

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jill Wakefield, President
FROM: College Council
RE: Budget Recommendations for 2008-2009

SUMMARY

The four divisional budget requests presented at the 2008 budget hearings were appropriately conservative for the college's current financial environment. Requests supported college goals and were well aligned with the college-wide priorities: *Promote Student Learning and Success, Ensure the Financial Health of the College and Prepare the College for its Preferred Future.*

Five main themes emerged this year from both the scheduled College Council meetings and the Budget Hearings: Growth/Capacity, Student Success, External Socioeconomic Environment, Emergency Preparedness, and Accreditation.

BALANCING GROWTH AND CAPACITY

The considerable requests for infrastructure, staffing, and efficiency chronicled the recent growth of the college. Budget presentations reflected growth over the last several years and the anticipated increase of 100 FTEs in the 2008-2009 budget year. We must consider the increased demand on staff due to underfunded mandates, state expectations, and reality of unprepared high school graduates, in addition to increasing FTEs. The extent to which college personnel have worked hard to rise to the challenge is commendable; however, infrastructure must be adequately resourced to accommodate this increase. This is an ongoing concern that college staff have articulated previously. It is imperative that we evaluate our current capacity as we prepare for continued growth and our preferred future.

Staffing

A strong demand for staffing was clearly documented. All of the staffing requests, as outlined in the budget presentations, appear to be justified and modest. Historically, the institution has responded to increased demand with part-time positions, which can lead to a false sense of economy. Increases in full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff should be consistent with growth. Budget presentations illustrating converting part-time benefited positions to full-time positions does not represent a substantial financial commitment on the part of the college and may decrease the college's total benefit costs. Full-time office hours, advising, and committee work contribute to student retention. Staffing should appropriately reflect the number of people being served.

Additional concern needs to be focused on Georgetown and PSIEC. These facilities are in close alignment with the business community, political interests, and have tremendous potential as the college strives to meet the demands of the labor force in the coming years. All SSCC locations need a security presence and dedicated IT administrative services. Appropriate staffing will maximize productivity.

Efficiency

Administrative services should be commended for the fine work they do in revenue-generating activities. One quote from the budget hearings was "profit is not a dirty word". College Council recommends reexamining policies and practices through a lens refocused on private sector efficiencies such as fee structures and alignment of costs (e.g. rentals, parking).

STUDENT SUCCESS

Excellent work has been done to improve student retention and completion. Compelling data were presented; personnel dedicated to Opportunity Grant students contributed to a 98% quarter-to-quarter

retention. Budget presentations revealed of 3864 financial aid applicants, only 1218 (32%) of forms were complete. Assistance in the financial aid process would improve financial health of the college as well as remove a barrier for the community we serve. The Council endorses funding positions and initiatives that improve student success.

EXTERNAL SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Preparing the college for our preferred future requires clear understanding of the external socioeconomic environment. The college must consider proper planning, budgeting for inflationary factors, and rising utility and fuel costs in the changing economic environment to ensure financial health. Responses to current changes need to reflect everything from time of class scheduling, to tuition costs, commuting costs, to training for jobs appropriate in the shifting work force. Decisions made as we go forward need to take into account long-term trends and the current situation. Whenever possible, sustainable and green alternatives should be sought and South should step up to provide leadership as we prepare for our shared future.

SECURITY/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Substantial advances have been made in the area of Emergency Preparedness, a theme discussed at the 2007-2008 Budget Hearings. Work has been done to bring the institution from non-compliance/limited capacity with a minimal financial investment on the part of the college. Efforts on this front deserve continued financial support.

ACCREDITATION

The contribution of personnel college-wide attests to the dedication to our preferred future. The accreditation process provides a rare opportunity for thorough self-study leading to continuous improvement. This exercise have been engaging and enlightening and it has highlighted areas of need. Lessons learned from this self examination are indicated by appropriately aligned budget requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE BUDGET HEARINGS

The 2008 budgetary process was facilitated greatly by the excellent work of the Business Office and the Budget Development Workshop should be included as a best practice. The common template for presentations increased transparency, consistency, clarity, and tied requests to college priorities. This format allowed each division to tell the story of the excellent work that they do and how resources are allocated. Unambiguous expectations provide comprehensive information such as occurred this year. Results of the climate survey reflect sentiment from faculty and staff that participation in the budget process is limited; however, attendance to the budget hearings was disappointingly low. Our goal is to increase attendance and participation.

The transparency of the budgetary process under President Wakefield's leadership is admirable. A standard is set for collaboration and clear communication as the college's financial resources are clearly aligned with college-wide priorities. Each year the process improves.

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