

YSU Budget Advisory Council

Meeting minutes for February 14, 2017
11:00 a.m. – Kilcawley Center, Hynes Room

Members in attendance: Connie Augustine-Thompson , Elaine Jacobs, Gabriella Gessler, Ken Learman, Charles Howell, Carly Devenburgh, Lisa Mudryk, Jacob Schriener-Briggs, Jeffrey Coldren, Eddie Howard, Thomas Wakefield, Neal McNally.

Members absent: Carole Weimer, Len Schiavone, Jeff Tyus, Elaine Jacobs, Martin Abraham, Amy Gordon.

1. The meeting convened at 11:00 a.m. The minutes from the 1/30/17 meeting, which had been distributed prior to today's meeting, were accepted as final without changes.
2. There was a brief discussion on the issue of information technology (IT) infrastructure, about which the Council had received a presentation from interim CIO Jim Yukech on January 30th. There was general consensus among the members present that the need to invest in the University's IT infrastructure should be a budgetary priority. Having sufficient IT capabilities is as essential as a building having a roof. And the risks associated with insufficient IT, such as breaches to sensitive information, could be very costly. Not only does YSU's IT infrastructure need to be addressed, there also needs to be better long-term planning to mitigate IT obsolescence. It was also noted that the condition of the University's IT infrastructure has a direct impact on efforts to recruit and retain students, as today's college students expect and demand up-to-date technology.
3. Gary Swegan, Associate VP for Enrollment Planning & Management, made a PowerPoint presentation to the Council on the topic of enrollment. [This presentation is posted online at the Budget section of the YSU website.] Gary noted that while spring 2017 headcount is 109 lower than spring 2016, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment is up by 18, including a 123-student increase in freshman persistence. There was also some discussion about the size of Ohio's high school graduating classes, which are projected to drop significantly as a result of regional demographic changes. The number of high school graduates in Ohio is expected to drop by nearly 12% between 2020 and 2027, with similar downward trends in New York state and western Pennsylvania. This doesn't bode well for YSU's future enrollment outlook, as the trend is similar among the six high schools from which YSU continues to draw the most students: Austintown Fitch, Boardman,

Canfield, Hubbard, Poland and Struthers. Consequently, YSU has taken a series of strategic actions, including a \$600,000 investment in Royall & Co. two years ago to augment student recruitment efforts. YSU has also enhanced marketing efforts, expanded outreach efforts well beyond its traditional 3-county area, and begun earlier communications regarding financial aid and admission deadlines. President Tressel has also been actively involved in student recruitment efforts, having personally visited and made presentations at dozens of high schools in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

YSU's relatively low tuition price has made us very competitive, both in Ohio and in western Pennsylvania. YSU has not been as successful in attracting students from New York State, largely because tuition at high-quality institutions, like the University of Buffalo, is much lower than YSU's.

For fall 2017, enrollment indicators are generally positive, with freshman applications up by 5.6%, freshman admissions up by 8.8%, and orientation reservations up by 35%. When asked about an overall enrollment projection for the next fiscal year, Gary indicated that enrollment could be up by just over 2%. Neal McNally noted that on an FTE basis, and excluding College Credit Plus (CCP) enrollments, a 1% change in FTEs could impact tuition revenue by \$1 million. Therefore, a 2% increase in FTE enrollments could have a significant effect on next year's budget. Gary speculated that CCP enrollment has likely leveled out; the increases in CCP enrollments that YSU experienced this year are not likely to recur next year, though the total number of CCP enrollments is expected to remain flat year to year. [This is an important point because CCP students generate comparatively little income for YSU—as low as \$41.50 per credit hour compared to \$337 per credit hour for a traditional undergraduate student.]

There was some discussion regarding the return on investment of YSU's engagement with Royall & Co. While it is impossible to produce precise metrics, Gary asserted that Royall has resulted in student enrollment generating approximately \$3 million in annual tuition and fee income for the University, which more than covers the cost of YSU's contract with Royall. He also stated that Royall is more effective than investing in additional staffing resources in YSU's Admissions office, since Royall already has in-place the infrastructure and capabilities that YSU would otherwise need to develop internally over a longer period of time.

A question was asked: which institutions do YSU compete against for student enrollment? Gary said that Royall's "decision IQ" has helped discern the various reasons students choose and do not choose to enroll at YSU, and said that YSU

generally competes with Kent State, the University of Akron, and Ohio State. Gary was asked whether requiring a tuition deposit might help boost enrollment levels. He responded that he didn't think it would have a significant impact, and that participation in orientation is usually a better indicator as to whether prospective students will ultimately attend YSU. Citing the construction of the new Barnes & Noble bookstore on 5th Avenue and the new University Edge apartments, Gary said that retail and student housing options near and on campus will help enhance YSU's appeal to prospective students.

4. In the interest of time, the next item on the agenda—an update on the Governor's budget proposal for FYs 2018 and 2019—was deferred until the next meeting. Neal McNally asked members to e-mail feedback in response to the six questions that the Inter-University Council had distributed, which will be used to help shape IUC President Bruce Johnson's testimony before the House and Senate Finance Committees regarding the higher education portion of the Governor's budget.

There was a brief discussion about the textbook proposal in the Governor's budget proposal, which would allow universities to charge students up to \$300 per year for textbooks but would require universities to cover the remaining cost of textbooks, which could be as high as \$1,200 per year per student for certain programs. This would be an enormous cost burden for universities. This appears to be a politically-motivated proposal that is likely to resonate well with voters and which is apparently expected to compel universities to address the issue of textbook affordability. However, it would drastically increase costs for universities, require additional staff resources to manage and administer, and could ultimately erode academic quality and reduce degree offerings. The Governor's textbook proposal is very likely to be modified during the legislative process, and universities state-wide will collectively lobby against it.

5. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 27th at 10:00 a.m.