

THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
FINANCIAL CRISIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, August 16, 2016

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**Tuesday, August 16, 2016
12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Coe Library 506; University of Wyoming Campus**

AGENDA

Call to Order	1
Roll Call and Approval of Minutes.....	1
Public Session	
I. General Public Comment.....	1
II. Meeting Time for September and October	1
III. Written and Oral Proposal Guidelines	3
IV. Discussion: Possible recommendations to reduce the number of staff and faculty without position terminations	1
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Call to Order

Chair Steve Bieber called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

Roll Call and Approval of Minutes

Committee members present included: Dean of the College of Law Klint Alexander, Dean of the Outreach School Susan Frye, Dr. Frederic Sterbenz, Dr. Robert Cawley, Dr. Donal O'Toole, Dr. Robert Sprague, Chair Steve Bieber, Mr. Kevin Colman, and Mr. Joel Defebaugh.

Dr. Cawley moved to approve the minutes from August 9, 2016 and August 12, 2016. Mr. Defebaugh seconded. All committee members were in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Public Session

Committee Chair Bieber explained that the committee would begin to talk about very specific issues at each meeting based on the email comments that had been sent to the committee. He added that the committee would hear a presentation from Dr. Rob Godby, the Chair of the Revenue Enhancement Committee, during the Friday, August 19, 2016 meeting. Committee Chair Bieber also noted that Athletic Director Burman and Dr. Myron Allen would present to the FCAC on Tuesday, August 23, 2016 and Friday, August 26, 2016, respectively.

Members of the committee stated that there was ample documentation provided on the website for Academic Affairs that could be very beneficial. The committee noted this also included the White Papers from the 2008-2009 Budget Reductions, which could be found on the FCAC Website. Committee Chair Bieber noted that in the coming meetings the public comment session would be moved to the end of the meeting to allow for comment on the entire meet discussion.

General Public Comment

Mark Gunnerson, UW Staff Senate President, stated that the committee should look at all perspectives before changing the state amount input into employee retirement. He explained that members of the campus community who are on the lower end of the salary scale might see this as an additional burden. Since their disposal income each month was minimal, requiring them to input more money each month did not seem right.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that this was mentioned at the previous meeting for Vice President for Administration Bill Mai to examine the state statutes to see if this was an option that could be pursued. He noted that Mark Gunnerson's point was one that would need to be taken into consideration because often times reduction strategies do not impact everyone equally.

Dr. Maggi Murdock, a professor from the Political Science Department, thanked the committee members for their work this summer and for addressing serious issues. She noted that thoughtful discussion making was critical to these issues. Dr. Murdock stated that a lack of imagination could easily work its way into these decision making discussions if there was not a clear vision for what kind of university we want UW to be in the future. She noted that it would be important to look back and not regret the decisions that were made. Dr. Murdock explained that she did not believe that the cuts should be proportional across the University. She added that the idea of differential

tuition could cause students to not choose a major solely because they cannot afford the additional fees.

Megan Selheim, from the Dean of Student's Office, asked if there would be a clear definition provided to the campus community regarding the difference between Section I and Section II dollars. She noted it could assist with understanding how that money was being used to offset the budget reductions. Ms. Selheim explained that there could be some additional clarification regarding how positions are being filled and why some are not being filled. She added that it could be difficult to move forward without understanding where the money was.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that he would pass this request along to the correct people to make sure answers were provided.

Sandra Barstow, a Librarian in Coe Library, noted that in a previous budget cut where no raises were given, the state decided to cover a larger amount of employee retirement. She added that it could be less painful for the campus community to change the retirement contributions than some of the other potential options. Ms. Barstow suggested that there be an option for the employees to voluntarily contribute more to their retirement account.

The committee noted that the idea was presented to implement a 50/50 contribution into the retirement account, but added that previous comments were true in stating that this option might be considered unfair to all UW employees. The committee further discussed the options, but stated they would continue this discussion once Vice President Mai presented the committee with more details regarding the statutes.

