

## **YSU Budget Advisory Council**

Meeting minutes –April 22, 2019

9:00 a.m. – Kilcawley Center - Esterly Room 2069

Members in attendance: Dr. Charles Howell, Lisa Mudryk, Ernie Barkett, Dr. Gregg Sturuss, Mr. Eddie Howard, Dr. Joe Mosca, Dr. Jeff Tyus, Caroline Smith, Elaine Jacobs, Dr. Thomas Wakefield, Neal McNally.

Members absent: Dr. Tomi Ovaska, Dr. Bruce Keillor, Carly Devenburgh, Dr. Jeffrey Coldren, Dr. John Jakubek.

Guests: Rich White, Director of Construction Planning; and Dr. Mike Sherman, Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Effectiveness & Strategic Planning.

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.

1. Rich White provided a verbal report on campus construction and building maintenance projects that are ongoing and/or scheduled to begin soon. Construction projects in progress include the Constantini Multi-Media Center that will be primarily used by the Communications Department for student instruction and which is scheduled to be completed by September 2019; the Mahoning Valley Innovation & Commercialization Center, scheduled to be completed by fall 2020; and the new indoor tennis center, scheduled to be completed mid FY 2020. Projects that have been (or are still being) competitively bid include the demolition of the City Printing Bldg. on Wood Street; roof renovations for University Housing facilities; the North Central Parking lot and the Cafaro Field projects, both scheduled to begin this month; and structural repairs in Ward Beecher Hall. Mr. White also noted that the state of Ohio is expected to release state capital dollars to fund renovations in the Physical Therapy Department in Cushwa Hall, and renovations to the Computer Science Department in Meshel Hall.

Mr. White noted that the State of Ohio would soon be requesting that YSU, along with every other state university in Ohio, submit a 6-year capital improvement plan. This 6-year plan is a prerequisite to receive funding from the state capital bill, which typically allocates between \$10 and \$12 million to YSU for each 2-year biennium. Mr. White noted that such funding levels have not been sufficient to cover YSU's growing deferred maintenance backlog that he estimated to be as high as \$500 million.

2. The group was briefly updated on use of \$300,000 in Strategic Investment Funds that the Budget Advisory Council recommended and President Tressel approved last year for renovations to the Honors College in Fok Hall. The funding was allocated to replace the roof on Fok Hall. However, just one bid was received that the Facilities staff deemed as too high. Therefore, this project has been delayed but will be re-bid as part of a larger roof renovation package and which should generate more interest among roofing contractors.
3. Dr. Mike Sherman led a discussion regarding the university's degree audit system. YSU had purchased UAchieve but implementation has been unsuccessful during the past three years. The lack of a fully operational degree audit system has impeded YSU's ability to effectively advise students on degree paths, which has undoubtedly hindered matriculation, success and retention among students. Therefore, YSU plans to abandon UAchieve in favor of another system, Degree Works, which is fully compatible with YSU's Banner ERP system (unlike UAchieve). While there will be a budgetary investment required to implement Degree Works, it can be implemented within an expedited time frame, possibly within 9-months and, more importantly, appears to be a more functional system complete with a mobile app for students. Both Dr. Joe Mosca and Dr. Charles Howell voiced support for moving away from UAchieve and toward Degree Works.
4. Neal McNally provided an update on the state of Ohio budget, which among other things will dictate tuition policy and state funding for higher education for the 2-year biennium, commencing July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021. Governor DeWine's executive version of the new state budget, House Bill 166, provides for modest increases (1%) in State Share of Instruction (SSI) funding and would allow for a 2% increase in undergraduate tuition (for non-tuition guarantee cohorts). Because the state of Ohio has prohibited such tuition increases over the past several years, a tuition increase allowance of anything greater than 0.0% would provide some much needed revenue relief to YSU. Mr. McNally noted that while the governor's budget is based on a revenue forecast produced by the Office of Budget & Management (OBM), the state legislature will instead rely on a revenue forecast from the Legislative Service Commission, which has already indicated that its estimates will be \$700 million lower than OBM's. This unfortunately means that state funding for higher education (and other state agencies) is vulnerable as H.B. 166 makes its way through the statehouse.

In its present form, H.B. 166 would also enable state universities to assess a special student fee to support and augment mental health and substance abuse services on campus. Mr. McNally noted that YSU just last year implemented a new student

health center fee to fund the Mercy Health Center, which offers some mental health services. Feedback from Council members strongly suggested that YSU should take advantage of the new fee, if in fact it's included in the final enacted version of H.B. 166, because the demand for mental health services requires additional resources. Dr. Howell suggested that Mercy Health could continue to provide those services but that the new fee could provide resources to support YSU's efforts to manage and coordinate services with Mercy.

Mr. McNally updated the group on planning for YSU's FY 2020 general fund budget. Depending on which planning assumptions are employed—enrollment growth vs. no growth, tuition increase vs. no increase, and SSI funding levels being flat or otherwise—the university's projected revenues do not appear sufficient to cover projected expenses under any planning scenario. He noted that expenses are slated to increase next year largely due to existing labor agreements and an upward trend in health care insurance costs. Accordingly, budget planning for FY 2020 will focus on maximizing all revenue opportunities, and trimming expenses where possible, including the continuation of deferring staff hiring among the approximately 60 full-time equivalent staff positions that are budgeted yet presently vacant.

5. Regarding future agenda development, Dr. Howell suggested that the Budget Advisory Council take on a greater role in evaluating proposals for new academic programs, which are oftentimes presented to the Council of Deans without adequate fiscal consideration. Dr. Howell also suggested that he be allotted time to present information regarding merit-based scholarships at the Beeghly College of Education.
6. Caroline Smith and Ernie Barkett introduced Justin Shaughnessy who will serve as the next vice president of the YSU Student Government Association. The Budget Council welcomed Justin and congratulated Caroline Smith for her election to SGA president. The group also thanked Ernie Barkett for his years of service and for his many contributions to work of the Budget Advisory Council and to YSU in general.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.