

Faculty Senate

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Budgets & Fiscal Planning Committee

2008-2009 Annual Report

Co-Chairs: Robert Frost, College of Education
Rebecca Warner, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

The Co-Chairs wish to thank Vickie Nunnemaker, Faculty Senate Office, and Dan Dowhower, Office of Academic Planning, for their support and assistance over the year.

The B&FP Committee completed a busy year, completing several agenda items held over from 2007-08 as well as responding to several new CAT I degree program requests even as the state budget climate rapidly deteriorated over the academic year. Some of the policy and operating procedures identified below were discussed in 2008 and applied by new chairs. Key developments over the year included:

1. In their first month as co-chairs, Frost & Warner proposed closer working partnerships with the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment as well as the Curriculum Committee. By widening the circle of communications across these groups, the two intended to reduce time to approval and improve efficiency of these committees.
2. Becky Warner served as liaison to the university-wide Budget and Finance Committee.
3. Rob Frost served as liaison to the university-wide Curriculum Council.
4. Both co-chairs attended Senate sessions.
5. Chairs met extensively with faculty and deans between meetings to answer questions and reduce questions about curriculum and budget review processes.
6. Several key changes were instituted as informal processes that need to be highlighted for future chairs:
 1. Proposals were automatically referred back to the college when no or insufficient budget information was included. This was a significant change from past practice. Within the year, college deans realized this committee, even though it was a "review committee" could not be bypassed on the road to Curriculum Council approval. It should be pointed out that the Curriculum Chair was highly supportive of the B&FP review process.
 2. In busy months, committee members sometimes volunteered to take the lead in reviewing and forwarding questions to proposers. This helped speed committee review and reduced reading for all.
 3. Because the committee charge was to review for budget implications (i.e., immediate or ongoing costs) the committee often discussed the distinction between "no budget implications" indicated in a proposal and actions that clearly would have obligated faculty to revise curricula; teach additional courses; or potentially obligate the university to hire additional FT faculty. The committee chose a "middle ground" on this issue: members raised questions when insufficient budget information was provided and frequently requested more detail. Secondly, some proposals were returned for revisions when budget implications were not articulated.
 4. Committee detected trends in two directions, which was somewhat puzzling at times: Some programs were developed with an interdisciplinary approach (Applied Economics or Natural Resources), while others took a specialized approach (Business programs in Finance, Management, and Information Systems). Both types of proposals indicated these were contemporary trends. This is purely a historical reference, given budget limitations, as we wondered which type of program would be affordable/ sustainable in a worsened funding context.

Summary & Conclusions: Because close working relationships were formed between committee chairs, Senate leaders, college deans, and administration, a collaborative process developed rapidly. More importantly, because committee members were willing to take the lead and investigate details of some proposals, it was much easier for the chairs to serve as liaisons to other committees. Without such collaboration, such cross-committee work would prove unworkable. Chairs' ability to declare, and then follow working approach that "no proposal would be forwarded without full financial disclosure" was perhaps the greatest shift between

