
GUESTS: none

MINUTES: no previous minutes reviewed

Dr. Delano called the meeting at 3:33pm and began with introductions of the members of the 2009-10 University Planning and Policy Council.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT
No report was given

CHAIR’S REPORT
Dr. Delano began the first UPPC meeting of the 2009-2010 academic year with brief remarks about the role of the Council in the governance process. He recommended a book by Stephen M. R. Covey entitled ‘The Speed of Trust’ since it describes how important Trust is making an institution run effectively. According to Professor John Whitney of the Columbia School of Business, “Mistrust doubles the cost of doing business.” Finally, since trust is based on a foundation of both character and competence, Jack Welch (former CEO of GE) has stated that individuals must “live the values (character) and deliver the results (competence).” Dr. Delano concluded his opening remarks by suggesting that these operating principles could guide this year’s UPPC.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Strategic Planning Process

Provost Phillips presented information regarding a strategic planning process, scheduled to commence this month and be completed by the end of September, 2010. In a perfect world, UAlbany’s strategic planning process would be informed by the SUNY strategic plan, but we will have to begin on our own as the SUNY plan is not expected to be presented before March or April of next year.

Dr. Phillips reviewed a handout that covered the phases of the strategic planning process, pointing out that we have some pieces already out the door – we have completed community and international plans, and the current Middle States accreditation review process gives us an advantage – we have already been thinking about many of the issues we need to tackle in the strategic plan.

Dr. Lahiri inquired as to how we can proceed with a strategic plan without a budget in place – Dr. Phillips responded that allocation follows the plan – objectives drive where the money goes. Mr. Beditz added that having a strategic plan is useful for identifying where to best invest our declining
Dr. Lenart commented that the compact planning process from 2005-06 had bottom-up approval from a departmental perspective, and that revisiting those ideas could be useful as part of the current process. Dr. Range noted that obtaining information on how the Campus Financial Plan (CFP) met goals identified in previous strategic plans would be helpful.

2. Budget process and role of governance

Dr. Range brought this issue to the council; the sections in the existing Faculty Bylaws and Senate Charter regarding faculty consultation concerning the budget give specific roles for UPPC. Dr. Range cited a lack of information on budget figures over several years; data are needed to measure trends and expenditures, not necessarily down to the department level. He requested sufficient information to see how we have spent our money in the past. There are no specific data regarding the university’s structural deficit. There was discussion about how difficult it is to pin down numbers and see how our books are balanced, and how we change allocations over time.

Dr. Range distributed a historical look at state budget data from 2001-02 through 2004-05 and questioned why comparable information is no longer provided. Mr. Ferlo commented that the figures don’t necessarily tell the whole story – a onetime allocation to a department for a capital improvement, for example, skews the numbers and does not elaborate on the reasons behind the funding. Dr. Johnson cited the role of the council is to push and find out where the numbers are.

Dr. Phillips explained that her office, the Budget Office and the President’s office are working on better communication strategies – they are creating a way to ask questions, a FAQ process and a methodology for posting current budget information. Mr. Beditz added that while we do have macro level information, there is the issue of what can be provided versus what should be provided – in order to answer many of the questions asked, the process is entirely manual and very time consuming. We currently have inadequate budgeting systems to handle such requests in an expeditious manner. The President has instructed ITS to make such improvements a priority.

Dr. Lahiri suggested that we look at this globally - take 10 years (or whatever is available) and look at where the money went. Mr. Bessette commented on the history of the budgeting systems - back when PeopleSoft was implemented, the intent was to use their financial package, which would provide much of the requested information easily. Unfortunately, the module was incompatible with SUNY Central and was never implemented. The in-house All Funds system has only been partially completed - extracting global data from the system continues to be a largely manual process. Mr. Beditz indicated that F&B would be able to provide budget data covering the past years in response to more specific requests.

Dr. Delano briefly cited the 1984 article by J. Fred Volkwein (Journal of Higher Education, 55, p. 389-401), which had been distributed to all UPPC members prior to the meeting, documenting the importance of consultation with all university constituencies during harsh economic times.

Dr. Delano remarked that the Budget Advisory Group (BAG) information was startling in terms of volume and information, and wondered why that would be better than going through UPPC?
Phillips responded that the BAG process was only for Academic Affairs, and that the process was oriented toward gaining perspectives from full-time members of the teaching faculty.

Dr. Range noted that the governance system does not impinge upon the administration’s right to form advisory groups, but the by-laws vest certain powers in the faculty, that are delegated to the senate. Dr. Wagner added that UPPC provides consultation on [the budget] and Dr. Phillips stated that the provision for formal consultation sends administration to the governance council.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Comments regarding FYE Task Force Report

Dr. Delano solicited comments from the council on the Freshman Year Experience report that was released last month, and lauded the end result as being exciting and worthwhile. Dr. Phillips noted that analysis of our campus and others along with a best practices study yielded three different models (small, medium and large) that will be driven by our ability to provide resources.

Motion was made to adjourn at 5:20pm

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Stern