Meeting Minutes

1. Vice Chair called meeting to order at 9:10am.

Agenda Items

1. Approval of Minutes from previous meetings
   a. Minutes of 5/22/2012 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. Presentation and discussion of results of voting
   a. Chair DeHayes opened the meeting by reminding everyone of its importance. The Council will sift through 32 priorities, determine the most important priorities, and make a recommendation to the President for inclusion in the FY14 budget. The Chair reminded the Council that the process about to be embarked upon is the representation of the procedure agreed to previously by the Council. The Council will review the average scores of strategic alignment and benefits, the average maximum scores, and frequency distributions. Per our agreed upon process, on the spot requests to view the data with different correlations will not be allowed. As we agreed earlier, each individual will have the opportunity to develop an overall priority score for all of the requests using a Likert scale. At our next meeting, we will exclusively discuss the top 10-12 items that emerge from data.
   b. The Chair reminded the Council that FY13 was a very challenging budget. A $5 million shortfall is now balanced. The recommendations SBPC made to the President are retained in the FY13 budget.
   c. It was also noted that the real enrollment challenge is retention, more so than the incoming freshmen class. This Council works with a moving target and it is one of the real challenges the Council faces. The URI budget is always susceptible to State cuts.
   d. The Council decided to use a 5-point scale for the overall individual rating of the items, which possible might provide greater separation than a 3-point scale.
e. Prior to the presentation of results, question asked if there were any changes in FY13 that could affect FY14. None were noted.

f. Eugen Tradafir, from the Budget Office, presented the data derived from the original vote of 12 voting Council members who completed the survey. Some items scored highly in one aspect and that resulted in a very high average score.

g. The Council reviewed the data from varying aspects and correlations relative to strategic alignment and benefits to the University emerging from a variety of criteria. Questions were raised as to whether some items should be considered in the disaggregate. The Vice Chair responded that there is not a good mechanism at this time that allows the Council to disaggregate the requests.

h. It was noted that the Global Strategies position could eventually pay for itself with increased revenue brought in by the tuition from international students.

i. There were only two requests submitted for the FY15 preliminary budget and the Council decided not to consider requests at this time for FY 15.

j. The Council agreed that the data supported the emergence of 12 top priority items. The Council will consider these items further and rank them on a 5-point Likert scale. The Council was requested to uniformly distribute rankings among all five points of the Likert scale in order to separate the highest ranking items.

k. It was noted the student aid is no longer a budget request item for the Council because it is a discount to revenue, unlike other items. This was discussed previously by the Council and appears in the budget submission process guidelines recommended by the Council’s subcommittee. Council member noted that high level donors continue to be concerned about financial integrity and she is in support of the internal auditor request.

l. Discussion about the Wellness Center ensued. When asked about the role of fundraising in the project, Thorr pointed out that an ongoing fundraising effort continue, which is expected to fund base equipment, however, more funding is needed. A question was raised about whether there would be funds leftover from the project bid process. If the project bid came in for less than what was estimated in the budget could those funds could be utilized for equipment? Vice Chair Weygand indicated that the bid only came in only slightly under what was projected. The amount being requested for equipment remains unfunded. He affirmed that the Wellness Center is scheduled to be open in the fall of 2013.

m. The Chair noted that the Wellness Center equipment request should be for a one-time only financial request.

n. The Council discussed the issue of sustaining funding to replace equipment at the Wellness Center over time. The issue was raised about the need to continue fundraising efforts to attract donors for giving to the Wellness Center for equipment ongoing. It was noted that Northeastern has had good success in the area of attracting donors for their Wellness Center. A suggestion was made for a user fee to sustain the operation. The Chair noted that it would need to be built into the budget and that Higher Education costs are spiraling because everything is treated as needing a new funding stream.
o. A question was asked of the Provost about his priorities relative to his division’s requests. He affirmed that the University is most in need of more full-time, tenure track faculty. URI has a shortage of faculty. We have faculty who have left and not been replaced, which cannot be disregarded. The Council needs to continue its focus on the best investment for the University as a whole.

p. Vice Chair Weygand noted that retention is so important to URI revenue, the Council needs to look at what is being done to improve retention. The Chair commented that student aid is the key to retention. It was also noted that faculty are very important in improving retention and the Chair mentioned experiential learning as critical to retention. Disability Services is another important aspect in retention. The addition of a Coordinator could reduce caseloads and improve retention. This item could be recommended as #1. A Disability Coordinator would assist the faculty in managing growing numbers of students with disabilities.

q. A Council member commented that additional legal counsel is vital as so much is processed through that office.

r. With regard to the division of Administration and Finance request, questions were asked about whether project management staff is more efficiently outsourced? VP Weygand pointed out that in some cases particular skills are needed from external project managers, but general engineers would be more efficient to be staffed in house. External personnel are hired at a substantial rate for projects where additional expertise is deemed necessary. Any savings achieved by having a project manager for these projects would be realized for the specific project, not for Fund 100.

s. Vice Chair: The requested Engineer would deal with all of the various systems on campus.

t. Vice Chair: We are dealing with flattening enrollment. Dealing strictly with attracting and retaining students is different than the strategic alignment we laid out for the rubric. You would come up with different rankings if retention was the main goal.

u. All present members of the Council agreed to use the entire breadth of the likert scale in the second round of ranking when voting on the 12 items agreed upon.

3. Communications

a. Monday, June 18th meeting canceled.

b. Friday, June 22nd meeting will include the presentation of the final analysis of the voting.

Minutes by: John Olerio