From: UPBC
To: President Miller
Re: Recommendations of the University Planning & Budget Committee following the Budget Presentations of February 18, 2016.
Date: March 10, 2016

UPBC key recommendations

Long Term Budgeting

UPBC is in agreement with a statement made by President Miller that the University needs to consider taking a longer term look at our budget. CCSU should strongly consider budgeting for revenue against our costs. Where do we have to be with increased revenue to accommodate a planned initiative? Where do we have to be in terms of having planned spending reductions in place for long term declines in enrollment and other revenue sources? Increasing our budget planning between the committee and the administration beyond a single year should prove beneficial to the University.

Forecasting Retirements

The recent focus in state government to reshape the size of the state employee base requires that divisions at CCSU work throughout the year to more closely forecast possible retirements within their divisions. The opportunity to refill positions will be less about the availability of funds in the future and more about the state’s willingness to maintain the number of positions. That being said, the ability for the institution to plan ahead for these changes will aid greatly in operational planning for the near future.

Departmental reliance on one-time funding

As the UPBC has stated in previous years, one-time funding is a shrinking pool of money. Departments need to work to migrate regularly requested one-time items to a sustainable funding mechanism. It is time that CCSU start to think less about being all things to all people and more about what the University’s core mission is going forward.

Overall recommendations pertaining to most or all budget presentations follow. Following the overall recommendations we present recommendations related to the budgets presented by each division.

Overall Recommendations

Reduction of all catering services

UPBC feels that it is time for a “campus diet”. Considerable funding can be saved in all divisions as a result of removing catering options for various meetings, events and campus functions.
Student worker employment

UPBC has worked hard for the last two years to assure that our student workers are being considered during the budget process. The increases in the minimum wage have continued to place a strain on the campus finances in each division. The University has forecasted the FY16 and FY17 increases and supported these numbers by applying funding to each division. UPBC is requesting a report at the end of FY16 to see that this funding was properly applied to the student workers on campus. The retention of students is impacted in large part by their ability to work while they attend school. Additionally, UPBC would like CCSU to work with the Board of Regents to draft a more flexible and realistic version of the student worker compensation guidelines. The system office needs to allow decisions on class rank and pay for students to be made at the campus level and they need to allow for more flexibility in the wage increments. Current increments, which in some cases are more than 10% apart, are not sustainable and will lead to students not being hired, or being hired at incorrect levels to avoid these large increases.

Recommendations Specific to Departmental Budgets

Academic Affairs

The committee is supportive of the proposals put forward by the Academic Affairs division. Many smaller items that are requested and prioritized UPBC trusts have been vetted by the department chairs, Deans and Provost to the point where none stand out to us as needing further review. One item that we believe should be reviewed is the proposed salary for the replacement English faculty member emergency hire to teach poetry. In addition to teaching faculty positions, UPBC also recognizes the importance of the need for an Associate Dean in the School of Business and is very supportive of this position. The committee wishes to compliment Dr. Lovitt on his decision to utilize his own accounts to establish base budget funding in many areas. He is providing stable funding in the base budget for these areas removing them from the yearly one-time request list. Going forward this decision will prove helpful to many areas within Academic Affairs.

Administrative Affairs

UPBC has some concerns with the overall presentation by Administrative Affairs. The division should reformat the proposed refill of positions to have them appear as “above the line” items that follow the same formatting as “below the line” reductions. In both areas, above and below, prioritization, strategic objective and detailed summary of impact need to be described. There is a planned reduction in an athletics position of $52,000 base salary that may need to be accounted for elsewhere. Upon investigation, the UPBC believes that all SUOAF lines in athletics would require at least a 1-year notification of non-renewal, impacting the planned cost savings of that personnel change in FY17.

The first two capital items in the proposal, both for the Energy Center, are supported by the committee. Dr. Bachoo stressed their importance to the sustainability of air conditioning and electrical services to the campus. Should one-time funding not be available, as with all items, we suggest these be considered for bonding due to their overall importance to the campus.
UPBC would like to receive more information about the planned $50,000 in requested Copy Center furniture. Without further explanation the committee cannot support such a generous amount of furniture for one office. The committee noticed a discrepancy in account coding for Copy Center furniture. The area requesting this is listed as EM for Event Management however in another part of the presentation a high volume cutter is requested using Copy, the Copy Center account.

A few additional items on the capital request list stood out to the committee. Safety items – Lightning detection should be moved up much higher in the proposal priority ranking. It does not seem to be in the correct place below so many other items. The committee is supportive of this system and other safety items; security cameras, garage fencing and lock systems.

Pool filter system components – UPBC supports this item as we are all aware of the importance of a safe water environment.

Football Stadium Sound System and Torp and Dance Studio lighting upgrades - At this time, these items are not supported by the UPBC. The Dance studio specifically was just built by the University at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars and the facility should suffice as an academic space for the time being with the resources that it has in it.

The committee is supportive of the remaining one-time and capital funding requests.

UPBC would like to have an update on the deferred maintenance funding that was to be released to the schools by the system office. Perhaps some of this funding can be utilized for the replacement of outdated equipment including electrical switch/transformer, chiller, energy center overhauls.

The committee is supportive of the reduction strategy except for the athletic lines noted above. Continued hiring savings is a likely area that all divisions will have to utilize in the coming years. Prioritizing the removal of student labor very low also is highly supported by the committee.

