The University of Rhode Island
Strategic Budget and Planning Council
October 25, 2012
9:00 am – 11:00 am
Thomson Board Room, Ballentine Hall

Members in Attendance:
Chair Don DeHayes, Vice Chair Bob Weygand, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Ray Wright, Peter Larsen, Cheryl Foster, Patricia Morokoff, Thorr Bjorn, Linda Barrett, Ann Morrissey, Tom Dougan, Ken Kermes, Gigi Edwards, Mark Higgins, Ellen Reynolds, Naomi Thompson

Members Absent:
Stephanie Segal, Michael Smith, Steve D’Honrdt, Peter Alfonso, Sharon Bell, Scott Martin

See the complete list of member information at the Strategic Budget and Planning Council website at http://www.uri.edu/budget/sbpc/Membership%209-2012.pdf

Meeting Minutes
1. Chair called meeting to order at 9:07am
2. Welcome New Members:
   a. All new members introduced to returning members of the SBPC.
   b. Guiding principles and charge of the Council reviewed for both new and existing members. Members of the Council are asked to participate as representatives of the University, not on behalf of their home department or college.
3. Minutes of the September 20, 2012 meeting were approved.
4. Creating a Larger Context for Strategic Budgeting:
   a. The Council, over the past couple of years of reviewing requests for additional budget support, has seen an opportunity to operate in a larger context. This occurred in the past when the Council changed the University policy for fund balance use. The need for a larger context became particularly apparent when the Council reviewed requests for expanding legal counsel on campus. Benchmark data suggested that URI was understaffed in legal support. The Council found that other Universities appeared to have greater numbers of staff in a centralized legal office, whereas URI has legal counsel dispersed and working for different departments and colleges.
   b. Vice President Weygand offered that the SBPC has mainly focused on identifying areas of new strategic investments. The Council should consider a focus on cost reduction and revenue enhancement strategies. The Council can get very specific in certain areas, after defining broad principles as a context from which to operate. As a public institution, URI needs to look at where we can spend money to advance the University and other places where we can reduce or avoid cost to accomplish the same goal. Outsourcing a particular service could be a cost reducing strategy the SBPC might consider. Developing summer programs needs to be preceded by the SBPC establishing a goal for increasing summer enrollments and international enrollments.
c. The Provost indicated that URI has been focused on the goal of expanding international and summer enrollments (as in its Academic Plan goals) and is making modest progress. The traditional 18-23 year old student population is dwindling. There may be other populations, such as the adult population, where we can attract more students. Certificate programs can be aimed at these individuals. Creating robust and interesting summer programs can also attract new populations of students. We are currently working on these issues.

d. The nuclear reactor at URI's disposal is alluring to many international universities who want to send entire cohorts to study it. There are gems on the URI campus, which can be used to attract many international exchange students during summer sessions. The URI international exchange program can be as expansive as we want it to be.

e. The College of Continuing Education may be renamed to better reflect a more current mission and focus for the future. The MBA program's alteration was impressive and might serve a guide. The role of CCE as a virtual and physical entity needs to be considered.

f. URI currently has record enrollments, but unfortunately, the University could soon be looking at a $6-$12 million deficit in FY2014. Salary increases have not occurred in some time. Is there a role for this committee to address the issue? Departments are hurting in a lot of areas. Another way to frame how the committee might work is to examine whether and how the budget is and is not currently aligned with the President's Transformational Goals and the University's overall Academic Strategic Plan.

g. The Provost mentioned that programs and services need to align closely with our strategic goals, and as such, we need to consider what we should stop doing, with reallocation as the default. Every Dean, Department Chair needs to think about what we can stop funding to start doing something of high priority. The Provost's Office incentivizes this type of thinking by matching dollar for dollar all reallocated funds, which are reinvested in positions closely connected to the strategic goals of the Academic Plan. We need to reposition the University to fund programs and services that directly relate to the University's future; making those strategic investments and reducing costs and adding revenue streams.

h. On evaluating the URI retirement incentive program relative to the University's agility and flexibility, the Provost indicated that there was no one set of projections used to measure the success of the program. The incentive did help cut the budget shortfall. It did a lot of helpful things, just not on the scale we hoped. Not enough people accepted the incentive to retire and this diminished the University's capacity to reinvigorate the faculty and staff overall. We have acquired information on reasons for those who did not choose the retirement incentive. It seems that mostly, the reason is the economy. People are working longer and later into life.

