The University of Rhode Island
Strategic Budget and Planning Council
June 5, 2015
9:00 am – 12:30 am
Thomson Board Room, Ballentine Hall

Members in Attendance:
Don DeHayes (Chair), Christina L. Valentino (Vice Chair), Linda Barrett, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Sharon Bell, Wendy Bucci, Lori Ciccomascalo, Steven D’Hondt, Tom Dougan, John Kirby, Lindsay McLennan, Trish Morokoff, Ann Morrissey, Bahram Nassersharif, Ellen Reynolds, Gerry Sonnenfeld, Naomi Thompson, Kim Washor, Ken Kermes, Thorr Bjorn

Members Absent: Rachel DiCioccio, Joseph 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 - none
2. FY2017 Divisional Request (9:00 am) – President’s Division presented by Dr. David M. Dooley
   a) Similar to last year’s request which was focused on the Business Engagement Center, this request for Web strategists is designed to position the University to take better advantage of opportunities. URI has done great work, particularly by faculty, thus, the University is better positioned in the state and nationally than it has been in many years. We have a rather unique opportunity to capitalize on it. URI has succeeded in getting our message out across the state; the University is a partner and an asset. Seeing benefits in many ways, growing national profile for instance. Today’s request is a key step in building on our success, to continue and to expand it.
   b) A critical component of interface is our need to hire up to three web content strategists to manage our website.
   c) University websites are the single most important tool students and their families use to make their college choices. Need to capture their interest, maximize their time on our website and convey timely updated information.
   d) There are 500,000 unique visitors per month, three million page views per month; increased 50% over the past five years; our audience is the world; success in capturing international visitors is important; this will help our students to be more globalized.
   e) Ensure website is always what it needs to be; the website can provide important tools, they can also cause frustration; this is playing defense; people leave satisfied; come away with its opportunities, amenities, etc. Consistent, competitive look and feel. Target audiences and create unified Web presence. Important that site is accessible; think about the student that is sight or hearing impaired; we must ensure that they have the tools they need; could be legal issues if there is a lack of accessibility.
   f) Evolution – managing the web was primarily a technical endeavor; needed programming skills; centralized control by IT professionals.
   g) Web content maintained by hundreds of individuals across the campus; decentralized control; must be continuously maintained.
   h) Re-centralize oversight of University website with communication and engagement focus.
i) Maximize the impact of our message, create visual and editorial consistency, meet strategic goals; important sensitive needs of each website; but, need some consistency in navigation, etc.

j) Every website should reflect the institutional goals and reinforce them; making it more effective.

k) Strong collaboration with academic units.

l) Creates sustainable, long-term support for websites.

3. FY2017 Divisional Request – President’s critique presented by Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Ken Kermes, Devon Swanson

a) Directly affects the single most public aspect of the University.

b) Focus on benchmark, centralized nature, is this the best place for the positions to be housed, are there potential cost savings using existing personnel?

c) Why three? Council would like rationale for the number of positions requested.

d) Faculty get concerned when they are told they must do something, concerned about the wording; need to have consensus building on what should and should not be on the site rather than a dictated list.

e) How will the University at large participate in the decisions? Small group making decisions? Committee? Top down vs bottom up have pros and cons. We need to strike the right balance between centralize support and control and decentralized.

f) Could inhibit speed of updating; ensure no restriction on what faculty could post on the web.

g) Is it appropriately housed in the President’s division? Could be located in a place closer to the users and report to the Provost; can we train existing staff to do this work? Location of staffing to be debated.

h) At present, one has to work to find what you are looking for on various URI sites.

4. FY2017 Divisional Request – President’s Council Discussion

a) CELS has a web staff; pay 2 Graduate Research Assistant’s and contract with someone from Metcalf Institute; we roll information through, new content every week; strict guidelines in the college of environmental sciences; having input and guidance would be beneficial;

b) Would this investment provide some relief to the areas?;

c) All good points raised; one robust solution is collaboration; needs to be continuous robust collaborative; want professionals who have expertise working with faculty and staff;

d) Other tension is do websites exist for internal or for external interface? Survival, prosperity depends upon website view to people who are external; prospective student, donors don’t have a vested interested in getting the information if not easily accessible;

e) Websites do not follow the vision we have; positions are important; two clicks and visitors are done, gone from our site;


g) External communications – wanted it to reside at highest level in the University.

h) Focus broad for Web Council; represent any and all perspective on campus; students, faculty, staff, other professionals, external partners; first meeting this summer; to get at how as an institution going forward can we work collaboratively and effectively to serve internal and external constituents. Kelly will provide a list of membership to SBPC. Part of initial charge will determine communication.

