

May 4, 2016

Dear President Oertli:

Thank you for giving the College Council the opportunity to provide you with feedback regarding the 2016-2017 budget proposals.

We would like to start off by acknowledging that resources are very scarce this budget cycle, and our recommendations may be more than can be covered in the budget.  Our approach will be to pass on our best interpretation of the priorities of the College community, rather than to determine the actual financial feasibility of the recommendations.  The mandatory funding items clearly need to be given the first allocation of resources and we know that anything which is not vital will only be considered if resources to pay for it can be found.  With this in mind, these recommendations are meant to prioritize the proposals in terms of importance to the campus community.

Out of the four presentations this year, two departments (VP of Instruction and VP of Student Services) requested additional line items, while the VP of Administrative Services and the President’s Office did not request any non-mandatory additional funds.

When providing feedback for the Budget Hearings, attendees were asked to rate each proposal on whether it was essential to the College (ETC) and give their level of overall support (OS.)  With each proposal, we have noted the percents of those who gave the highest rating in each category in their feedback. We used this data to inform our recommendations, but did not have a strict threshold for support.

**Instruction**

* Full Time lab technician

ETC: 93%; OS: 93% - **Strongly recommend**

This was the most supported proposal by the campus community across all divisions during these budget hearings. This is an essential position if we’re going to continue to grow and retain our recent growth in our science programs. There are also current safety concerns that this would help address.

**Student Services**

* Continue Completion Coach Funding

ETC:  84%; OS:  84% - **Strongly Recommend**

This is vital for both guided pathways and South 2017. It should provide efficient use of funds compared to recruiting new students and thus not be a net drain on the budget. Additionally, this is a proposal that we might be able to find grants to help fund, and the Council would recommend exploring that option if feasible.

* Restore Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Deficits from State Allocation Redesign

ETC:  57%; OS:  70% - **Recommend**

At around $6000, this is a fairly modest request. Campus climate is currently a huge issue at this time which we are in the process of addressing. This would tie in to both personal safety and cultural lack of comfort. Students, faculty and staff need to feel safe on campus. Morale on campus is low right now and this proposal directly helps.

The Council knows that at this time there are many other requests that all the divisions might like to make which will be necessary long term, but for now given the state of our finances we don’t recommend pursuing any items not mentioned as proposals. Having said that, as a series of hypothetical questions, what would we need to give up as an institution to meet these proposals? Can we anticipate our needs and shortfalls better in the future? What can we as a campus do to work on the revenue side of the equation in terms of retention, schedules, which classes we offer, etc … How well is this budget process is aligned with our strategic planning?

We wish that we could recommend fully funding all the proposals and wish lists this year, but we know that that there is a shortfall just to keep funding for various programs at their current levels. All the divisions worked hard to keep their requests to a minimum, and it showed.  There is clear evidence that throughout the campuses we are trying to do more with less.  We know that the next decisions will not be easy ones to make, but hopefully these recommendations will help make it clearer where the priorities of the faculty, staff and students lie at this time.  Thank you for this opportunity to give you our recommendations.

With great respect,

SSC College Council