

Senate Budget & Planning Council
Minutes for April 21, 2015
UC 202

Members present: J. Matthew, H. Wilder, J. Owlett, J. Pinkston, E. Knaus, S. Bolyai, L. Mathew
Absent: B. McClosky, J. Mohlman

Meeting convened: 11:10am

- S. Bolyai gave a status report on the budget process. Budget proposals are now at the vice-president level (this would be the Provost for the academic colleges). Budget presentations will be made to the cabinet by the academic deans and vice presidents, outlining goals, accomplishments, expectations, etc. for a decision to be made by the cabinet in 2-3 weeks.
- S. Bolyai gave a preview of the topics he will cover in his upcoming town hall presentations. This will include an explanation of how state funding for direct appropriations (which WP has control over how it is spend) will be decreased by 8.4%, as part of the Governor's budget plan which shifts the money over to cover increased fringe benefit costs (which the state pays directly to providers). The actual state budget will not be known until the end of June but even if the legislature restores the direct appropriations funding, the Governor may veto that line item. Continued cuts from the state should be expected as the state's economy continues to flounder.
- S. Bolyai also explained that over the past ten years we have had flat enrollment at a time when there have been increased costs and cuts in state funding. At this time, there are no plans whatsoever for layoffs however the university will have to adjust the way it operates in order to create sustainable revenues that meet current and future expenses. Over the past 10 years there has been an increase in full-time and adjunct faculty as well as an increase in class sections (with a decrease in class size) but this has not been matched with an increase in enrollment. The option of a 'transition to retirement' plan was raised by J. Matthew, however Bolyai pointed out that the state attorney general had declared this in violation of federal pension laws. J. Pinkston asked about salary increases which may be negotiated with the new contract and Bolyai said that current plans include a 1% placeholder for cost of living increases. Other options include finding more optimal usage of facilities.
- **All council members are strongly encouraged to attend one of the town hall presentations and to encourage members of their respective units to attend. It is hoped that participants will contribute ideas and opinions for how to increase revenues and/or decrease costs. E. Knaus pointed out that we all need be part of this change and engaged in problem-solving.**
- S. Bolyai also briefly reported on capital planning projects. The new academic building construction is on schedule to be ready in fall 2016. Architects are already designing plans for renovations of Hunziker Hall and Wing, which will be done over a three-year period once University Hall is completed and occupied. Following this, it is anticipated that renovations will be made to Ben Shahn and Wightman Gym, and further in the future, the replacement of older residence halls. Again, capital projects are impacted by the budget, which helped cover some of the smaller capital costs in the past. It was also

noted that the state does not pay for academic space (unlike a number of other states for their public institutions), and WP is still responsible for the debt service on the loans used to pay for construction projects.

Meeting adjourned: 12:05pm

H. Wilder, Minute taker