The University of Rhode Island  
Strategic Budget and Planning Council  
October 27, 2014  
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm  
Thomson Board Room, Ballentine Hall

Members in Attendance:

Members Absent:
Chair Don DeHayes, Devon Swanson, Joe Maynard.

See the complete list of member information at the Strategic Budget and Planning Council website at:  
http://www.uri.edu/budget/sbpc.html

1. Announcements
   IT Review Steering Committee formed as a follow up to AMRC recommendations. Committee is chaired by Mike Motta. Members are Sharon Bell, John Sears, Ann Morrissey, Kathleen Torrens, Mike Khalfayan and Bruce Corliss. The charge of the committee is to develop a scope of work including an IT strategic plan, the most appropriate organizational structure, defining both a centralized and decentralized structure; streamlining of business processes involving IT; user input will be included; committee is small and most of work will be via consultant who will work with entire campus community. Through the governance structure that the campus embraces, others will be involved. Consultant not yet identified.

2. September 24, 2014 minutes approved as presented
   Meeting minutes are a recap of the meeting and generally only the Chair and Vice Chair are quoted within the minutes. This was agreed to by the initial SBPC Council and is in place to ensure open discussion by all committee members. Data and information presented to the committee, but not necessarily discussed are included within the minutes to make it easier for readers.

3. FY2016 Budget Request Highlights
   By Linda Barrett
   a. FY2016 Request is ~$730M; largest revenue driver is enrollment. State contributes ~9% of the total budget. Largest item in restricted budget is external student loans.
   b. Strategic initiatives include 10 tenure track faculty, 4 Lecturers, investment in Athletics, Business Engagement Center, Research and Economic Development and Capital Projects, related to small projects.
   c. Annual enrollment projection for FY2016 is 13,344 full time equivalent students.
   d. Research awards and overhead are estimated to decline due to limited federal resources and sequestration finally catching up to URI.
   e. RI Capital Fund (RICAP) reflects a request of $25M, with $12.5M for Asset Protection (various projects); $4M for instructional labs and the fourth floor of the new Chemistry building; $6.5M for utility infrastructure; $1.5M for White Hall renovations and $700K for Hazmat facility at GSO.
4. Balance of effectiveness ratio – staff: grants; research revenue target
   a. Information on this item was requested previously and VP Sonnenfeld reported the following:
      ➢ Process can be trial and error until you are operating smoothly
      ➢ Looking at enhancing the grant management system to include less steps
      ➢ Things can change so frequently and it makes keeping the system up to date more difficult. In one instance, the organization changed the grant so that the duty of reporting conflict of interest passed from the investigator to the institution
      ➢ The grant numbers are decreasing at URI, but the institution is doing fine. This was inevitable, given the decrease in federal grant money. The NSF and NIH budgets are increasing and it has made predicting grant funding a little easier. There is no shortage of proposals being generated by URI faculty. As new tenure-track faculty are hired at URI, even more proposals will be generated.
   b. Question on whether there is an equivalent of IPEDS for grants; on an annual basis there is a national database for the top 100 Research Universities. VP Sonnenfeld will send info to the members. URI has a lean operation compared to other institutions; difficult to make comparisons. Appears we have appropriate number of staff; but, system could be improved. As the SBPC makes budgetary decisions related to research staffing levels at URI, this information would be helpful. Staffing can be dependent not only on how much funding a university generates, but also what type of revenue it generates. For example, universities that deal with AID and overseas grants need more staffing because the regulations are more intense.
   c. The Division of Research and Economic Development reviews how quickly and effectively grant proposals are approved, with faculty complaints receiving a high priority for review. The SBPC wants to develop benchmarks for efficiency in grant development. The division is currently running a lean operation and completed a self-assessment study and determined the staffing level within the division is appropriate but the system the employees are using is outdated and inefficient. A committee has been formed to evaluate the system. The committee includes users of the system, employees from IT and representatives from the Division of Administration & Finance. The division will be sharing institutional rankings in grant funding with the SBPC.
   d. Annual grant funding totals can be misleading in evaluation of the division. Grants are not always consistent in when they awarded and it can affect annual totals.

5. Subcommittee Updates
   Strategic Budget and Planning Council (SBPC) Subcommittee on the Establishment of a General Fund (Fund 100) Budget Carry Forward Policy for URI. Linda presented a status on behalf of Don DeHayes who chairs the subcommittee.
   a. The charge of the subcommittee was read.
   b. The subcommittee will be drafting a new general fund (Fund 100) balance carry forward policy and is in process of creating a survey to gather input from key participants. The subcommittee is gauging the financial risk of implementing a policy and other potential long-term implications if the policy were to be enacted.
   c. The institution did have a significant fund balance this past year. The State of Rhode Island Budget Office is concerned with any fund balance. Given the size of the URI budget, the University was correct to carry a contingency at the end of the fiscal year. At the time, the University was in the midst of delicate negotiations and needed to reserve a balance in the event that a large sum were to be needed to pay any unexpectedly accrued expenses.
d. The University did not add to the cumulative fund balance at the end of the last fiscal year. URI does have the ability to carry over funding from one fiscal year to the next. The LGBTQ building, for example, is paid for out of prior year balances. The Budget and Financial Planning website includes the Fund 100 Balance Carryforward Process Step by Step Guide at the following link. http://web.uri.edu/budget/policies/

e. The SBPC subcommittee is exploring a process at the College level. This would not be implemented at the departmental level. There are some units, aside from colleges, such as IT, that would also be included within the recommended policy.

f. The President's Team would continue to meet and decide whether all or a portion of the fund balance is contingency and if any is to be designated toward funding specific strategic and transformational projects. The SBPC previously recommended a contingency be established and retained. This is good fiscal management.

Long-term Planning: Trends and Indicators of Change in Higher Education and potential budgetary impacts: scenario planning and policy recommendations. The charge was read.

a. Consider SWOP of various funding models. Managers should be able to be more strategic. Lingering issues due to outdated staffing and systems and recommendations will include changes in that area. National trends were reviewed. Scheduled to meet October 30, 2014.

6. Identification of strategic focus initiative(s) for SBPC new work in 2014-15
Continue and complete SBPC subcommittee work – implementation of which may require committee work in the future
SBPC role relative to future progress on AMRC related priority areas as articulated by the SBPC (see attachment of SBPC memo to President)
Other potential new council areas of focus (see attachment) as discussed last meeting

a. At last meeting asked members to think about this; will discuss today; no decisions today.

b. IT and reorganization of colleges underway. What is status of HR? of Business Streamlining. Strong recommendation from SBPC that IT review be completed with external personnel.

c. Under impression consultant was selected. That is not the case. Currently working the circuit and talking to colleagues. Exploring what other campuses are doing. Once competitive bidding is in place we will not be able to do this. Full blown state process for RFP takes 6 months. Researching ways to minimize the time. Four potential firms were vetted and they can be part of the limited RFP process. Taking time to ensure quality and integrity of the final product.

d. Revisiting our recommendations relative to AMRC may be helpful.

e. SBPC is interested in receiving reports from new steering committee and other groups working on AMRC recommendations.

f. SBPC requested the status of other categories. E.g. charges related to grad students and post docs (broadly part of HR), aspects focused on Research. Is work being done? Pooling fringe? Student Affairs? Are those being recognized? President stated that he expects each VP and Provost to provide him with an update on work done in each division relative to AMRC. When that report is generated, it should be shared with SBPC.

g. SBPC asked that a request be made to the President on the status of the AMRC recommendations.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:30pm
Minutes by:
John Olerio, Provost Office
Linda Barrett, Budget & Financial Planning