

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 10, 2012

TO: Gary Oertli, President, South Seattle Community College

FROM: College Council

RE: Budget Recommendations for 2012-2013

Introduction

The 2012 divisional budget request presentations amply illustrate the diligence and care that SSCC has demonstrated in its analysis, planning, budgeting, focus, and stewardship of our dwindling resources.

With a nearly 35% reduction in state funds over the last few years, maintaining the highest standards of serving students hasn't been easy, to say the least. We have met these challenges by "doing more with less." Every division has reported that it is stretched to capacity and beyond. Even with utilizing additional grant funding, resources are taxed. We have made hard but fiscally sound decisions such as pruning when it had become clear that thinning would no longer do. We have sacrificed personnel and salary, re-prioritized division needs, and reduced the maintenance of grounds and equipment to the barest essentials needed to maintain state compliance and safety.

We are aware that we will not see our state funds restored to previous levels anytime soon; the good news is that we will not have to plan for more cuts in state funding this year. Unfortunately, this good news is tempered with the knowledge that students will shoulder more of the financial burden of their education due to the legislature's 12% student tuition increases both last year and again this year.

The College Council believes that South Seattle Community College should put its focus squarely on doing what we can to support our students, both directly and indirectly, in the following areas:

- Student Achievement
- Teaching and Learning
- College Culture and Climate
- Community Engagement and Partnerships

The purpose of this memo is to make recommendations regarding the divisional budget request presentations based on feedback received from those who attended the presentations, as representatives of our various constituencies, and our experience as a Council.

Issues Presented in the Budget Hearings

Hiring Positions/Utilizing Staff:

The College Council heartily agrees with feedback received during budget presentations regarding hiring a **web assistant for PIO**, as this will help with implementing student self-serve innovations and information dissemination. We also recommend that those departments needing additional website work, (and have funding for this work), have those funds and website enhancements managed through the PIO office for centralization and consistency. Keeping in mind that we serve *real* people, not FTEs, a better-enhanced website encourages students to be more self-motivated and self-sufficient, and can help make the enrollment and registration process run more smoothly.

The College Council heartily agrees with the positive feedback received during budget presentations regarding the hiring of an **electrician**, because in order to have the best possible environment for learning, our campus environment must maintain safety and reflect the quality of our services. To this end, electrical maintenance staff is absolutely critical to our campus, and we agree that an electrician is needed.

Based on feedback from the presentations, we also fully support hiring adequate **Financial Aid staff** to meet the needs of our students. This is extremely important during these hard times, and particularly so with the increased student tuitions! Additionally, we support the suggestions to fund a combined **position of 13th-year support** with an admissions support position.

We also support campus feedback encouraging campus partnerships with the Student and Activities (S&A) Fee Board to explore funding for web-based information that directly serves students and supports their achievement and activities.

Presentations suggested using **Student Leadership** as "Peer-to-Peer Mentors" to supplement Student Services staff and help students with the online tools such as Web Application, Student Online Services, Degree Audit, the Pre-Advising website, and perhaps even SOAR outreach events, and campus feedback was in agreement. The Council wholeheartedly supports this. "Peer-to-Peer Mentors" could walk the registration line (think "Apple Store") with a checklist, winnowing out those who are applying to our campus, those who simply want to update records, etc., from those who need to register for a class. Additionally, they could also encourage students to use the pre-advising website which starts them off right and encourages students to take more responsibility and ownership of their process. This begins the process of helping students to be set up for success. The other important benefit of the "Peer-to-Peer" approach is the development of *community*. Students going through registration will now have another student on campus with whom they can connect, reducing their feeling of isolation, which can make a wonderful difference in student success and retention.

Lab aids and tutors are *desperately* needed, and it's time we focused on these valuable services. College Council commends the S&A Fee Board for fully supporting tutoring and other services. We are in favor of increased funding for tutoring. This, we believe, will help with accreditation, climate, retention, and student success.

Practices:

Due to increased tuition rates, it is anticipated that fewer students will enroll in colleges throughout Washington State. Therefore, College Council heartily approves feedback recommending investing in Student Services because, as the front line, they are the starting point for our students who will be looking for the utmost value for their dollar. To this end also, we would echo feedback stressing the use (*and enforcement of*) appropriate and accurate placement tools and pre-advising and advising services, and we encourage additional funds going towards retention services. We recommend streamlining and collaboration among departments that are advising students who are earning a degree or certificate.

Technologies:

College Council heartily approves the feedback received during budget presentations regarding expanding and marketing the Work Discoveries program to include a wider audience, thereby increasing student success and retention. Allowing funds to be allocated toward students in Work Discoveries, either by scholarship or by directing funds from S&A fees, would aid student retention and success by alleviating the problem of students being unprepared for their level of studies, which impacts in the level of learning in any given classroom.

