

Committee on Priorities and Resources  
Meeting Minutes – September 28, 2021

In attendance: Professor Nusrat Chowdhury; Professor Andrew Dole, chair; Professor Jill Miller; Professor Monica Ringer; Retail Dining Supervisor Peter Charron; Interim Chief Financial Officer Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Interim Director of Financial Planning, Ashley Travis, *ex officio*; Assistant Director of Family Giving, Emily Ziomek; Jae Yun Ham '22, *ex officio*; Allie Ho '24; Jaden Richards '25; Steven Hegarty, recorder

Not in attendance: Interim Director of Human Resources Chris Casey, *ex officio*;

Guest: President Biddy Martin

The meeting came to order at 8:30 am.

Proceedings

1. CPR welcomed our new student member, Jaden Richards.
2. As a follow up to Tom's presentation last week, a reminder that the endowment bump will take three years to realize in the budget due to the college smoothing formula. By a reminder of the 2008/2009 downturn, not using all of the gains immediately is out of wise caution.
3. President Martin shared her high priority budget items for the college  
[Note: Please see subsequent announcements for updates to these proposals.]
  - a. Expansion of financial aid: Use available funding from endowment performance to simplify the application process and to attract and retain the strongest students. Also increase the support for lower- and middle-income families.
  - b. Do more for lowest paid staff: Convert ongoing casual positions, those working 20 or more hours per week, to benefitted staff.
  - c. Support faculty: Add more student research positions and academic internships.
  - d. Salary support: Employees will experience a loss of income over time due to COVID-19 and skipped raises in 2020. In addition to salary increases for FY23, this proposal is to add an appropriate percentage as catch-up for 2020.
4. Questions and discussion
  - a. To take advantage of the historic moment and endowment returns, the college will undertake a mix of big initiatives and individual departmental requests, while also factoring inflation.
  - b. Jill asked how are the initiatives costed and sourced. There is an analysis done of current spending, as well as considering additional endowment returns and any unanticipated budget needs.
  - c. Allie raised the question of the climate action plan and asked will the plan encompass more than just buildings but also educational opportunities and facilities. The college has hired a new director of sustainability to focus on climate action and environmental studies. The director will build educational programming around climate change and sustainability. Further, the hope is to grow a center of sustainability to create student and educational opportunities.

- d. Jaden asked how the college intends to communicate enhanced financial aid and to reach prospective first-generation low-income students. AC will reach out to high school counselors and possibly enlist the help of an external communications firm.
  - e. Andrew noted that in prior fiscal years, casual conversions had already been occurring. Then COVID hit and casual usage grew significantly. Are COVID casual positions winding down? This is not yet known. It's too early to know staffing needs post-pandemic in Dining, for example.
  - f. Pete noted his appreciation of the effort to convert casuals for morale and inclusiveness in his department. Will there be a benchmark or goal set for the conversion? Yes, and that will be forthcoming.
  - g. Andrew asked if the financial aid priority is driven by the college's desire to be more socio economically diverse? Also, is there a correlation between admitting students from higher income bracket and a relationship to an alumni donor? The goal is not about percentages of lower- and middle-income students. Rather, the goal is to create opportunity for talented students who otherwise can't afford AC with the current financial aid policies. Increasing opportunities and awareness for prospective students, yet not begrudging opportunities to any group of students.
  - h. Andrew's final question was, given the lack of student social spaces, is the student center planned to reshape social life on campus. Yes, and Bidy and Liz are thinking forward on how to best effect that.
5. Other business: CPR will vote on an 8:00 start time by email.

Adjourned 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
S Hegarty