

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING**  
**FINANCIAL CRISIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE**

*FY18 Budget Reduction Listening Session*  
**Friday, October 21, 2016**

**Public Session**

**FY18 Budget Reduction Listening Session**

Committee Chair Bieber stated that this was not an official meeting, but an opportunity for the FCAC to answer questions and get comments on almost anything, but there was a specific focus on the draft of Financial Crisis Plan released by UW President Laurie Nichols during the previous weeks Town Hall Meeting. He stated that notes would be taken because the committee wanted a record of comments and questions so that they could be revisited. He added that these comments would also be useful when the FCAC was advising UW President Nichols the following week on whether there needed to be any adjustments made to the Financial Crisis Plan before it was presented to the Board of Trustees. He noted that he sent an email stating that the next official meeting would take place on October 28 or October 31, and that this would be communicated to the group in the coming days.

A member of the campus committee asked if the timeline for the Financial Plan could be clarified for those in attendance.

Committee Chair Bieber responded that the draft plan had been distributed to the campus community following the Town Hall Meeting and the committee assisting with the comment period through Friday, October 28. He explained that UW President Nichols would take the received comments and evaluate them to better understand if any corrections were necessary before submitting the Financial Crisis Plan to the Board of Trustees. Committee Chair Bieber shared that the draft plan would be ready by November 8, 2016 for distribution to the Board of Trustees. He stated that the Board would consider the plan during their November meeting. It was noted that an agenda for the November Board of Trustee's meeting agenda would be released in the coming weeks.

A member of the FCAC asked if there had been any word about the release of the CREG Report. Committee Chair Bieber stated that the news article in the Laramie Boomerang the previous day had been the only information he had received. He noted that Vice President for Administration Bill Mai was quoted about getting preliminary information from the CREG, but there was no additional information.

A member of the FCAC stated that the Governor would base his supplemental budget requests on the current report and that the January report would drive any budget decisions by the Legislature during the Legislative Session. He noted that even if it comes out as flat lined, it was still unsure what would be done. Another member of the FCAC commented that Vice President for Governmental and Community Affairs Chris Boswell had stated that the Governor wouldn't say anything until the Legislature made decisions when they were in session beginning in January. It was added that this meant that repercussions of the CREG Report would not be known until February.

Committee Chair Bieber stated that in terms of the time line, the committee had the draft plan out and the October CREG report would come out during the middle of the comment period. The Trustees would then act on the plan during their November meeting, which was before the supplemental CREG Report would be released. He stated that budget reallocation or reduction would not be done until the Legislative session. Committee Chair Bieber affirmed that all activity

would be completed prior to learning whether or not there would be another reduction, which had been known from the beginning, but had recently become more apparent. He stated that the CREG report would not activate anything, but if the Legislature or the Governor said that there needed to be further reductions it would be determined during the Legislative Session.

A committee member stated that the initial goal of the committee was to look for \$15 million in reductions, noting that the committee's directives to the units on campus were to come up with cuts to equal that designated amount. He explained that it was then decided that \$15 million in reductions was not necessary, so the directive of the committee was reduced to \$10 million.

A member of the campus committee stated that he felt that there were good numbers that had been established, and agreed with the statements regarding competitor universities. He added that he was worried about the notion that UW had to stay in competition with other universities instead of the community colleges in the state of Wyoming. He stated that if he were a student and UW raised its prices, he would do the 2 plus 2 plan at a community college.

Committee Chair Bieber stated that the Chair of the Revenue Enhancement Committee Rob Godby had not mentioned these thoughts, but he would pass the comment to him.

An ASUW senator for the College of Arts & Sciences thanked the committee for their work, recognizing what an immense workload it was for the committee members. He noted that he would like to address program fees, but began with his comments on the other proposed reductions. The ASUW Senator stated that he was happy with the reductions because other branches had taken on large cuts to prevent that burden from solely falling on Academic Affairs. He discussed the committee's utilization of the recommendations from the Huron Consulting Group, such as restructuring IT. The ASUW Senator noted that students had been encouraged to see that the committee had kept education at the forefront. He added that he was happy with the discussions regarding diversification of revenue, noting that the proposals regarding the key factors of retention rate and the use of Residence Life & Dining Services had been well thought-out.