Innovation:

Work Discoveries, Start Next Quarter, Online Tutoring, Degree Audit, HERSHEY, FACTS payment plan, HigherOne Seattle Colleges Card, and other online resources including newer applications that give students more control over their educational processes, time, and experiences, has shown to be useful and popular. This is the kind of innovation that not only helps our students succeed, but saves the campus money. The College Council approves the feedback received during budget presentations regarding support of these technologies.

South Seattle's eLearning classes are gaining in popularity due to the course offerings and convenience, and **South leads the state in successful student completion** of online classes. However, by comparison, our staffing levels are lower than other eLearning offices district-wide. We recommend adding more online class offerings and increasing instructor learning resources.

Mini-Classes for students:

We approve the feedback suggesting helping students learn how to find the resources and use:

- Learning Management System (LMS), e.g., ANGEL, Canvas, etc.
- South Gmail
- Student Online Services
- South Library
- Brief MS Office tutorials
- Supplements such as Khan Academy and Academic Earth

Infrastructure – Maintenance:

In order to have the best possible environment for learning, our campus environment must reflect the quality of our services. To this end, maintenance is absolutely critical to our campus, and as mentioned above, College Council approves the budget request to hire an electrician to keep our campus running smoothly.

Efficiencies:

We need to look at collaboration and/or consolidation where there are duplicate departments in both the Academic and Professional/Technical divisions.

Additionally, we need to find a way to enhance the process in place for work orders through the Facilities department. As the Administration Service Budget Presentation noted, campus staff believe that help requests are slow to get answered. Currently the system of submitting work requests into the Facilities work queue often gives the feeling that your request has been lost or forgotten. Since there now seems to be much more satisfaction with IT/PIO work order process "HelpDeskRequest", perhaps Facilities' "Megamation" could be reconfigured to send out a receipt and estimated time for addressing the problem. This would go far towards changing the perception that Facilities has a slow response time.

College Council agrees with campus feedback regarding developing core-themed, prioritized criteria for administrators in regards to budgeting concerns. Additionally, transparent and communicated criteria for switching faculty positions around to where needed would alleviate the confusion regarding why positions "disappear" such as those referred to by Instruction (wine faculty position at South converted to faculty position on another campus).

Some of the requests presented seem on the frivolous side when compared to what we've had to pare and prune. \$6k requested for travel for Administrative Services seems excessive. Council agrees with feedback from budget hearings that this expense be reconsidered.

Community Engagement and Partnerships:

The College Council recommends continuing the policy of contracted partnerships, e.g., Bernie's and the Bookstore. Much care should be given concerning contracting out our services. We would like to stress encouraging *higher* standards of product availability, costs, customer service, hours of operation, and meeting the campus needs for hiring students. Specific recommendations for Bernie's include the following:

- Provide faster service.
- Increase healthful food choices consistently throughout the week.
- Offer quality food service evenings and Saturdays.

Summary

The College Council agrees with requests from Divisions and feedback from campus that a full-time financial aid position and a support person in admissions/outreach should be funded, as well as an electrician and web design assistant. We agree with suggestions to encourage the use of Student Leadership as Peer-to-Peer Mentors to help students through some of the processes fundamental to their admission, advising, registration success such as introducing students to advising services, Student Online Services, etc. We would like to stress the need for increased funding for tutoring.

College Council would like to take a minute to give kudos to IT for the work they've done addressing various issues that have plagued the department in recent years. We received nothing but compliments for IT in campus feedback during the presentations, and we would like to add our own.

We'd also like to express our appreciation to our fellow campus members for their resilience and perseverance in what can unquestioningly be called the worst of financial times.

We appreciate the transparency shown by the college in this budgetary process. The College Council relies on receiving clear and unambiguous information in order to make its recommendations, so we ask that we receive more detailed and specific monetary values in the future. The Council wishes to thank all of the Divisions for printed materials provided *before* the budget hearings, which allowed an effective review and response.

We appreciate this opportunity to serve our campus, all the hard work and effort that went into the budgeting process – from obtaining the information to developing and delivering the presentations – and the thoughtful responses from those who attended the hearings.

Respectfully submitted,

College Council

College Council 2011-2012: Catherine McCollum (Chair), Jennifer Evans (Vice Chair), Paula Herd, Mike Rudnev, Katie Frasier, Marla Lockhart, Pablo Basilio, Pedro Reyes, Kelly DeForrest, Ben Taves, Kosal Sieng, Tori Stoner, Eric Owen, Suzanne Sittner (Secretary)