i. Vice President Weygand noted that the University's inflexibility negatively affects its ability to be financially as effective as it could be.

j. With regard to the issue of public relations related to the University's problems and its future, it was pointed out that the University needs to be more aggressive and daring,
especially in communicating our problems. The University needs to better articulate to the State and public the positive impacts it has on the State and its economic development. The State’s involvement may have hurt the retirement incentive program. People had a very small window to make their decision and maybe did not consider it as seriously as a viable option as they might have with more time for rumination. URI needs to improve telling its great stories and telling them at the right time. Depending on what we are doing, the timing for sharing it with the public is different for each issue.

k. The SBPC committee on entrepreneurial pathways might want to advise the SBPC on next steps and follow up recommendations with regard to the ideas proposed in its subcommittee report.

l. Vice President Weygand shared that his division continually considers efforts that will generate revenue and what we can no longer afford to do. Partnerships and other ideas are deliberated.

m. There is an opportunity to teach an on-location MBA program at Taco, Inc. We need to look at removing impediments created from systems in place for decades. The University needs to examine all paths for new revenue or cost reduction and identify the impediments and advance ways for us to become more agile. We need to focus on the variables we can control. Much of what we think we cannot do we think is based on policy, when in fact it is culture.

n. Vice President Weygand noted that rules, regulations and bureaucracies bog us down and prohibit us from helping faculty and staff to do new things. More time and efforts should be directed at creating partnerships with private sector companies and identify the obstacles for doing so. But it is more important to focus on overcoming the obstacles, not just identifying them. You can spend a lot of time identifying obstacles, but time is better spent planning how to succeed despite them.

o. URI personnel have become so resourceful and the creativity displayed by these people to do so much with so little resources has been very impressive.

p. The Provost’s Office will soon be coming out with an initiative to incentivize colleges to create a post-bachelor program. If a new one is developed and approved, the college will get a certain percentage of the revenue back.

q. Revenue generation and increased efficiency need to be executed without compromising education quality. The quality of the student learning experience is embedded in the Academic Plan and its goals.

5. Mechanism for coordination of SBPC and AMRC

a. It was noted that Steve D'Hondt was appointed by the President to the AMRC to be a liaison between AMRC and SBPC. SBPC has the advantage of being together three years. The AMRC is newly formed. The AMRC is looking at cost savings, efficiency, and synergy. They will explore ways in which to do the business of URI more effectively and efficiently and will consider whether to recommend combining departments, systems, groups, etc. which enhance URI's abilities to deliver services. Quality is part of effectiveness and will be important for the AMRC as it explores improvements to becoming more efficient. SBPC’s mission is tied to the budget where AMRC’s is not. The
AMRC may also utilize a consultant to look at internal process since it is often tied to cultural issues as much as procedural.

b. The SBPC may want to articulate its principles in a memo and share it with the AMRC as they begin to fulfill their charge. AMRC already has a website and they will be posting minutes. The Communications department should go out to the entire URI community and alert everyone where more information on the AMRC can be found.

6. Subcommittee to revise division budget submissions
   a. Tom Dougan, Fay Boudreaux-Bartels, Naomi Thompson, Linda Barrett, Ann Morrissey, and Trish Morokoff were named to the SBPC subcommittee to revise division budget submissions.
   b. There are some items from last year's submission process, which the President said did not need to be vetted again in the coming process. As we change our process, we need to keep this in mind. An update might be provided relative to those items by the presenting divisions, but it does not need to be time-consuming. The subcommittee will also be asked to look at the timing of the submission of the requests and the vetting of the requests. The committee will also begin focusing on guidelines for how to vet cost reduction submissions. Tom Dougan will convene the process committee.
   c. Provost DeHayes on reviewing budget requests on an annual basis while being aware of a larger timeframe: A rolling three year horizon is what we are working towards, funding one year at a time, but also having a view of a bigger picture.

7. Announcements:
   a. November 15, 2012 will be the next meeting in the Thomson Boardroom at Ballentine Hall.
   b. New members of the SBPC will have a 90 minute meeting on the budget submission process.
   c. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes by: John Olerio