not only welcoming for students but also supports and enhances the activities of our University.

Instructional and Academic Technology and the Library - Priority III

The BLRPC acknowledges that state-of-the-art Instructional and Academic Technology for the Library must meet the needs of a diverse group of university stakeholders and is essential to our continued ability to achieve our “strategic goals and aspirations” as a publicly funded higher educational institution. New iterations of instructional technology and academic technology require the right mix of resources (e.g., people, time, and software) necessary to fully implement technologic innovations and maintain their use in future semesters. However not all unit needs can be satisfied by centralized resources. Budget requests by the units should be evaluated in terms of their specific need, accompanied by clear justification of such need, to allow exception to basic university-wide support position allocations if implemented.

The Library has made substantial progress in its efforts to serve the students and faculty of the campus and should be encouraged to continue to do so. The BLRPC would like to see a more active Library Committee working with the Library administration to accomplish these goals by delineating those areas in greatest need for budgetary support and communicating those needs to the University Community through the Faculty Council. **Continued growth in the book collection, online serial collection, enhancement of training (faculty and students) and enhancement of the online presence of the Library should be supported. The BLRPC continues to wonder, however, if system-wide unification of access to collections across all campuses cannot alleviate some of the resource needs on this and other campuses in the system.**

Integration of PeopleSoft at the Unit Level - Priority IV

Last year a number of units requested funding to integrate their unit’s software management and integration with the existing PeopleSoft framework. Given the huge and ongoing investment in this software, it is not clear why yet more funds are required to fully use this program. We sincerely hope that these costs can be absorbed into the ongoing costs associated with PeopleSoft, which have already had a significant financial impact on the institution.

The BLRPC acknowledges that discussions about the state of campus IT and the infrastructure required to operate a modern campus are not new ones. The Committee views PeopleSoft as an important campus management information function across the UMass System. But over the years, the Committee has expressed many concerns about

the basic nature and type of software implementation options needed to manage campus operations, the extensive multi-million dollar annual licensing agreement fees, and the enormous hourly costs required to customize PeopleSoft products to better serve our local campus needs.

We recognize that the campus must address software adaptations to better meet our needs continuously throughout the year and especially whenever possible during budget allocation periods. The Committee does not think that larger institutional fixed costs can be easily broken down to a discussion at the unit level to create working guidelines for this budget year. **However, the Committee recommends that additional charges to customize applications of PeopleSoft programs to better meet unit needs not be funded through scarce general revenues and instead suggests that requests be identified and pooled to identify economies of scale within the campus and across the other campuses to maximize sharing of costs.**

Facilities - Priority V

The issue of facilities and the state of the physical plant is not a new one, building and renewing the structure to meet the needs of University stakeholders is essential to our continued ability to achieve our “strategic goals and aspirations” as a publicly funded higher educational institution. Many attempts have been made to revitalize and reorganize the space so that it is engaging and more vibrant without the infusion of needed capital to create state of the art facilities in the sciences and the arts and humanities. These temporary fixes work to some degree but leave the university each year with a myriad of small and large requests for improvement at the unit level.

The purpose of the BLRP Committee’s work in this critical area this year is not to anticipate the final details of the Master Plan Sub-Committee of the larger Strategic Planning Task Force final recommendations, but instead to reaffirm our continued concerns about this as a high priority area. Recommendations for this year are not intended to preempt the work of future committees in the planning and determination of such needs.

However the BLRP Committee strongly suggests that the budget allocation process in the facilities area include the judicious allocation of funds intended to improve the conditions for teaching and learning. Any presentations requesting funds should be prioritized into various categories with the teaching and learning category receiving the greatest weight when funds are allocated to the units.

The Committee also recommends that a permanent Faculty Council Space Committee be established, and charged with working with faculty and staff to evaluate the larger repair and refurbishing requests that must go forward on the campus. The Committee recognizes that in these next ten years other committees, will be charged with exploring and implementing the recommendations from the yet to be released Chancellor’s Strategic Planning Task Force Report (anticipated release June 2007).

Athletics - Priority VI

Though not a foremost priority, the BLRPC acknowledges the importance of the athletics department in creating a campus culture of inclusion. The recreation facilities and community-based programming have the potential to improve the overall campus sense of community for students, faculty, and the community at-large. There is a new spirit on campus in support of our athletic endeavors and we recognize the importance that athletics plays in achieving campus identity and vitality. **We recommend the following strategies for the athletics unit for it to be fully embraced by the entire academic community:**

- **An external review should be done to determine student, faculty, and community use of the facilities.**
- **An external audit of accounting practices**
- **An evaluation of community programming**

Presentations requesting funds for expanded projects should be prioritized in the above context and data that propose concrete programs for students, faculty, and the UMB community at-large that clearly address constituents' needs.