i) At the end of the day, the entire university community has to feel this serves their interest.

j) Poorly designed web pages exist; reflection of the people behind their webpages; challenge is finding qualified individuals.
k) What does a web content strategist do? Hybrid of technical and writing and communication; new field; relationship building is a large part of this role, your goals, audiences, external and internal, review analytics, where people are going; little bit of design; thinking from a user perspective; writing for the web; conversational; marketing and communication side is heavy; we are building the websites using URI WordPress;

l) How will they work with the department out there? Will leverage the resources in the department and work with them directly; ensure they have the information they need; case by case assessment.

m) There are 300 staff and faculty contributing to web development and support, but they are not communicating; thus chaos is represented on our website; this is a thorough assessment of the website; we want to move this forward and cannot do it with current resources;

n) Must be cognizant when comparing; what is our market position and what is our financial model?; as a non-resident tuition driven institution and a public research university we need to take both of these into account when we build our website;

o) Always asking who are our competitors and who is our audience; if we don’t do this, threaten our existence;

p) Are these peers we should use in this group? There are more and others are our competition for students such as UConn and UMass at Amherst.

q) Important point – seems like we need a system and strategy to arrive at what the web should look like and how it can best serve our constituents and markets; the Web Policy Council was developed to develop that system and strategy. We have the request to SBPC before the Web Council has done its work; is it possible that if the Web Council had done its work, they might have a diff recommendation? also the IT consultant is about to embark on phase 2; instead of 300 people working on our website, we will now have 303 people working on it; might we just be adding 3 more people to the chaos described earlier. Ideally, the Web Policy Council would have done its work prior to adding the positions to ensure the system is in place and the role of the positions; However, this does not mean we should not make this investment, but it does emphasize the importance of establishing a collaborative strategy soon - perhaps this can be completed before the positions would be filled.

r) The most expensive websites are those maintained by faculty; content needs to be driven by faculty; removing it from their hands and getting it done;

s) Like the Council; recent example of faculty link on home page;

t) There are 300 staff, students who do not necessarily have the skills; but, who work on the websites.

u) Important to have the Web Council and their process in place before we make the hires. Strategic alignment will be key to success.

v) Everyone on campus makes a recommendation for additional resources it is important that the new resources are deployed strategically.

w) IT Governance overall steering group – systemic connection and strategic alignment.

5. FY2017 Divisional Request (10:15am) – Administration & Finance presented by Christina L. Valentino, Vice President

a) Security Systems; Module enhancements; Immigration Specialist. Other position originally requested has been removed as it was funded via a re-organization in Business Services.

b) Requests are to reduce level of vulnerability and solution centered to meet needs.

c) The first request creates a fund of $60K for safety and security enhancements; blue light telephones across campus; improved lighting for parking and camera repairs and replacement;
d) President’s Commission on Women (PCOSW) and Equity Council approached me with regard to state of cameras on campus; assessment revealed of 71 cameras, some inoperable and outdated; poor quality; purchased on ad hoc basis; installed with funding; security vulnerability; as moved towards enhanced safety no resource for improved safety measures; will partner with Parking Services (they will contribute $20K annually); found way to fund internally in Fy2015 and Fy2016 with one-time-only (OTO) funds.

e) Under leadership of Sam Adams, Assistant Director, Emergency Management/Public Safety created Campus Safety Advisory Council; oversee management of preparedness; this council will make recommendations.

f) The second request involves two remaining modules for the recruitment system purchased in 2009; OTO implementation cost in FY2017; the request is for ongoing annual maintenance;

g) Proposal responds to SBPC and AMRC recommendations for process improvements/efficiencies and complements the streamlining initiatives;

h) Position management (detail in proposals for review) updated job descriptions; how we manage hires; eliminating paper; Performance Management is revitalization of an inactive program; have not done this for a while; lack of tools; this will revitalize it; not just evaluations; tools in place for FY2017;

i) Could be implications relative to the Board of Education being a single employer; could be advantageous if that happens.

j) The third request is for a part-time Immigration Specialist, 20 hours; request made last year also; Numbers are growing and this workload is currently being managed by the Director, Personnel Services, the number of cases doubled; see even greater growth in FY2017; coordinate internal and external; work with prospective candidates, Payroll and Affirmative Action Office and handle diverse array of complex issues, compliance and legal; deal with legal attorneys, labor certification and outreach and education to URI community;

k) This complements the other request from Human Resources; need subject matter expert.

