Dear Members of the University Planning and Budget Committee,

I have now heard the budget presentations made by each of the Division Heads, and have carefully studied your recommendations of March 10th in relationship to those presentations. At this juncture, we are still dealing with a few unknowns concerning the upcoming fiscal year, the greatest of which is enrollment. That said, we will need to make tentative decisions recognizing that the allocation of some resources may need to be made, but approval to spend can depend upon more information. Given this, I will respond briefly to each of the recommendations UPBC has made.

1. I agree completely with the comment that divisions reconsider one-time requests for inclusion in capital funding should they qualify for that type of funds.

2. In regards to the comments about working out of class, I agree; however, some of these problems may be resolved by revising downward the work assigned so that people are currently properly assigned. Some of these requested revisions are not because of increases in workload due to unfilled positions and thus, may not be warranted.

3. I agree that we should continue the practice of hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty when it is possible; however, it is also important to note that most of the additional resources we have received in the last few years have come as a result of initiatives in specific academic areas, so our flexibility is not as great as it has been.

4. I agree that we should be extremely cautious about the expense of the Nutmeg/Laurel Room renovation. We must look at how that might fit into an overall approach to Food Services and our upcoming contract.

5. I am unclear about the necessity, considering the total dollar amount requested, for the Alumni/Bellin, Semesters sound system.

6. I am not certain what you mean by “banked recreation fees.” That is not my recollection of what was explained when we started into the field project. In fact, I believe what we specifically said was that it was almost impossible to go back and determine exactly where all of those fees had been utilized. They were taken in, they were included with other overall fees, and there were expenses incurred against them. They were not dealt with in a separate account. I remember Larry Wilder explaining this. That being said, I tend to agree with you about the cost for the power rack. I would similarly note the information about fencing. Although some fencing costs were anticipated in the initial project, now that the fields have been used for several years, it is clear that some additional fencing work needs to be done, both for safety and for preservation of the surfaces. Similarly, the resurfacing of the football, lacrosse, and recreation field was not required nine years ago; it is now becoming an issue.

7. I agree with your comment regarding clarification of the reallocation funding in IT.
8. The Classroom Enhancement Pool needs to be considered for funding from a whole range of sources, and that will occur. There may also be some funding coming from the Smart Classroom Initiative proposed by the System, and hopefully, funded in the Governor’s budget.

9. I share the concerns of the UPBC with regard to the web management system. Obviously, the web management system is critical. How we are able to fund it, whether in one piece or annually remains to be seen. In either case, the commitment has to be clear. We can’t pay for two years of the project, and then quit. We will need to be able to identify where we find the overall funding, even if it is paid out over a period of time. Furthermore, I don’t know whether we should include such funding into the base as an ongoing cost for every year in the future. We don’t know how much will be required in the future. For example, the amount requested for this five-year term is considerably lower than what was expended for the last five years. It probably will continue to be a cost, but it will vary annually.

10. It is important that we begin to make a range of investments, both in terms of human capital and in actual funding, to complement an ongoing plan to increase enrollment. I think a number of things can be done that don’t require advertising and marketing, such as adding faculty resources, through reallocation, to areas where we have current unmet student demand. Nevertheless, a concerted multi-year process to raise our overall profile is important, and will be examined.

11. The Victim’s Advocate position in the President’s Office will be funded through reallocation, as suggested.

Again, thank you very much for all of your work. I can assure you that I will pay close attention to all of your recommendations as we move closer to constructing a final budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Jack Miller
President