The University of Rhode Island  
Strategic Budget and Planning Council  
April 18, 2013  
9:00 am – 10:30 am  
Thomson Board Room, Ballentine Hall

Members in Attendance:  
Chair Don DeHayes, Vice Chair Bob Weygand, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Ray Wright, Peter Larsen, Patricia Morokoff, Ann Morrissey, Tom Dougan, Mark Higgins, Ellen Reynolds, Naomi Thompson, Scott Martin, Ken Kermes, Kim Washor, Cheryl Foster, Sue Bergen (On behalf of Thorr Bjorn)

Members Absent:  
Peter Alfonso, Stephanie Segal, Michael Smith, Sharon Bell, Thorr Bjorn, Linda Barrett, Steve D'Hondt

See the complete list of member information at the Strategic Budget and Planning Council website at  
http://www.uri.edu/budget/sbpc/Membership%2010-12.pdf

Meeting Minutes

1) Chair called meeting to order at 9:09am
2) Continued discussion on budget reductions for FY’14
   a) Provost: Our sole agenda item today is to continue our preliminary discussions on viable budget reduction strategies. At our last meeting, VP Tom Dougan gave us an overview of Student Affairs, VP Bob Weygand did the same for the division of Business & Finance, and we heard about the overall Academic Affairs process in budget analysis.
   b) Provost (recap of his process on budget reduction from 4/11/13 meeting): Cutting vacant positions is contradictory to the URI Academic Plan and should only be done as a last resort. As we make reductions to the FY14 budget, we are hoping to be able to protect some strategic priorities. Some cuts may require a bridge to ensure the cut is made in the most strategic manner possible. Deans have been asked again this year to identify their lowest funded priority. And to review all Fund 101 accounts. In aggregate, Fund 101 has a $10 million fund balance. We are exploring whether individuals who do work on Fund 101 could have their salaries come respectively from the Fund. We are also attempting to bring in the Freshmen class while spending less than targeted amounts for financial aid. We are exploring creating a fund balance out of the FY13 Fund 100 budget, which could be carried over to FY14. This would be done by incentivizing departments not to spend out FY13 budgets. The fund balance created by this incentive would be used as one-time-only money in FY14 as the "bridge." We are also looking at release time models that could create some savings. Some of these strategies will result in improved overall accounting practices at the University.
   c) A discussion ensued about the practices of teaching loads between departments and colleges to maximize effective use of resources. Main points of discussion involved the advantages and disadvantages of teaching larger classes, streamlining the curriculum with mapping technique, advising, use of full-time faculty, the importance of excellent teaching in the freshmen year to improve retention, enhancing faculty development and support with regard to teaching, and creating incentives for teaching lower level courses.
   d) Provost (Commenting further on vacant positions within Academic Affairs in FY14): We know we have 8-9 retirements coming next year. This accounts for about $1.5 million
when you add in the fringe costs associated with these positions. If I were to cut these positions, I could be done with the Academic Affairs budget reductions. My hope is that we can do the right thing academically and financially. If we are able to implement some of the models being discussed here, we could make our cuts and still have the money left over from the vacant positions to reinvest in strategic priorities.

e) Some research universities are delivering the freshmen curriculum with a lot of online learning. Some models of implementing more online courses could be more cost-effective, while other models of incorporating online learning are not cost-effective.

f) Provost (On managing cultural change at URI): We are shifting to a 21st century institution where research and scholarship are the same thing. We need to be help everyone adapt to this cultural shift. We are not looking to single people out who are slow to adapt. We need to bring them along in a sensitive way. We should not be surprised that our best researchers are our best teachers. There are certain skills that make someone both a great teacher and a great researcher.

3) Sue Bergen presenting the Athletics budget on behalf of Thorr Bjorn

a) The economy has a tremendous effect on the Athletics budget. The cost of travel continues to force us to do more with less. We do our best to protect our core sports, men's and women's basketball. We reinvested in our Men's Basketball Coach, Dan Hurley, with a contract extension. He was not given a raise with this extension. Nonessential travel has been eliminated from the budget. We do not know of retirements, which will affect the FY14 budget. We will delay the filling of some currently vacant positions. We will rely more heavily on paid interns and students. We do not want to endanger our revenue stream, so we are protecting our ticket office staff. We are exploring some other potential cost savings. Ms. Bergen responded to questions: The total budget of Athletics is about $9 million and the operational piece of the budget is $4 million. There are about 500 student-athletes at URI. The A-10 is working through a bunch of logistics with conference realignment and it could lead to lump payments to URI over a number of years which could total $200,000-$300,000. There are teams leaving the conference, teams entering the conference, and there will be fees attached to these entrances and exits. URI Athletics receives about $1.3 million annually through Foundation gifts. There are also corporate sponsorships that bring money to athletics. The revenue from these sponsorships is split between the Ryan Center and Athletics. We still have a condemned track and we are hoping to get that renovated through a donation or through RICAP money. In terms of equity, any changes to the football team will have an impact on the women's side of the ledger. This is mandated per NCAA rules and regulations. Renovations to Tootell locker rooms is on the deferred maintenance list and remains the jurisdiction of Student Affairs as the locker is under Recreation Services. The pool generates income through a 101 account and there could be decreased revenue generation, if the condition of the locker rooms is not improved.

4) Provost DeHayes on possible budget reductions of the Division of the President

a) With the reorganization of this division, the plan was to hire a full-time employee to head up communications & marketing (right now this position is filled by Kerrie Bennett, on an interim basis). This position may not be filled in FY14. This would save, with fringe benefits, $180,000-$190,000.

b) The second Legal Counsel position, which was a recommendation by this Council, is in the budget for next year, though a search has not been started.

c) Financial aid is more tied to revenue generation than to expenditure. One-time-only cost reduction may not be in our best interest if we are facing budget deficits on an annual basis in the future. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to project our revenue in the future.
We do not know what our future state appropriation will be. We do not know our ability to increase tuition or reorganize student aid. This removes many degrees of freedom.

d) Provost (On protecting FY14 investments in budget items recommended to the President by SBPC): This council is comprised of a very diverse group of University constituents with a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge. During this process last year, we sifted through 35 budget items and came to the conclusion that there were $1.2 million worth of priorities, which we believed were superior investments. These investments account for a portion of the deficit we are facing next year. This council needs to advise about whether to prioritize these new investments over other budget items for possible reductions.

e) Sue Bergen (An update on AMRC activity): AMRC is having each committee put together a preliminary draft report and these will be consolidated into one draft report by Anne Marie Coleman, who will be submitting the report to the President. One AMRC subcommittee is looking at the URI enterprises, which generate revenue. This subcommittee is looking at a potential reorganization of all of these enterprises. The Council expressed the desire to hear from the AMRC as to their recommendations to date.

5) Meeting adjourned at 10:40am / Minutes by: John Olerio