Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee

October 7, 2009

Bibb Graves Conference Room

The Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee (SPBS) meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by incoming chair Dr. Brenda Webb. The following committee members were present: Mr. Ben Baker, Dr. Kerry Gatlin, Ms. Martha Hickman, Ms. Tera Kirkman, Mr. Mark Linder, Dr. Anna Lott, Mr. David Shields, Dr. Steve Smith, Dr. John Thornell, Dr. Kristy Van Rensselaer, and Mr. Daniel Wagner. Absentees were: Dr. Alan Medders and Ms. Lynn Underwood. Visitors were: President Cale, Dr. Priscilla Holland, and Ms. Donna Tipps.

Dr. Lott made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Dr. Van Rensselaer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Lott made the motion to approve the minutes of May 5 with one editing change. Mr. Wagner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Webb requested introductions be made due to new members on the committee.

Old Business

Dr. Webb distributed a handout entitled “Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee Charge” as an information item for the committee. Chair Webb read the charge. She noted that changes have been made in shared governance committees, and she will bring a revised charge back to the committee.

President Cale then addressed the committee concerning the University budget. He noted that the University had an additional 7 ½ % (approximately $2 million) budget cut from the state for a total reduction of approximately $9 million. President Cale’s original plan of action was to build a 4 year budget plan which would accumulate surplus dollars for the 3rd year after using the $2.2 million stimulus funds for the first two years. A tuition increase of $14 per credit hour was implemented to cover the 3rd year. Tuition was increased $14 per credit hour (9.15%). With this plan, the 4th year of the budget would be even. He noted that despite the additional cut scholarships had not been reduced and the Phase II staff salary plan had been implemented. From this plan, two things occurred: (1) some of the prorated budget from last year was restored and (2) a tuition scenario was built which generated a small reserve of approximately one million. Because of the additional reduction of $2.035 million, President Cale is considering the following:

1. Find ½ in current budget model by not restoring previously cut items which would include the physical plant which would account for $250,000 of the needed ½ of funds.
2. Apply some of the excess reserve funds in the reserve account.
3. Will only fill essential unfilled positions. This would provide funds of approximately $400,000. The vice presidents are reviewing positions in order to decide only essential positions to fill.

In addition, he is also considering:

1. Not refunding bonds.
2. Using technology fees
3. Moving 2-3 employee positions from the E & G budget to the technology budget.
4. Using discretionary funds from departments.

President Cale and Dr. Smith will be reviewing options to implement and making decisions before the end of the month which will be brought before the committee. He informed the committee that there would be an open forum at a later date to explain the budget situation.

On a positive note, Dr. Smith noted that the University has had no layoffs. Also, the University has not had to borrow funds. For additional revenue, work is being done to recruit quality international students which will provide double tuition.

Chair Webb noted that it was important for the SGA to inform students of the current budget situation and the history of funding reduced over time. President Cale reviewed the history and noted that higher education was moved to a peripheral position instead of being front and center. Mr. Wagner (SGA Representative) indicated that he understood the reasons for tuition increases. Mr. Shields informed the committee that he had met with Samuel Thigpen (SGA President) and explained budget concerns and that there was good support from the SGA.

Chair Webb expressed her appreciation to President Cale. She noted that morale was very high on campus in spite of cutbacks and that there was a positive environment that comes from the tone set by the administration.

 New Business

There was no new business.

Other

Chair Webb expressed the need for setting a regular meeting time. She suggested meeting once a month and additionally as needed. After discussion, the committee decided to meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 3:30 pm. Chair Webb will inform the committee of the meeting place.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Westmoreland