As is the case in previous years, I want to thank the UPBC for the detailed set of recommendations you have provided to me in your memorandum of March 9. I have kept all of your comments in mind as we work through the budget presentation process. Although we certainly do not have sufficient information to reach final conclusions at this point, we do have some preliminary information. Thus, I want to share some preliminary thoughts with you now, and provide at a later date a more detailed list of all requests and the action on them.

I do not think it is appropriate to reply to every single suggestion at this point, but I do note that I paid attention to all of them. I will address a few of the major recommendations and respond to some of the larger elements collectively or independently.

Let me begin by offering a few general observations constraining our ability to approve some one-time and ongoing requests. We are taking a $600K+ cut in next year’s budget from the amount we were budgeted for this year. That is already done as part of the biennial budget process. Second, if our enrollment stays flat from this year to next, we will lose about the same amount of revenue that we lost this year from the decrease in enrollment we had, which was about $500K in tuition, $500K in meal plans, and $500K in housing. Further, we have had a $400K+ rescission this year. Also, a second $800K+ rescission is now proposed for this year. Whether or not these are to be continued into next year, is yet to be determined. Add to this list unanticipated facility repair issues. What is clear from all of these constraints is that we do not have this year, nor will we have next year, the amount of money to respond to one-time requests that we have had in the past. We certainly will be able to respond to a number of requests this year, but not all, and there will be even a lesser amount available in next year’s budget.

These comments also relate closely to your set of suggestions about moving ongoing, one-time requests into base budget. I am going to do some of this in a very cautious way this year in order to follow your recommendation, but in general, that’s going to be difficult to do for the same reason cited above. Further, as we lose our degrees of flexibility to respond to one-time requests, that problem will be exacerbated by taking money out of what would have been available for one-time requests because it has been moved into permanent-based budgets. Making adjustments upward of permanent-based budgets during this time period is clearly difficult, and we are not yet “out of the woods” financially, by any means.

With that said, we also have to look at a number of issues such like some of our unfunded IT liabilities, and the percentage of a tuition increase, which will need to go into student financial aid. As is usually the case, we will continue to try to support both student employment and student financial aid above the minimum requirements.

In terms of some specific observations about requests, the $400K requested for Locknetics upgrade will not be approved, but may be revisited at a later date pending further budget information. We will be making some significant budget decreases in the Department of Athletics’ budget and some of these can be off-set by funding the four scholarships requested (2 for female and 2 for male athletes) from revenue. And, of course, we need to cover the increase in expense caused by tuition increase in existing scholarships.

We will not be approving the turf request, although some portion may be available if Athletics and C.A.O.’s budget can fund the majority of the funds. We will approve, as suggested, some addition of IT positions. Most of the smaller, one-time requests will be met. We will also approve a portion of the
requests for new student orientation ($10,000) and recreation ($85,000) from one-time to permanent, as suggested, although both amounts are lower than the requests.

Again, thank you for all your work. More detailed responses will be forthcoming as we learn more about rescissions, enrollment, etc.

Jack Miller
President