

UPBC Report 2016-2017

FROM: University Planning and Budget Committee
TO: President Zulma Toro
CC: Faculty Senate
RE: Budget Proposal Recommendations

DATE: March 7, 2017

As you know, there were two significant changes to the annual budget proposal process this year. First, Fiscal Affairs published a cache of [historical expenditure information](#), including university spending plan expenses from FY 2005 to the present, and historical expenses by division from FY 2010 to the present. These data provided the UPBC and members of the campus community an unprecedented level of transparency, allowing the UPBC to review past spending as it considered proposals for FY 2018 budgets as well as one-time/capital expenditures. Second, the budget calendar was altered to create a window during which the campus community could review the historical expenditure information as well as the FY 2018 [budget, capital and one-time expenditure proposals](#) prior to the February 23 meeting between the UPBC and the division heads. The UPBC would like to thank you for authorizing these changes.

General Recommendations:

Before proceeding to the divisional proposals, the UPBC would like to offer the following observations and general recommendations.

As the UPBC has noted before, divisions should not rely on one-time funding for the support of essential operations. We have made some recommendations in this report advocating that certain expenses be relocated to base budgets, but as the availability of one-time funds will probably shrink, *we recommend a focused review of all one-time and capital expenses* in recent years. Recurring items should be moved into base budgets if at all possible.

A significant constriction in state support for FY 2018 and FY 2019 seems likely. It is imperative that the resulting cuts to the divisions not be made across the board. Moreover, the members of the UPBC are convinced that the “real story” of university expenditures lies in the divisions’ annual budgets, which are not subject to our close review. After exploring the historical expenditure information provided this year, *we encourage you to begin a transparent review of base budgets* to ensure that they align with strategic priorities. As part of this process, we also recommend a review of vacancy and salary savings within each division.

At the same time, we are aware that the current [Strategic Plan](#) itself requires review, which complicates this process. In our discussions of the proposals before us, we have been guided by the three priorities you established: 1) increasing enrollment; 2) enhancing community engagement; and, 3) identifying additional sources of revenue. More specifically, we have given

careful consideration to proposals with implications for student recruitment and retention. As CCSU moves toward the [integrated strategic planning and budgeting process](#) required by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC), the UPBC looks forward to working with you in the design of a new, long-term strategic plan. This spring we will review the existing plan to identify which goals and objectives should be prioritized in the interim.

Specific Recommendations for the Divisions:

Academic Affairs:

The UPBC supports the “above the line” proposals made by former Provost Carl Lovitt for a new Clinical Placement Coordinator and the reclassification of an Assistant Dean position, both in the School of Education and Professional Studies (SEPS). Although it is not clear that these changes will result in overall cost savings, they are well-reasoned and will free faculty to focus on their primary responsibilities.

The reduction plan in Academic Affairs first depletes salary savings, then methodically cuts individual budgets, and finally eliminates full-time, faculty positions currently filled by emergency hires (i.e., non tenure-track). While the UPBC understands the desire to protect full-time faculty positions, the scale of individual budget cuts raises significant concerns as it would necessitate the elimination of numerous student worker positions and undermine the educational mission. Reluctantly, should substantial cuts to Academic Affairs become necessary, the UPBC recommends that one-third of these faculty positions be eliminated at the 5%, 10% and 15% level respectively.

The UPBC supports the numerous one-time requests related to recruitment and retention that appear in the first twenty priorities of Academic Affairs, but observes the following. First, these are essential tasks; in future, the funding should be located in the base budget. Second, and this applies equally to proposals from other divisions as well, the members of the UPBC are deeply concerned that in our haste to promote recruitment and retention, we are allocating funds in such a decentralized fashion that it will be difficult to determine their effectiveness. We strongly recommend centralized oversight of these expenditures regardless of their location in the budget.

We are generally supportive of the few capital requests prioritized here.

Administrative Affairs:

The UPBC supports the tuition differential for athletic scholarships with an understanding that the funds committed will be only those that are needed. At this time we cannot support the request for CCTV/Security Camera Maintenance, although we recognize that this is an important expenditure. Steps should be taken to place this cost within the division’s base budget.

In general, the UPBC has no concerns about the proposed reduction plan for the division, assuming that none of the SUOAF positions targeted for elimination are currently occupied.