Meeting Times for September and October

The committee members discussed that when the fall semester was underway, the current meeting times may not work for all members. It was proposed to change the meetings beginning August 29, 2016 to Mondays from 1-3 p.m. and Friday from 12-2 p.m. The committee was provided a few days to further check their schedules and these times would be finalized in the coming days. Committee Chair Bieber added that beginning Tuesday, September 12, 2016, the committee would begin to hear presentations from the different campus divisions about the budget reduction target the FCAC had recommended for them.

Written and Oral Presentation Guidelines

Committee Chair Bieber explained the original format for the written and oral presentations that the committee had decided upon in a previous meeting. He added that there had been talk about changing the guidelines for these presentations to include the concept of meeting the target, meeting less than the target, meeting more than the target, and the implications of each of those targets.

The committee members discussed committing to not recommend across the board cuts if another option was presented to shift away from departments who were more heavily targeted. It was further discussed to allow for elasticity instead of giving additional targets for the divisions to meet in their presentations. Committee Chair Bieber stated that the information that was provided

during the Friday, August 12, 2016 meeting regarding the FY 2017 Budget Update should be used moving forward. He added that President Nichols would take into account all of the information presented to her, including the plan, to make her final decision, and that the committee should work diligently to enable her to do so with the most information possible.

A member of the FCAC suggested that the presentations remain as close to the given target as possible. It was added that to work within the given target would give the committee a full understanding of what each division would be facing, and would allow for a true reduction to be implemented. The committee noted that in addition to the presentation of numbers, it was critical to provide the actual impact of the cut. It was reiterated that only 35% of the proposed budget could be renewed through revenue streams.

The committee discussed the possibility of returning to the originally proposed \$10 million in cuts instead of the current \$15 million. It was added that after hearing the most up to date numbers, it seemed that there would only be a \$3 million shortfall instead of \$5 million, which ultimately could allow the committee to adjust their current targets.

Committee Chair Bieber stated that the \$15 million was a moving target, different even than the numbers presented on Friday, August 12, 2016. He added that the potential results of the CREG Report could additionally affect these numbers and that potentially going over the targeted number would allow for even greater flexibility moving forward to increase or decrease these targets.

The committee suggested that the divisions come prepared to share different phases of their budget reductions with the most up to date numbers as a part of those phases. It was added that as these targets were presented, the overall positive vision for what UW would look like in the future needed to be held at the core of every presentation. The committee discussed the different contingencies that could present themselves as the university moved forward and as these presentations are made.

The committee discussed the timeline of the proposed plan, including the potential for the Governor to change the overall target number following the publication of the CREG Report, which would happen following the committee's recommendation to the President. It was further discussed that with so many opportunities for fluctuation, the target numbers were a great opportunity for the divisions to come to the committee to present their strategy for cuts, even if those numbers adjust.

A member of the FCAC asked how confidentiality of potential position cuts would be handled during these presentations. It was decided that the committee needed to be transparent, but this type of information needed to be handled sensitively and possibly presented to the committee in a confidential way. It was added that this would be addressed with each division on a case by case basis.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that he would share the comments made during the meeting with the division heads as they prepare their presentations.

Discussion: Possible recommendations to reduce the number of staff and faculty without position terminations

Committee Chair Bieber explained that the most recent discussion of this topic had resulted in the statement that there would be 400 less employees working for UW over the next few years as these budget cuts were implemented. He noted that this number included the 152 positions that had been vacated through the retirement/separation incentive or through natural attrition. Committee Chair Bieber added that it could be beneficial to propose solutions to the division about ways to reduce employment without the termination of positions.

The committee discussed the retirement incentive, including from where the target age of 61 arose for the current retirement incentive. It was added that many divisions across campus had already begun to deal with these vacancies through the combination of positions when there had not been a plan to replace that position. It was noted that this allowed for replacement of one position instead of two, which ultimately would create more efficiency. The committee expressed concern about how to approach vacancies as they continued to arise over the remainder of the budget crisis.

