

May 17, 2014

Summary Report from the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR)

The CPR is happy to share with the faculty this brief summary of the chief concerns and accomplishments of the committee's work this year. As you know this has been a year of intensive strategic planning and we have attempted to approach our responsibilities in ways that support these efforts and do not duplicate them.

We recognize that we are in a period of significant demographic change at the college in the make-up of the student body and as the result of retirements and hiring among both faculty and staff. These new populations have new and different needs and changes in institutional structures and supports have lagged behind the demographic changes for all groups. The question of how to align resources to meet these developing needs was the major focus of much of our conversation this year.

- a. **Student Affairs and the 365, 24/7 campus.** We met with Student Affairs and approved modest staffing increases for that work, and discussed the need to move from a reactive intervention model to a more pro-active fostering of student life at this residential college, and the integrated planning that entails. It is clear that for an array of reasons students are now on campus virtually year round and that the need for programming and for staff and faculty involvement in student activities has expanded, and it seems likely that as a result of changes in Student Affairs and in response to Strategic Planning insights and proposals it will expand further.
- b. **Workforce planning.** More year-round and round-the-clock programming has large implications for staffing. Presently many segments of the college are responding to these increased demands through ad hoc measures including increased use of casual employment and overtime. These staffing mechanisms have significant costs financially and in terms of effectiveness and staff morale. The CPR discussed these issues in meetings with the Employee and Managers Councils and urged managers to assess these new needs and to request regular positions where appropriate. The Job Classification and Compensation Review process (5 members of the CPR serve on the advisory committee for JCCR) together with initiatives of the Office of Human Resources to match goals to resources should prove helpful in fostering workforce planning across the college.

Consideration of the budget, salaries, and benefits remain core CPR responsibilities.

- a. **Budget process.** With a new Chief Financial Officer we initiated a number of new procedures this year in our consideration of the budget, both in terms of working within a preset expenditure rate for the endowment and in terms of beginning our consultation process in the fall—far earlier than in prior years. We assessed these changes in procedures throughout and found them productive.
- b. **Faculty Salary Report.** For the faculty salary report we created new charts of gender and disciplinary comparisons within the college and were pleased to find

them equitable. We also created a new comparison chart including only the liberal arts colleges in the “New Group” of comparison institutions and will be interested to see how the faculty as a whole responds to this model of benchmarking within a more truly peer cohort.

- c. **Benefits.** Work on benefits issues included developing a mechanism to smooth the medical coverage increases for low-income staff as they move up in the sliding scale; concern over inequities for “essential” service workers with “casual status” during weather emergencies; and beginning discussions about childcare provisions at the college. Our assessment of the findings of the COACHE report reflects comparative faculty dissatisfaction with this and other “Personal/Family Policy” benefits at the college.

Curricular initiatives assessed by the CPR include

- a. The committee’s support of the creation of a **Humanities Center**
- b. The committee’s support of the creation of an **Environmental Studies Department**

Committee governance was also a topic of consideration this year.

- a. **Administrators.** The committee expressed a strong consensus that the inclusion of relevant administrators as ex officio members of this committee strengthened our functioning and our capacity not only to deliberate, but also, as appropriate, to effect specific policy changes. We approved the addition of the Provost as an ex officio member of the CPR.
- b. **Dissemination of Minutes.** We agreed to post our minutes not only on the Dean of Faculty website but also through the Employee Council.
- c. **Committee Membership.** With this year’s concerns about student life and about staff overtime and the use of casuals, the committee keenly felt and appreciated the advantages of our committee structure and how it enables the inclusion of students, staff, faculty, and administrators in these deliberations.

We look forward to discussing these issues with the faculty on the morning of May 22nd

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