

Full Minutes from the April 16, 2009 Meeting
of the Budget Steering Committee

Present: Seth Allen, David Clay, Nancy Combs, Houston Dougharty, Kathryn Jacobson, John Kalkbrenner, Leslie Gregg-Jolly, Russell Osgood, Mark Schneider, Susan Schoen, Kathleen Skerrett, Paula Smith, Marci Sortor, Karen Voss, Greg Wallace, and Emily Wax.

Marci Sortor opened the meeting at 7:33 a.m. central time.

Approval of the Minutes

The full and excerpted minutes from the April 2, 2009 Budget Steering Committee meeting were approved as distributed.

Update—Board Budget Committee Meeting

President Osgood reported on the recent telephonic meeting of the Board's Budget Committee and stated that the Trustee members on the committee were supportive and pleased with the proposed FY2010 budget. He further stated that the Board members were confident in the soundness of the major elements of the budget proposal, which include a reduction in the endowment contribution, a modest salary pool of 2% for those whose compensation is below \$75,000, and an increase in financial aid. Trustee members of the Committee were additionally interested in what steps were being taken to alleviate any significant budgetary problems in budget planning for FY2011. Discussion ensued and included a reminder about the recently approved policy that any surplus in FY2009 be held in reserve to help us meet any unforeseen economic difficulties in FY2010, and similarly for any surplus in FY 2010 if economic circumstances continue to warrant this. Additionally, serious thought is being given to no salary increases in FY2010. The Board members were encouraging, confident, and complimentary with regard to these ideas and the budget planning process.

MAPs Report—Leslie Gregg-Jolly

The meeting continued with Leslie Gregg-Jolly's report on possible cost-saving measures in the MAP Program. Associate Dean Gregg-Jolly stated that the MAP program is a distinctive aspect of the Grinnell curriculum and offers valuable benefits with regard to the connection between faculty scholarship and student learning. Her conclusion and those of her colleagues on the sub-committee considering this issue (Kathy Jacobson, Paula Smith and Karen Voss) is that the MAP expenditures are not excessive and cannot be reduced significantly without impacting their curricular importance. She described ways in which the program's value could be enhanced without significantly more investment, such as improving the application form and eliminating required MAPs; and also some concrete ways to reduce the costs associated with the program such as tightening student travel guidelines, not funding proposals without a reasonable likelihood of success, and explicitly offering cash options to faculty in lieu of the teaching credit for MAPs. Discussion ensued.

Update on Previously Discussed Cost-Saving Measures

Marci Sortor asked for any updates on the cost-saving measures the Committee had previously discussed. John Kalkbrenner reported that plans are going forward to eliminate the 21-meal plan from the student options and to replace it with a 20-meal plan (cutting the current Sunday breakfast meal.) This will provide a savings of approximately \$10,000. Mr. Kalkbrenner also reported that voluntary programs are being offered to the staff in the way of unpaid leaves and job reductions. These programs allow the staff to take advantage of an opportunity to enjoy more time away from work while helping the College manage its expenses. Information sessions are being scheduled for any staff member to attend and learn more about these two programs, which will be available for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Dean Paula Smith reported that she will continue to work with those faculty members moving to Senior Faculty Status to strike a better balance of teaching and research in their contracts in order to reduce the costs associated with this faculty employment category. Finally, Russell Osgood described the possible reduction of the academic calendar and the discussion of the proposal by the Executive Council. The proposal needs to be discussed more fully and should include specific cost savings and identify the associated sources for the savings.

Ms. Sortor introduced for discussion the list of suggestions that staff members have submitted for cost-saving ideas. Some of the suggestions are being implemented, including the creation of a “clearinghouse” for sharing/recycling office supplies among the campus administrative office areas and turning off room lights and computers when not in use. Other ideas on the list are being investigated. Ms. Sortor encouraged budget managers to remain open to ideas from staff members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m. central time.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Schoen