In attendance: Committee members Michael Martinez (chair), Philip Boyland, Robert D’Amico, Rori Bloom, David Foster, Susan Gillespie, Richard Hollinger, Whitney Sanford, Ata Sarajedini; also CLAS Budget Director Uma Sethuram, Dean Paul J. D’Anieri

1. Martinez called the meeting to order at 12:50 pm and circulated copies of the minutes of the March 2, 2012 committee meeting. Hollinger moved to adopt the minutes of that meeting, seconded by D’Amico. The motion was approved by acclamation.

2. Dean D’Anieri briefly spoke to the committee during the first half-hour of the meeting concerning President Machen’s presentation yesterday (March 15) to the Faculty Senate regarding the state of the University budget, based on legislation recently passed but not yet approved by the governor. The likelihood is of a reduction in state appropriations for the University of some $58 million, and the planned 15% tuition increase for 2012 would offset only about half that reduction. Also, if market tuition rates are allowed, they would not start until 2013 and only for the incoming freshmen. Colleges are therefore tasked by the President with creating plans to cut 5% of their budgets. The Dean asked the Finance Committee for suggestions on soliciting public comments on the plan without creating needless anxiety. Although personnel is the most obvious category for reductions, plans should include the potential of increasing revenue to the college, e.g., by augmenting SCH.

3. The main agenda item, carried over from the March 2 meeting, was to draft a set of guiding principles to be followed in making budget adjustments. The Finance Committee will meet jointly with the Faculty Council on March 27 at 9:00 to create a final version of such guidelines for the college. By that date we may have more information about the state budget and the governor’s approval or veto. The following ideas for guiding principles were suggested (in no particular order).

   a) There is great concern that decisions made to remedy the current financial condition may irrevocably damage the college’s ability to fulfill its core mission to the University and the state. The college should be as cautious as possible in making any fundamental irrevocable changes.

   b) Make temporary reversible cuts where possible, rather than irreversible ones, anticipating future revenues, e.g. from tuition increases.

   c) Articulate foreseeable down-the-line consequences of implementation of any decisions in the near and medium term future to assess whether they will have longer term negative implications offsetting any immediate gains.

   d) Share the sacrifice among the college units and personnel.

   e) Include faculty, staff, and other impacted audiences in meaningful consultation before making final decisions. Share information about the financial situation with college units so that they can be more fully aware of the consequences and what might be done. They may have solutions college officials have not considered. Then survey the individual faculty to gauge their collective wisdom and keep them engaged in the process.

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f) Ask departments to identify possible cuts and revenue enhancement first. Recognize that solutions which include adding more SCH and distance learning will not augment revenue immediately.

g) Reduction of instructional faculty should be a last resort. The loss of teaching positions will translate in the loss of SCH and thus of revenue (see #3).

h) Avoid eliminating specific units. Amalgamation with consolidation of staff is a preferable alternative to elimination. Eliminating units will not create immediate savings, and any savings may not appear until additional revenues become available with market tuition, making them moot.

4. Martinez circulated a handout showing the impact that different combinations of possible staff and faculty reductions would have on the budget. Committee members suggested we could play a more direct role in presenting information to departments.
   Martinez will ask chairs of all CLAS departments to allow members of the Finance Committee to give a presentation at their faculty meetings in March or April, to discuss impending budget deficits and engage them in these discussions and consultations. Committee members will pair up to make these presentations.
   Martinez and D’Amico will prepare a short powerpoint presentation for committee members to use for this purpose.
   We will follow up on these presentations with a survey or polling of individual faculty to gauge their concerns or rank their priorities among suggested solutions. We need to create the brief survey (e.g., on survey monkey), and have it sent by email to all CLAS faculty.

5. The members agreed to circulate the draft principles among ourselves by email and decide upon a final version of them before the meeting with the Faculty Council on Tuesday March 27. Martinez will inform the Dean concerning our plans


Minutes prepared by Gillespie March 16, 2012, revised March 26, 2012