6. FY2017 Divisional Request – Administration & Finance critique presented by Lori Ciccomascolo, Naomi Thompson

a) Electronic recruitment system; helps with evaluation process; need to be paperless and effective; RIC and CCRI have all three modules; focuses on improving institutional effectiveness.

b) Security Systems Maintenance: appears modest; security is critical and this provides continuous support; important to be operable; Brown University established a $644K fund; upgrades important; impacts student experience.

c) HR Immigration Specialist part time; request last year; 17 cases in last 9 months; with the 55 new faculty; will see diverse global candidates; many NE colleges have a similar position.

d) Overall modest request; focused on $155K from an internal $1.5M request; peer information relevant and up to date.

e) Can any be funded through other sources?

f) Was new committee supportive?

g) How do peer institutions fund these?

h) Which peer institutions fund an immigration specialist; would we expect legal background for this person?

7. FY2017 Divisional Request – Administration & Finance Council Discussion

a) Have so many of the PS modules purchased sitting on shelf – how will IT be able to install this? It is installed and maintained by PeopleAdmin; not part of PS;
b) Will immigration specialist deal with Post docs and grads? 99.5% of traffic is in Academic Affairs; mostly faculty; deal with post docs; grad students are handled by the International Affairs Office; likely see increase in post docs particularly with Neuroscience;

c) Had conversations with Vice Provost, UC, International Office prior to request;

d) Research and Economic Development wants to be included in the discussion; could look to consolidate into a single office.

e) Campus security initiatives are important;

f) Santa Cruz Public Safety had a resource; committee was informed; one piece of a larger picture; this fills the missing piece; we have the staff to install, etc.

g) Many issues need to be addressed immediately.

h) Immigration Specialist – need to be pro-active in reaching out to the new hires as it is time sensitive; need; not sure if new funding.

i) Performance evaluation - is it a standard form for annual performance? it is more looking holistically on how manage an employee’s performance, includes performance development; not wait until there is a problem.

j) Commend office for responding quickly to PCOSW and Equity requests; cameras address what happens outside; many staff work late;

k) Performance module for what employees? Faculty one is in contract and set. It would be for all employees; need to know what skills we have; can't always count on what some folks in HR remember;

l) What is the plan rolled out? Collaboration with community, communication and training; standardization of way annual performance evaluations are performed; we are always reactionary and must be pro-active; we do paper tracking for example on a new degree a staff member obtained; can’t just have HR do data entry.

m) PeopleAdmin will act as a consultant for a period of time; we would do what it would take to make it a successful tool for the campus.

n) How do you want staff to develop, create learning plans to maximize their potential?

o) Wonder about the mechanics of an Immigration Specialist? Would be a new part time position; why not full-time?

p) Office of International Education has expertise; they are only tasked with handling J and H visas, students and scholars that do not receive pay.

q) Camera request appears as a OTO; request is for a base fund; will stay in a replacement repair fund;

r) PeopleAdmin mentioned process streamlining in presentation; is it possible when come out of the process streamlining conversations we are now making an investment in something that would be different from what the outcome of the streamlining conversations?

s) Did not think about this; relatively modest and poised to use in FY2017.

t) How many immigration cases this year? 17 cases this year over last 9 months.

u) Is it possible given expertise that is in International Office, could this position be there? Ensure position description is broad enough; specialized.

8. FY2017 Divisional Request (11:30am) – Academic Affairs presented by Don DeHayes, Provost

a) Two requests, one was made last year.

b) New model for Academic Advising at front end, first two years; building bridge; could be over two years; represents 0.3% of Academic Advising budget;

c) Faculty advisors from all colleges (charts distributed); some get release time, per course instructors hired; system is not working; culture of academic advising has changed; students want on demand services; many more walk ins; advising has
become more complex; faculty are asking for advising training; with faculty who advise changing, it is overwhelming to provide training;

d) Institutional student success goals, retention, on time graduation, Complete College America, performance funding models, retention and graduation rates will be among them;

e) Student needs must be addressed; 65% change majors; walk in; up to date and accurate information; career – experiential information-academic;

f) Challenges of scheduling, training, availability;

g) Advisor training is essential;

h) Best practices – looked at 74 institutions in our Carnegie class - 85% use professional advisors, mostly on front end first two years; would build a bridge to the college for upper year advising;

i) Tested this with an investment in the College Of Engineering; hired a professional advisor for 400 engineering students; Council Of Deans (COD) supports this and College of Business has been doing this and supports it; came up at Academic Summit and Student Summit even though it was not a topic at the Student summit; students want this; they expressed it in a big way at the summit.

j) Faculty who wish to stay involved will remain Advisors and continue to bridge to upper class advising in their college;

k) Would have 400:1 ratio with this request; request is based on this ratio;

l) Most institutions with professional advisors range from 300:1 t0 500:1 – our model is right in the middle.

