University Senate Budget Committee Minutes

Thursday, January 9, 2003


The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the December 4 meeting were approved.

II. Consideration of Draft Proposal from Priorities Subcommittee
Following debate and amendment, the Committee approved the Priorities Proposal (Attachment A). The approved proposal will be sent to the Fiscal Advisory Committee to the President as input.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30.
BACKGROUND

The Budget Committee subcommittee on priorities was charged with developing a list of budget priorities for the FY2004 budget. We have focused most on academic matters but acknowledge that all aspects of the University are important in furthering the University’s strategic goals. The faculty, staff, undergraduate, and graduate students of the University all play crucial roles in the success of GSU and while not all budget items can be made priorities, there are a number of important concerns for faculty staff and students that we believe should be reviewed in the future. Many of these are included in our supplemental material. When the committee was given its charge, the general view was that there would be new money in FY2004. Therefore, this document should be read as priorities for the use of new funds. The committee decided not to make recommendations regarding budget cuts. The committee did, however, note that faculty and staff are the life-blood of a university and therefore any layoffs should occur only after the most careful consideration of all alternatives.

The subcommittee consists of:

Kyle Bruner
Hugh Hudson
Charlene Hurt
Steve Kaminshine
Astrid Lipp
Al McWilliams
George Rainbolt
Bala Ramesh
Sally Wallace (chair)
Bill Waugh
Jim Wolk

To develop the list of budget priorities, we used the University’s Strategic Plan as guidance to the major goals of the University. From the Strategic Plan, we agreed that the University’s focus on increasing the quality of the University was the overarching goal that affects the prioritization of budgetary expenditures. We surveyed all University Senate Committee chairs and the Provost for their input by presenting them will the following request (in some direct or alternate form):

“The subcommittee on budget priorities has been charged with developing a list of priorities for University spending for FY2004. We would like your input regarding the priorities of your committee and a statement of how they fit into the overall University Strategic Plan goals of supporting teaching, learning, scholarship and outreach. The Strategic Plan is available on the web: http://www.gsu.edu/~wwksen/strategic_plan/. You will note that the SP does not list very specific priorities, but does present the University’s goals of supporting learning and teaching in a changing environment with increased emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, changing technology, supporting research areas with outstanding records or prospects of excellence.”

We received input from nine committees and the Provost and a summary of that information is attached. A
number of the committees hold open the possibility to adjust their priorities after meetings with their full committees. The information from the committees and Provost presented a relatively cohesive picture of a strategy to move the University forward. Each committee provided thoughtful input and each of the individual committees’ priorities are important to the University as a whole, however, we have prioritized those inputs and recommend support for five top priority items.

While developing the proposal, a number of concerns were raised regarding budgets, processes and the likely impact of the soft economy over the next year to two years. There appears to be a perception that a positive program review means funding some time in the future. We suggest that the program review process be continued, but that it be made clear that the reviews will not be evaluated in a vacuum but rather that the Deans and the Provost use the reviews to access college, school and University priorities. Keeping the program review process viable requires that, over the long-haul, departments not be treated differentially depending on whether they come up for review in a good or bad budget year. Graduate student funding was also a concern and we suggest that a review and analysis of alternative funding of graduate students be done.

PROPOSAL:

Considering the University’s Strategic Plan we believe there are six top priority action items for the University. The subcommittee finds that the following priorities fit into the University’s strategic plan for supporting excellence to increase the quality of programs, graduates, and research, listed in priority order. The priority listing is not meant to imply that the higher priority items be fully funded before funding the remaining items. We propose that the University allocate newly available funds to all six items. The allocation will depend on the availability of funds but should be made in a way that is consistent with the University’s goal of improving the quality of Georgia State University.

1. Financial support for the academic program review action plans. These action plans will enable the University to meet the needs of undergraduates, expand support for graduate programs, and generally raise the quality of GSU. There are many action plans that are pending due to budget limitations. To implement this support, the University may consider setting up a separate budgetary fund for support of action plans. These plans should be prioritized both within colleges and schools and across colleges and schools as they pertain to the support of improving the quality of the University. Within colleges, the Deans should prioritize the action plans and the Provost could prioritize across colleges. The rationale for this high priority is that we see financial support for academic program review action plans as defining the overarching goal of the strategic plan of increasing the quality of the University. This priority also naturally supports the educational mission of the University as because strong research is inextricably linked to good classroom experiences, especially at the upper-level undergraduate and graduate levels. Within the action plans are detailed issues such as hiring, moving to tenure track placements, and increased support for graduate students, which fit into the concerns raised by some Senate committees.

2. Health insurance for graduate students. Many graduate programs are having an increasingly difficult time attracting top quality graduate students due to better monetary and fringe benefit offers at other institutions. Good graduate students will help to increase the productivity of the faculty and continue to increase the quality of good programs.

3. Enhance the percentage of tenure-track faculty in the overall core of instruction.

4. Increased support for collections and services of the University’s libraries with the goal of achieving membership for Pullen Library in the Association of Research Libraries. Funding for library services and collections has not kept pace with either inflation or the increased demands associated with the growth of academic programs and the large growth in undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty.

5. Increased funding for internal grants. The internal grants program provides support for faculty research
through mentoring and research initiation grants and for graduate programs through funding of graduate students. The current funding of the internal grants program is not sufficient to support new scholars and new lines of research, all of which are needed to support the University’s progress in meeting its goals. We propose that the internal grants program receive increased funding.