The ASUW Senator emphasized his disappointment with the interaction between students and the Revenue Enhancement Committee on this activity. He recognized that this committee began its work over the summer, but noted that there were many students on campus during that time that could have expressed their concerns. He stressed that this had such an impact on the financial burden of students. The ASUW Senator shared that he was a pre-med student with 12 years of higher education that he needed to determine how to pay for. He noted that although it is only an average of about \$379 for student program fees, that was equivalent to a month of rent. He emphasized that this was a financial burden on students, which needed to be considered heavily. He felt that it was truly disappointing that students had not been brought forward and considered on this matter. The ASUW Senator expressed his concern with the variability of the plans, stating that some were very detailed, showing how the funding would be spent, why it helped students, and how operations would be affected. The ASUW Senator added that these fee should include measureable outcomes, such as faster graduation rates. He felt that where the money would go was very vague, as was the reasoning of why those funds would be spent in the ways described. He added that it did not have how the college would rate the use of those funds. The ASUW Senator noted that none of the plans addressed how they would control the ceiling or floor on a

reserve. He stated that all proposals felt as though they were missing accountability. The ASUW Senator noted the parameters and reasoning that ASUW used with their reserves, which should be considered for implementation for these fees to control some important factors. He continued that students were giving the University money to run with, and that program fees are a valid response and prudent way to deal with the financial crisis, but noted that the process of the implementation had been disheartening. He noted that students have many questions about how these fees would be spent and controlled, and if these would be redacted when the funding changed from the state level.

The ASUW Senator added that the thought process for this plan and student representation had not been adequately brought forward. He mentioned that he felt that the student leaders and the students as a whole had been put in an uncomfortable position because they do not want to see the education quality decrease at UW, but they have not been asked or involved and brought forward in the process of how the money would be spent. He added that he understood that the timing had been difficult, but that it would have been the best decision to take a step back because UW should make sure that all of the questions were addressed and that all students understood and felt that they were brought forward and involved in the decisions.

Committee Chair Bieber thanked the ASUW Senator and noted that his comments would be passed along to the Revenue Enhancement Committee. He added that the Financial Crisis Plan that was developed had no supplemental funding and was only reductions.

A member of the FCAC added that the fees would not be implemented in the 2017 spring semester. She noted that the deans have been instructed to hold hearings for students to comment on the fees. Another member of the FCAC mentioned that the hearing opportunities for students to provide their comments on the program fees would be posted on the website where the fee proposal was located.

Another member of the committee commented that his understanding was that the fee proposal would be presented to the Board of Trustees at the November Meeting. He added that there was a public testimony session and highly recommended that someone from ASUW attend and tell the Trustees what was mentioned to the FCAC.

The ASUW Senator thanked the committee for their hard work and mentioned that he, along with other senators and students were happy that Academic Affairs was kept a priority.

A member of the FCAC asked the ASUW Senator how the students would react when given the choice between the increase in tuition and the increase in the program fees.

The ASUW Senator answered that he could not give a fair answer to the question because his major was different from that of his constituents. He added the idea that the preference was that students just pay a flat tuition. The ASUW Senator noted that there was a fine-line between making tuition even as to give everyone a fair playing field and the ability to pick what he or she wanted to study and said that there was accountability to the investment made in education.

A campus community member added that as a tuition-paying parent, having to pay a tuition, a charge to the college, and a charge for the department created unpleasant optics. He mentioned that it started to feel like someone was taking advantage, which would not be received.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that the current situation at UW was that there was tuition and fees at every level. He added that it was not to say that the new system was any better or worse.

A member of the FCAC clarified that the student government position was mostly to get those fees assessed before a fee increase was implemented. He added that there was not accountability for what was happening currently. The committee member noted that he thought there were benefits to both options and students were weighing them.

A member of the campus community inquired how these fees would affect the Hathaway scholarship.

A member of the FCAC stated that the Hathaway scholarship could be used to pay fees. She added that the program fees would come with a seat guarantee, which would assist student having trouble getting into courses for their major.

One of the FCAC members noted that the Hathaway scholarship would no longer cover students for as long as it previous had. He added that there needed to be a discussion with the members of the Legislature to discuss how this scholarship should be changed to continue its original purpose; to help students.

A campus community member added that the Hathaway Scholarship was a good program, but could get difficult when there was a plan for a certain amount delegated to each person instead of the essentially flat rate currently offered.

A campus community member mentioned that since UW received so much money from the Legislature it had been suggested that one of the problems was that faculty and administration did not interact with the people of the state very often. She inquired whether the citizens of the state, the Legislatures, and the Trustees were invited to the listening sessions.

A member of the FCAC noted that a news release would be sent to the campus about the Strategic Planning Listening Sessions in the coming days. She added that in December, members of the Strategic Planning Leadership Council would be going to eight sites around the state where they would be having open listening session and would invite legislators, among others.

