

YSU Budget Advisory Council

Meeting minutes – December 12, 2017

3:00 p.m. – Kilcawley Center, Bresnahan 3

Members in attendance: Dr. Jeffrey Coldren, Dr. Tomi Ovaska, Amy Gordon, Eddie Howard, Lisa Mudryk, Elaine Jacobs, Dr. Jeff Tyus, Ernie Barkett, Neal McNally.

Members absent: Rayann Atway, Ted Roberts, Dr. Charles Howell, Dr. Bruce Keillor, Dr. Ken Learman, Len Schiavone, Dr. Martin Abraham, Carly Devenburgh, Connie Augustine-Thompson, Dr. Thomas Wakefield.

Guests: Rich White, Director of Facilities Planning & Construction; Mike Hripko, AVP for Research; and Mary Yacavone.

- 1) The meeting convened at 3:02 p.m. The minutes from the 10/30/17 meeting, which had been distributed prior to today's meeting, were accepted as final without changes.
- 2) Rich White provided a verbal update on the state capital budget process. In an effort to advocate for higher education funding, the Ohio Department of Higher Education asks each state university to submit a prioritized [six-year capital plan](#) based on an expectation of available state funding for the upcoming FY 2019-2020 capital biennium. Then, the state of Ohio Office of Budget & Management provides a statewide control total for higher education funding, which for the next two-year biennium is approximately \$300 million, of which YSU's share is \$10.5 million, as determined by the Higher Education Funding Commission, a consortium of college and university presidents appointed by the Inter-University Council of Ohio and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges.

Because YSU's allocated share of state capital funds is only a fraction of the \$200 million of deferred maintenance needs facing the university, YSU Facilities staff, in concert with Provost Abraham and YSU's Physical Plant Advisory Council, have developed a [list of prioritized projects](#). This list complies with the state of Ohio's requirement that capital dollars be used to maintain or otherwise improve existing campus buildings, as capital funds are generally prohibited from being used to finance construction of new buildings. In other words, the state of Ohio's capital funding policy is essentially to maintain existing space, rather than create new space. And because the levels of state capital funding appropriated by the Ohio general assembly is nowhere near sufficient to cover statewide maintenance and construction needs, the cost of deferred maintenance continues to grow, with most state universities having to issue significant amounts of local debt to raise construction capital.

Dr. Coldren asked if revenue-generation is a consideration when developing a list

capital priorities. Mr. White said yes, and that the Provost provides that perspective in terms of which buildings house academic programs that might have a greater impact on university revenue. Mr. White noted the recent improvements to the Physical Therapy area in Cushwa Hall as one such example of how capital dollars are targeted to high-demand academic programs.

- 3) Mike Hripko briefed the group on the University's past practice of automatically rolling forward unspent research incentive funds, allowing the Research Office to retain those funds to incentivize and recognize faculty efforts to bring in external research dollars. Because these funds are commingled with strategic investment funds, Neal McNally said that the question is basically whether the dollars should be allocated as requested by Mr. Hripko vs. being requested through the strategic investment fund allocation process (see item 4 below). Mr. Hripko further elaborated on how and why the Research Office uses these funds, which includes a number of items: Research staff support, annual veterinarian fees for animal facilities, electronic research software, iThenticate software for plagiarism in research-related proposals, memberships in national organizations, patent fees, and funding support for Research Challenge micro-grants for faculty project start-ups.

While there was some discussion over the merits of making this an automatic carry-over of funding, the group agreed that having this BAC discussion was helpful in spreading awareness, and as a way to validate and have input on a decision regarding the allocation of unspent research incentive funding, which for FY 2017 amounts to approximately \$217,000.

Eddie Howard and Ernie Barkett said that if the BAC feels that these Research Incentive funds should be allocated back to the Research Office—outside of the planned process to allocate strategic investment funds—then the same consideration should be given to allow the Student Government Association to retain unspent SGA appropriation funding, which for FY 2017 totaled roughly \$31,000. The group acknowledged that such special accommodations for Research and/or SGA would reduce the pool of strategic investment funding. This might also diminish credibility in the process, since other areas have not yet been given the opportunity to present proposals for funding. Dr. Tomi Ovaska noted that the template that will be used to solicit funding proposals (discussed in item 4 below) is not onerous, so it shouldn't be difficult for the Research Office and SGA to participate in that process.

- 4) Neal McNally asked the Council for feedback on the updated strategic investment fund allocation template that was previously e-mailed to the group. This is the last opportunity to update the template prior to it being sent out as a "call for proposals" to the entire campus community. Mr. McNally said that while roughly \$1.5 million is

available for allocation, President Tressel has asked that one-third be earmarked as a contingency for the current year's operating budget, since maintaining a balanced operating budget remains a priority for the administration and for the Board of Trustees. Therefore, approximately \$1 million is still available to be allocated for strategic investments. Mr. McNally asked the Council for feedback as to what a reasonable deadline would be for receiving funding requests. The group felt that a deadline of February 1, 2018, is reasonable, assuming the call for proposals is disseminated to campus within the next week or two. Dr. Tomi Ovaska suggested that section 4 of the template be re-worded so that benefits other than revenues may be included in proposals.

Depending on the volume of proposals that are submitted from the campus community, a subcommittee of this Council may be needed to sort through and summarize the proposals. Marilyn Ward in the Academic Budget Office is also available to help coordinate this effort, as may be needed. As a reminder of this group's advisory role, the BAC is expected to make a recommendation(s) to President Tressel as to how funds might best be allocated and utilized. This assumes that the Council reaches consensus on such recommendations.

- 5) In the interest of time, a follow-up discussion on the topic of funding for graduate assistantships was deferred until a future BAC meeting.
- 6) The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.