m) The second request is for the Institute for Innovation in Gen Ed (correction co share is in FY16 and is ~$100K);

n) Faculty worked for 4 years to develop this; a year for implementation, next year complete the implementation; this is a third of the academic experience for students; opportunity to not have to take six years to update gen ed; create an institute to constantly work on innovation, etc.

o) Details of request; change culture to gen ed as an engaging piece of our student experience not something to get out of way;

p) Want to build in a reward; ad hoc faculty came up with proposal; faculty who love to teach gen ed and create a title with perks need to value this important part of education of our students;

q) Per IPEDS report, URI is spending far less on instruction than our peers; this is before the 55 faculty are hired;

r) Return on Investment – 90% of budget is from tuition; yield; enrollment; retention important to all; both investments will enhance value and student success are critical and will pay back; brand university as student centered; celebrate excellence and innovation among faculty;

s) Ad hoc group of faculty, GEIST (Steering Team) group, Gen Ed committee of Faculty Senate, endorsed the new Gen Ed – called for a Director of gen ed, and supported the creation of a gen ed innovation institute to sustain new and creative approaches to gen ed courses and pedagogy and differentiate Uri in the marketplace.

t) Improve teaching and learning, quality of education; adds substantial value to URI learning experience; help recruit new students and increase first two years of student retention; ROI is potentially substantial in recruitment, enrollment, and retention – 1% increase in retention would generate $1.2m in revenue – we have room to increase retention.

u) Cost? Really need full-time staff person? Operating expense, not large, could that be reallocated?
v) Professional Advisors – advantages are accessibility; COD fully support UC has 6,255 students at various stages; 880 who have completed more than 60 credits without a major.

w) Get to know students; understand curriculum, policies; communication link for updating curriculum; improved quality and consistency.

x) Cons – cost, large investment, reallocation of funds.

9. FY2017 Divisional Request – Academic Affairs critique presented by John Kirby, Sharon Bell, Joe Maynard
   a) Member of the joint advising committee; in process, met with Larry Able (CCA), they use bachelors prepared advisors; we could lessen the cost if not required master’s, connection to college was what may be their eventual college; what is chain of command – search would be joint; person would live in UC and liaison with colleges (assistant dean with student responsibilities) and how integrate with TD advising and other advising efforts? Every TD student has an Academic Advisor; TD advisors is additional support;

10. FY2017 Divisional Request – Academic Affairs Council Discussion
   b) There is a gap, UC has strong support for students; when they transition, those students need to access faculty; spend lot of time with this; clearly lacking support; software and technology is weak; software should answer their questions; need more advising support; not sure if only need it for first year. This is for first two years, many students, including engineering students; have conversation at COD, lot of different views about the upper level; hard to say will do it at all levels because colleges do not agree; 53% of colleagues we surveyed use advisors for all years; at upper level some folks want to stay with faculty in the colleges, students are getting involved with research, etc. Some departments in A&S were most resistant to upper level advisors. Strong consensus for front end professional advising.
   c) Investment tied to retention? Could it pay for itself? If we could get .5% increase in retention we could cover this.
   d) 675/2100 alumni said professional advising helped them.
   e) 880 students shown, some are in a major but not matriculated; advisors could help some of these students take the right courses before matriculated.
   f) Over 2,000 senior survey relative to academic advising 65% approval for Upper College advising; but, inconsistent by college, not as satisfied; encourage you to move to professional advising at upper college also; could be getting at that here; will free up faculty advisors in Upper College who may do upper level advising; will need to invest in upper level advisors; if availability there in first two years, what happens in upper years? We are not excluding faculty advisors that want to continue; many faculty are there only to get release time and they are not passionate about it; not excited about just in time it is happening and being picked up by the four advisors there now; have illusion that system is working,
   g) No reward or acknowledgment for faculty advising;
   h) Concerned about the faculty role; don’t think technical part is what faculty love; don’t think we will gain a lot of time back either first two years or upper level; career and life advice; 65% of students change major, some majors likely to transfer out of; advisors could help them not be behind.

11. Process to Arrive at Recommendations to President
   a) Linda presented a step-by-step overview
   b) Council agreed to the process
   c) A chart will be emailed to the Council members after the meeting and they will select six projects (no ranking). The council members will email their identification
of six items to Linda by June 10th. On June 11th, the Council will be emailed the results.

d) The next meeting is June 18th at which time the results will be discussed, a Likert scale rating sheet will be completed by all members at that meeting and those results will be discussed leading to the FY2017 recommendation to the President.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm

Next Meeting Thursday, June 18, 1:00pm-4:00pm

Minutes submitted by:
Lisa Fiorio and Linda Barrett, Budget & Financial Planning Office