

## **YSU Budget Advisory Council**

Meeting Minutes –October 19, 2018

11:00 a.m. – Kilcawley Center - Esterly Room 2069

Members in attendance: Dr. Joe Mosca, Dr. Jeff Tyus, Dr. Tomi Ovaska, Dr. Jeffrey Coldren, Lisa Mudryk, Dr. Thomas Wakefield, Elaine Jacobs, Caroline Smith, Neal McNally.

Members absent: Dr. Charles Howell, Carly Devenburgh, Mr. Eddie Howard, Dr. Bruce Keillor, Dr. John Jakubek, Ernie Barkett, Dr. Gregg Sturuss.

Guests: Christine Adams and Anna Torres, Maag Library; Shawn Varso, YSU Police; and Dr. Mike Sherman, Special Assistant to President Tressel.

1. The meeting convened at 11:00 a.m. Christine Adams and Anna Torres provided an update on physical and aesthetic improvements recently made in the Maag Library and which were funded by approximately \$116,000 in strategic investment dollars recommended and allocated last fiscal year by the Budget Advisory Council.

In addition to the strategic investment funding allocated by the Budget Council, the Maag Library's operating budget allocated an additional \$66,828 to support improvements to the study area within the library. These improvements are tied directly to YSU's efforts to foster and enhance academic success. In summary, this project has resulted in updated, functional, and visually-appealing study space geared toward student learning and increased retention. Both Ms. Torres and Ms. Adams thanked the Council for having recommended funding for these improvements.

Questions were asked about how student utilization will be tracked, and how the effect on student success might be measured. Ms. Torres responded that the new space opened just two weeks ago, so there hasn't been sufficient time yet to measure results. Caroline Smith suggested the possibility of using the YSU mobile app to track library utilization among students (anonymously), as is currently done for the SGA's food pantry. Dr. Tomi Ovaska commended Ms. Torres and Ms. Adams for their efforts, and particularly how quickly actions were taken to complete the improvements in a relatively short period of time, i.e., in just 3.5 months.

2. Shawn Varso provided an update on the new police radio system that was recently purchased and for which \$300,000 in strategic investment funding was recommended

and allocated by the Budget Advisory Council last fiscal year.

Following a careful re-evaluation of his original proposal, Chief Varso stated that the YSU-PD decided to reduce the number of portable radios to be purchased, selected less expensive radios (as extras), and negotiated with the vendor to optimize pricing. As a result, the cost of the new radio system was reduced by more than \$100,000 below the original estimate. Chief Varso reported that the equipment has been purchased and is expected to be fully operational in December 2018. Chief Varso reiterated the nature of the proposal, which had been selected by the Budget Council for its demonstrable impact on campus safety and risk management.

3. Mike Sherman provided an update on the ongoing work of the Strategic Planning Organizational Team (SPOT), which consists of 18 members, including faculty, staff, administrators and trustees.

Dr. Sherman said that SPOT is not in the process of creating the university's next strategic plan. Rather, SPOT is laying the groundwork for the next planning cycle and "planning to plan." Noting that student enrollment is existential to YSU's long-term viability, Dr. Sherman said SPOT has defined *enrollment* as recruitment to the power of matriculation, plus persistence to the power of completion and career placement. He also noted that in order for YSU to strategically invest in its future, revenue growth must outpace the growth in expenses. Neal McNally stated that if revenues stagnate or even decline, strategic investment is still possible if expenses are managed in such a way to create sufficient separation between revenues and expenses.

Dr. Sherman laid out a timeline for strategic planning. Fall 2018 will focus on the proposition of answering the question of *who are we* as a university; spring 2019 will entail a SWOT analysis, and determining which direction the university might take; summer/fall 2019 will focus on academic optimization; and spring 2020 will focus on optimizing the allocation of financial resources with strategic priorities.

Dr. Coldren commended the open and transparent approach SPOT has taken but cautioned against the lack of overarching parameters. He said it is not realistic for the next strategic plan to include all of the perspectives or priorities of all campus stakeholders. As a result, there are likely to be constituencies who are dissatisfied with whatever direction the next strategic plan takes. Dr. Coldren suggested that guidelines for optimization be developed to facilitate investment and disinvestment alike. Dr. Tomi Ovaska suggested that optimization is perceived by some campus stakeholders as code for cutting budgets or cutting programs.

4. Due to time constraints, the remaining items on today's agenda were deferred until the next meeting, which is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Friday, November 9, 2018. The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.