A committee member stated that the Huron Consulting Group Report had been given to the President and it was up to her to make a decision on when and how that document would be shared with the campus community. She added that the Huron Consulting Group Report consisted of opportunities to save money and increase revenue, and it is up to UW President Nichols and the Vice Presidents to decide which recommendations they would put into place.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that even the committee had not seen the Huron report. He mentioned that the Executive Council had seen it along with himself, but other than that, no one else had seen the recommendations that were made.

It was mentioned that at an earlier FCAC meeting UW President Nichols said that the Huron Consulting Group Report would be shared as soon as possible. He inquired why it has not been shared yet.

Committee Chair Bieber noted that he did not know why it has been delayed. He added that the Huron Consulting Group representatives indicated that the majority of the report was not controversial, but that he did not know why it had not been released.

A member of the FCAC asked, per the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, that given the amount in faculty reductions, if there will also be a change in administration. Committee Chair Bieber answered that he would pass along the request.

A campus community member inquired as to why the legislature was so proud of the amount of money they expend on K-12 education but not proud of the amount of money being spent at UW. Committee Chair Bieber answered that the question would probably be best answered by the Legislatures themselves.

A member of the campus community asked how feedback would be communicated if the questions were being delegated. Committee Chair Bieber answered that the FCAC was only charged with processing the comments that were related to the plan and making sense of those to assist in working with UW President Nichols to make adjustments. He made an example with the Revenue Enhancement Committee notes that he took and mentioned that he would pass the comments along to Rob Godby. He added that Rob Godby was receiving the questions regarding the Revenue Enhancement Committee when they were received through the UW Pres e-mail address.

A campus community member asked how the \$1 million reduction in athletics was reached by the committee. Committee Chair Bieber answered that he cannot answer the question, adding that UW President Nichols came up with that recalculation based on the target values that have been communicated. He noted that UW President Nichols adjusted all of the numbers and had justification, but stated that he did not know the reasons for the \$1 million in reduction.

A campus community member stated that he understood that UW President Nichols put forward a number for cuts, but inquired what the recommended number that FCAC had given to athletics.

Committee Chair Bieber answered that the FCAC did not recommend specific numbers to UW President Nichols, other than the original target numbers that were given to each division. He added that UW President Nichols discussed with the FCAC the adjustments that may had been made to the divisions, but there were no recommendation from the FCAC for what the amount of the adjustment would be. Committee Chair Bieber mentioned that the FCAC did present to UW President Nichols thoughts about the various principles that they were trying to follow when deciding on the target numbers. He added that UW President Nichols did take out the full amount,

as if working under the \$15 million plan, for four of the ten division, which enabled the other divisions to reduce the amounts they cut.

A campus community member asked if there was any correlated effort that this committee, the Provost office, or others had engaged in to see what the impact of the cuts would be on other administrative actions. He added that there could be complex interactions about decisions that had been made because of objectives of this committee with other cuts.

A member of the FCAC noted that she asked internally to look at impacts. She stated that there was commentary about what the impacts were when deans cut a certain amount of faculty and staff. She mentioned that the deans had given Academic Affairs \$9.5 million in cuts to begin the process and \$2 million in cuts was the actually number requested. The committee member added that the deans had been instructed to review their specific reduction targets are and get back to Academic Affairs as to what the impacts would be. She talked about the process for the program review, stating that if programs were eliminated at the end of the process, they would affect the budget in some way, but the program reduction was not being considered in the budget reduction process for the \$2 million requested by the FCAC and UW President Nichols. She noted that it is a correlation in time and not causation in connection between the budget cuts and the program reduction process.

A member of the committee stated that the programs that were proposed for elimination had not had a sufficient number of students for a number of years. She added that just because there were programs being eliminated, did not mean that there would not be new programs in the future. The programs that are being eliminated were ones that were not thriving for different reasons. The committee member mentioned that the University would need to look at new programs that would thrive and attract new students.

Another community member asked about the program fees and how there may be students that will leave the more expensive programs for a less expensive program. He mentioned that there could be some areas with not enough faculty to teach the students and on the other side, there could be some areas that had too many faculty members, but no students.

Committee Chair Bieber clarified that the program fees are not associated with majors, but they are associated with the specific classes.

A member of the FCAC stated that he asked Rob Godby why he was not looking at the fees that were across the board, adding that looking at tuition made more sense. He stated that Rob Godby answered that students would see the changes made to the colleges through the fees more so than a tuition increase because the college reports make it clear where these funds would be spent to improve the educational experience of student at UW and these reports would make the fee justification more powerful when it was presented to the Board of Trustees. The committee member stated that it would really help the Trustees if there were a clear message from ASUW about what the students would prefer in the fees versus tuition debate.

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Committee Chair Bieber thanked everyone for their comments and noted that the FCAC would try to answer any further questions as best as possible, or pass the question and information along to the correct committee.