**Student Affairs**

UPBC has reviewed the request from Student Affairs for a base budget increase to hire a professional staff member to support the increased student behavior issues that our campus is actively working to address. The coordination of these student support services is currently orphaned between multiple staff members. UPBC believes that the focus needs to return to this effort in the form of an Assistant Dean position within the Office of Student Affairs. UPBC has requested additional data regarding the increases in this area so that this can be more openly shared with the campus community. Many of the members of the committee provided personal experience with student issues, both locally and while abroad, that would benefit from having this position in place.

Additional personnel requests from the division using reallocated funding is also supported by the UPBC.
One-time and capital items are mostly supported, however UPBC requests that Dr. Tordenti explore the viability of removing the Collegiate Link software from the Student Government Association budget ahead of allocating that budgeted amount to the SGA.

UPBC strongly recommends that the University work toward centralized scheduling and operations of facility use on campus. The full time staffing support, billing systems, tickets sales, scheduling software are utilized across two divisions, Student Affairs and Administrative Affairs. They largely exist however within the Student Affairs division. The reality facing the University is that budget reductions will likely not be going away in the near future and this is an opportunity to streamline the operations of this area, create cost savings through efficiencies, remove redundancies and properly align the service with the mission of the division it resides in. This is a direct internal and external customer contact area that the committee believes is negatively impacted when individuals and groups do not have one centralized office to coordinate services through.

Information Technology

The committee supports the request by the CIO for funding of the additional position to address the telecommunications needs of the campus. The position will be funded through multiple reallocations. Currently the University sends money to the system office each year to support the telecommunications throughout the system. This year, the system office is migrating responsibility for telecommunications to each campus. This will require that a specialized worker be hired with the skillset to run such a system at CCSU. This includes our phone and voicemail systems. One correction that needs to be made is that the funding needs to fall under the reallocation column.

Hard Drive Purchases - $14,625. While the committee is not opposed to this expenditure, UPBC is recommending that the incoming CIO be asked to take a hard look at virtualizing more aspects of desktop computing to avoid the need for as many local hard drives. The need to keep hard drives set aside for litigation issues is costly and time consuming for the campus.

Replacement Lab Chairs – UPBC would like to suggest that perhaps remaining new chairs being repurposed from the Mid-Campus Residence Hall be considered for this purpose.

Multimedia Classroom Upgrade – There was confusion in last year’s presentation to the UPBC on the part of the previous CIO regarding this item. Funding was provided for the refresh of this equipment in FY15 as one-time money, however the previous CIO interpreted this as a base budget increase and did not request it in FY16. The new CIO needs to consider making this item part of a base to support classroom technology versus asking for the funding as one-time money each year. UPBC is supportive of this funding.

The committee is supportive of the remaining one-time and capital funding requests.

Planned Reductions

Faculty Training Institutes - UPBC members are generally not in favor of a broad cut to faculty training in this area. The committee would like the CIO to explore other cost cutting measures such as a reduction in the frequency of the training and more appropriate timing only scheduling sessions during the start of the semester week before classes begin.
Reduce Student Workers – UPBC is again not in favor of negatively impacting student workers across campus. After supporting the increases in DPS funding to cover minimum wage increases, UPBC would like to see those positions retained.

Catering Reduction – UPBC is in favor of this cost cutting measure and would suggest that all divisions explore doing this similar to a ban on out-of-state travel. UPBC believes that a “campus diet” will save funds across all divisions.

UPBC agrees with the remaining IT reduction strategies as they appear to not cause considerable operation impairment to the division.

**Institutional Advancement**

UPBC is supportive of the personnel reallocations proposed by the division. UPBC has learned of reclassification provided to personnel within the division in this fiscal year that were not part of the previous year’s proposed budget. The committee reminds the Vice President that personnel changes should be reflected in the annual budget presentation before moving forward.

Website – Committee members are still receiving negative feedback about the University’s website. The ability for some departments to locally update their content, timeliness of updates, accuracy and missing pages are frequent topics. Committee members themselves work in some departments that are experiencing some of these problems. As we are now two years into the new content management system contract, UPBC is asking if there are plans to apply a systemic fix to these issues. Is this a resource issue in supporting our website? No additional web resources are being requested.

CE Courses - $15,000. UPBC would recommend a couple of items regarding these courses. The first item would be that continuing education revenue be considered for funding these courses. Second, consider instead, moving these courses to the Academic Affairs division and allowing them to prioritize their need. UPBC believes that this could involve CACE or school advising centers.

Marketing Funding - $250,000. UPBC is supportive of the plan to utilize a new company to assist with the overall marketing endeavors of the University. This should take some of the weight off of the in-house Marketing & Communications office.

The UPBC is in favor of the remaining items in Dr. Galligan’s request.

**President’s Office**

No proposal was received from this office. Dr. Miller stated in his comments to the committee that he is maintaining open positions for salary savings and may utilize some funds for reallocations.

**Fiscal Affairs**
The committee is pleased that the approved funding last year for the travel consultant has resulted in the planned launch of a new travel system this year.

UPBC would ask that Fiscal Affairs clarify with all divisions whether or not forecasted/planned refills of eligible retirees should be stated in all divisional proposals. Some divisions this year have forecasted retiree rehire plans and others have not done so. In light of the Governor’s plan to reduce state workers, first through attrition, the University should actively plan ahead for anticipated retirements and their possible impact on the campus operation should we not be able to refill those lines.

No additional specific budget recommendations.

Human Resources

No specific budget recommendations.