The UPBC recognizes that Administrative Affairs faces numerous upcoming challenges, owing in part to the age of CCSU facilities. The UPBC supports the one-time request for lighting upgrades in the Student Center, Copernicus, Vance and Welte garages, because this investment will pay for itself over a short period of time. With one-time funds likely to be in short supply, we suggest that the CCTV installations and Verint purchases be deferred.

The UPBC would appreciate additional information on several of the one-time/capital requests. Specifically, are the police server conversion and Phase 1 of the conversion to a digital dispatch console tied together? How much will this conversion cost overall, knowing that it should be complete as of 2019? Are there any other funds that might pay for the Invensys upgrade, Welte LEDs, additional AEDs, and emergency lighting upgrades? With answers to these questions in hand, the UPBC would be pleased to provide additional guidance.

Fiscal Affairs:

Roughly one-quarter of the full-time staff in Fiscal Affairs are eligible to retire; at least two have already identified specific retirement dates. As positions are vacated, they should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and refilled if they support essential functions or strategic priorities.

The UPBC supports the capital request for a new copier.

Human Resources:

Human Resources did not request additional support in terms of increases “above the line,” one-time expenses, and capital expenditures.

Information Technology:

The UPBC supports the proposal for a new network telecom position to support VoIP telecommunications on campus. Funds previously sent to the system office on an annual basis will be reallocated for this purpose. We also support the refill of the technical services position if vacated, understanding that it is critical to the division. The UPBC does not support the proposal for a Chief Information Security Officer position at this time.

Most of the one-time and capital requests from Information Technology support refreshing/upgrading computers and servers across campus. The funds required are substantial. With one exception, the UPBC is broadly supportive of these expenditures but believes that scheduled replacements must be moved into the division’s base budget. We also encourage a careful review of the replacement schedule to see if we can eke out savings by delaying the refresh of underutilized computers. At the same time, the UPBC believes that certain academic disciplines and campus offices require frequent replacements. Any computer located on the “front line” of our daily interaction with prospective and current students (e.g., admissions, registrar’s office) must be current.

The UPBC does not support the outdoor/public wireless project listed as a capital request. This is the one exception mentioned above.

Institutional Advancement:

The UPBC supports additional funds for University advertising, assuming that this will support efforts to increase enrollment. As we noted above, funds for recruitment and retention should appear in base budgets. The UPBC expects that the effectiveness of these expenditures will be carefully assessed before requesting additional funds in future.

Institutional Advancement also proposes to add three assistant directors with responsibilities for alumni affairs, continuing education, and marketing & communications. In the current financial climate, the UPBC cannot support these proposals.

It has been the understanding of the UPBC that the Institute for Technology & Business Development (ITBD) is a self-supporting unit, yet the executive summary for Administrative Affairs lists ITBD operational costs as one of the “challenges” facing that unit and the one-time request for Institutional Advancement includes \$12,100 for purchases of laptops, miscellaneous tools, and a smart board. The UPBC does not support these one-time purchases for the ITBD; a self-supporting enterprise should be able to cover them.

President’s Office:

The UPBC could not agree on a recommendation for the proposed position reclassification in Diversity & Equity.

We support the capital request for a color copier, as well as the one-time expenditure for Green Dot Instructor Training proposed by the Office of Victim Advocacy.

Student Affairs:

The UPBC supports the request for an assistant counselor to improve availability of services to students, faculty and staff. We also support the refill of the Secretary 2 position.

The UPBC does not support hiring two part-time physicians as University Assistants. Personnel hired to provide medical care, on a full- or part-time basis, should be afforded the protection of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Upon careful review, we do support requests for two other University Assistant positions, one each in the Student Center and Residence Life. It is our understanding that the former will be paid for from a food rate increase, and the latter from DPS/OE.

The UPBC is broadly supportive of the one-time and capital requests proposed by Student Affairs. We would prioritize the “Fall Welcome Back” activity. It is unclear to us why evacuation chairs appear in the Student Affairs budget. We would expect to see the evacuation chairs as a

safety item in Administrative Affairs. The UPBC has also asked in past why the Collegiate Link Software request cannot be paid via student fees, as it directly supports club activities.