Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee

November 10, 2010

Wesleyan Hall Conference Room

The Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee (SPBS) meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Chair Kristy Van Rensselaer. The following committee members were present: Dr. Kerry Gatlin, Ms. Martha Hickman, Ms. Peggy Hoekenga, Dr. Bill Huddleston, Mr. John Ledgewood, Mr. Mark Linder, Dr. David Muse, Mr. David Shields, Dr. Steve Smith, Dr. John Thornell, and Dr. Brenda Webb. Absentees were: Dr. Alan Medders. Other attendees were: Ms. Kim Mauldin (proxy for Mr. Ben Baker), Ms. Donna Tipps, and Dr. Andrew Luna.

Dr. Gatlin made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Webb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Shields made a motion to approve the October 13 minutes. Dr. Huddleston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Vince Brewton, Director of the UNA Honors Program, presented a line item request for $30,000 to fund existing housing scholarships for honors students. The request was sent via email to the committee. If additional funds are needed, they will be sought from other sources. Rationale for funding now is to ensure the funds are available to attract the best honor students. If the request for funds is granted, the honors housing scholarships will be moved from the Office of Admissions to the Honors Program who will assume full responsibility for coordinating, awarding, and funding these scholarships. Twelve students received housing scholarships for the Fall 2010 semester. Dr. Smith informed the committee that $145,000 in total scholarship money is budgeted with $20,000 allocated for honor housing scholarships. This would make the request for an additional $10,000 for next fall.

Chair Van Rensselaer noted that a problem exists because line items for the next fiscal year are typically recommended in August. After discussion, Dr. Gatlin made a motion to recommend the proposal for consideration to be added to the 2011-2012 request list. Mr. Shields seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Thornell asked the committee to take the opportunity to rethink its position for putting the request on the list. He recommended sending the recommendation to President Cale asking for his support now so that Dr. Brewton will know how to proceed. He feels that the committee should forward requests that need prompt attention for planning purposes, such as scholarship requests, to the President instead of waiting. Ms. Tipps noted that scholarships need to be planned a year ahead and that the budgeting process is working towards that.

This committee discussed that honors scholarships and other scholarship requests are a high priority but it is difficult to endorse budget requests early in the fiscal year when other budget requests are not known. This could give the appearance that requests received early in the year would receive precedence in funding. After discussion, Dr. Gatlin withdrew his previous motion and asked it be amended to Dr. Thornell’s recommendation. The committee agreed.

LTC Wayne Bergeron presented an operational plan to the committee for the establishment of an Office of Military and Veterans Affair. The cost of establishing this office would be approximately $240,000 for the first year. He noted that currently there is no single source of advocacy for military and veteran students on the campus. He informed the committee that students receiving the post 9-11 GI Bill tuition benefits has doubled from 40 to 80 with currently only one person (half-time) is handling these students. Dr. Thornell noted that the proposal was conceptually approved at the last meeting and that LTC Bergeron is presenting concepts and not asking for funding today. This was an information item for the committee. Dr. Thornell will keep the committee informed. Chair Van Rensselaer suggested that LTC Bergeron evaluate the costs carefully to determine if the budget could be reduced.

Dr. Thornell then discussed the proposal for a master’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and the creation of an office of interdisciplinary studies. Dr. Thornell indicated that this would be a good compliment to the Office of Military Affairs proposal since veterans, in particular, may be a good target market for this degree. The funding for the interdisciplinary office would come from existing sources. Dr. Craig Robertson discussed the Interdisciplinary Studies program (baccalaureate program). The program began in August with a goal of 20 students. He noted that 22 students were already interested and he is anticipating substantial growth. This was an information item and Dr. Thornell will keep the committee posted.

Dr. Webb gave an update on the status of the Strategic Plan. Dr. Luna, Dr. Anna Lott, and Dr. Webb collected data and compiled the report. The report was already been used by the SACS compliance group. The report has been sent to Dr. Thornell and President Cale for review. They will then incorporate feedback and do a second draft which would go the Executive Council to fill in any missing items. They will then take the information, add additional data, and do a final report. This report will go to the SPSB Committee at the December meeting and then back to the Executive Council for final approval.

Dr. Webb distributed handouts concerning travel policies and entertainment policies. The travel document is a draft to replace UNA’s current policy for travel reimbursement and would incorporate a new entertainment policy. She noted that the committee working on the draft had considered federal and state laws, reviewed several institutions and policies in Alabama, and considered comments from faculty and staff. Dr. Webb asked the committee to review the documents and give feedback in the next couple of weeks. She will then email a completed document to the committee for approval at the next SPBS meeting.

Dr. Thornell submitted a request for staff development funds. Currently, there is no funding for staff professional development. He noted that, at one time, there was a line item in the budget for staff development but it was lost during proration. Dr. Thornell is requesting that a staff development line be put on the 2011-2012 budget. After discussion, Mr. Shields made a motion to place the request for approximately $10,000-$15,000 for staff development funds on the 2011-2012 budget request list. Dr. Webb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Smith distributed the State of Alabama EBO Budget request for 2010. He noted that the report has already been sent in. He pointed out that a 4% increase had been requested. He informed the committee that tuition and fees would be used to replace stimulus funds and that a 3% cost of living increase had been requested. This was an information item for the committee.

The next SPBS committee meeting will be December 8 at 3:30 in the Bibb Graves Board Room. President Cale will be present to discuss developments associated with the Campus Master Plan. In addition, it was announced that a revised official document for the study on moving to Division I Athletics will be available on UNA’s website and that a campus forum will take place soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Westmoreland