Committee Chair Bieber explained that the rise from \$10 million to \$15 million was due to projected deficiencies that would be realized during the current fiscal year. He added that the flexibility of the higher number would greatly allow for reallocations if that were a necessary step. It was noted that often times faculty members do not want to retire from an institution because there was the possibility of losing connection with the university. It was presented that faculty be allowed the option to retire, but still teach and be paid strictly through health care benefits. The committee noted this could cut the cost of hiring part time faculty and hiring for vacancies, and would allow faculty to remain engaged with UW. Additionally, engagement could be gained through leadership seminars with Student Affairs or other campus entities.

The committee continued to discuss the ideas that could be presented to decrease the number of employees without termination of positions. The committee noted that this equation should not eliminate staff, as this group had already seen a large amount of position vacancies. It was also presented by the committee to work towards utilizing each individual's skills moving forward, as this could provide efficiencies to the department and add to the overall student experience.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that keeping the student experience and impacts at the front of the charge was important, especially as more information on this topic begins to arise. It was stated that the termination of positions in certain situations seemed to be the only option second to retirement, with no systematic or programmatic way of approaching the issue. The committee expressed concern regarding how to track vacant faculty positions and if they were filled or remained vacant. The committee added that divisions who potentially took fewer cuts in FY17 should be looked at to take more cuts in FY18 and vice versa to prevent a sizeable double reduction from taking place. A member of the FCAC noted that the idea of severance pay should be addressed for departments or divisions that are cut in order to further assist the members of the campus community.

The committee noted that they needed to address this topic from a realistic perspective. It was noted that another retirement incentive may not be the best way to accomplish this task as it

ultimately hollowed out the university. A member of the FCAC proposed the idea of vertical cuts and termination of employees. It was noted that the university had no current way to control or track attrition.

Committee Chair Bieber noted the importance of having these difficult conversations early in this process so that the most important decisions are not being left until the very end. He noted the outcome of these conversations would be very important as a plan began to form. A few members of the committee noted that it felt like there was no other option but to declare exigency if vertical cuts needed to be implemented. A member of the FCAC noted that it was very difficult to decide where the most cuts could arise and how to track that information. It was noted that cuts moving forward would need to be viable and helpful for the overall University.

The committee began to discuss vertical cuts and how those could potentially affect departments across campus that have cross listings with other departments. The idea of having strong departments at the end of all of the budget reductions should be a key factor. The committee discussed the current approach for program reviews and how that might be adjusted if vertical cuts were the new plan for implementation. It was noted that in all decisions, the overall good of the University needed to be addressed so that its integrity be upheld and no substantial harm be done.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that this discussion was not leading the committee to any final conclusions, but was working to get the committee to ask the right questions, so that when the presentations began the right questions were being asked of the divisions. He noted that none of the decisions made moving forward would be easy or always well received, but they should regardless be well informed decisions. A member of the FCAC noted that to make well informed decisions in the future would allow UW to not be put in this same place and certain items should be put in place to help guide the university towards its core mission.

General Public Comment

Dr. Frieda Knobloch, Director of the American Studies Program, seconded previous comments made regarding an overall vision of where UW should be once these reductions were fully implemented. She added that this process could have been helped had this plan been implemented before the reductions. Dr. Knobloch explained that she hoped that the committee would take the information presented by the different divisions seriously and truly implement that information into their decision making process. She noted that this was a lot of work that these divisions were putting into this material, and it should be treated as important and not another example of busy work. Dr. Knobloch added that the smaller programs had reached their small size only due to design and neglect, but that in the 21st century there should be a strong focus on diversity especially on the UW campus.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that the committee would take into consideration all information they were presented with through the program review and the coming presentations.

Adjournment

Mr. Defebaugh moved that the committee adjourn the meeting. Dr. O'Toole seconded. The committee adjourned at 1:51 p.m.