6. Facility support services as well as the academic sector of the university are under significant strain due to the recent large increase in number of students and faculty. Quality of facility support services impacts all student learning, but critically impacts research programs, and upper-level undergraduate and graduate learning (especially laboratory experiences). Additionally, GSU has a large number of older buildings that require increased facility support services compared to newer buildings. Thus increased funding for facility maintenance and repairs is a priority.

Responses of individual Senate committees and the Provost:

**Research:** Resolution on Internal Grants Program and Office of Research and Awards:

“Be it resolved that the budget for the Internal Grants Program be increased by at least 15% beginning in Fiscal Year 2004;
Be it resolved that the budget for the Office of Research and Awards Administration reflect the growth in external funding and keep pace with such growth.”

**Cultural Diversity:** Priority is to pursue the implementation of the University Policy for Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Faculty, initiated by our committee (Cultural Diversity) and approved by the Senate in March, 2001. This Policy called for all the colleges to develop their individual recruiting and retention guidelines for such faculty; and as of November 1, 2002, three colleges have approved their recruiting guidelines and the other three are very close to doing so. Our committee is now working to expand those various guidelines to include retention efforts. The Policy clearly has widespread support throughout the University.

So we think that a budget priority should be the continuation and expansion of fundings for the recruitment of underrepresented faculty, such as the Minority Recruiting funds and the Target of Opportunity funds. Expanded funding seems especially needed since the University Policy expands the past University efforts from the minority of African Americans to all underrepresented groups, both citizens and permanent residents.

**IS&T:**
Move the funding of staff positions out of technology fee proposals, both past and future.
Move Alpheretta Campus Lab and Classroom Support funding out of technology fee proposals, both past and future.
There has been some talk about de-centralizing computing support to colleges and academic departments. If this occurs, re-budgeting from the current funding source would be reasonable, unless additional funds are allocated.

**Planning and Development:** Traffic safety, staff/GLA offices, and fire safety issues

**Admissions and Standards:** A set percentage of new money should be reserved for action plans and the need for staff in financial aid.

**Provosts Office:** The University needs a balance between credit hours development and strategic planning for
moving the University up in the rankings. Capacity to meet unmet demand in the classroom is a priority that comes “off the top” in budget discussions. Funds for strategic planning come next. High profile research and graduate programs need to be supported and balanced with the classes that need to be taught. Quality programs can be evaluated based on quality of students, publications and amount of time to get publications out. Amount of time refers to the time available to tenure-track faculty members in a department that was not for teaching or service. Some departments have a lot more time available than others and hence more quality output should be expected of them. The Academic Program Reviews and action plans can be helpful in the process of developing priorities. Health insurance for graduate students fits into the goal of moving the University up in the rankings. The use of NTT appointments and the movement to tenure track also fits into the goals of moving GSU up, but should be done with consideration of the quality of individual programs (those that are to be more invested in relative to other programs).

Also (1) The deans need to give the priority order to the parts of their department Action Plans since there will not be sufficient funds to accommodate all recommendations; and (2): we need to remember that a lot of support services are under significant strain due to larger numbers of students and faculty - not just the academic sector of the university. Thus, impact on quality of service to student learning success is another important criteria.

Nominations and Statutes and By-Laws: No priorities with significant budget implications

Student Life: Maintenance of classrooms, library expansion, transportation across a growing campus

Athletics: As you may know, most of the athletics committee funding is external, soft money funded, and not in the normal, mainstream budget process. Thus, as you requested that some budget priorities be submitted for consideration, we focused on those items which would benefit all students and GSU, and be appropriate for FY04 funding consideration. The following three budget priority items were approved by faculty athletics meeting and are submitted for your consideration in the FY04 budget process:

1. $150,000 for installation of a new basketball floor in the GSU Sports Arena (must be accomplished between mid-May and July due to Commencement use). The current floor on which the GSU men's and women's team practice and play games has been resurfaced a number of times, and after this season will have exceeded its life. It should be noted that this floor & gym is used for all GSU commencements, which projects the GSU image to all internal and external constituents.

2. $100,000 estimated for Phase II renovation of the 2nd floor Sports Arena. The Athletics Department has just moved this week into the partially renovated space on the 2nd floor. This has freed up space in 1 Park Place for other GSU offices and program. This 2nd phase renovation would complete the move and provide space for GSU programs.

3. $25,000 security measures for the Sports Arena. Since the Sports Arena (which is also used for commencement) is perhaps the GSU space most frequented by visitors, it is paramount to provide an excellent appearance. Recently the space has experienced several break-ins, equipment stolen, and windows/doors smashed and broken. With the high GSU deductible, such intrusions are EXPENSIVE, demoralizing to GSU students & staff, and do not project excellent, secure facilities to prospective students and parents.

Senate Library Advisory Committee: We believe that the library’s collections and services are integral to all aspects of the university’s strategic plan, especially those relating to excellence and retention in
undergraduate and graduate programs, information literacy and lifelong learning, faculty and student research, and opportunities for collaboration between students, students and faculty, and the university and other institutions and the community. The current level of support for the library’s budget is not enough to support the programs of the university, and greater support is needed for the materials budget and staff and facilities. We are preparing a resolution for the Faculty Senate which states that the library’s material budget has not kept up with inflation or needs of increased numbers of programs, faculty, and students, and asks that the library’s materials budget be increased incrementally to meet those needs. As part of that increase, we observe that the library can’t plan adequately for the needs of faculty when so much of the budget is dependent on year-end contingency funding, and urge that the funding be moved over the next four years into the base budget of the university, so that contingency money can be used for new enhancements and initiatives rather than merely maintaining the current status of library collections and services. We further point out that this increase is not really a choice if the university and its faculty wish to remain competitive with other research institutions.