

UNIVERSITY *of* WISCONSIN

LA CROSSE

Date: Jul 30, 2007

To: Carmen Wilson, Chair, Faculty Senate

From: Steven Senger, Chair, Budget Review Committee

Re: Final Report for 2006-2007 Academic Year

As you are aware the Faculty Senate Budget Review committee consists of those faculty sitting on the Joint Planning and Budget committee. The committee provides a mechanism whereby faculty can report on issues related to the campus budget and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate in cases where it is not possible to do this through the Joint Budget & Planning committee. Consequently, the work of the Budget Review committee depends on the work of the Joint Planning & Budget committee. During the 06-07 academic year the committee found only a couple of occasions where it seemed necessary to meet outside of the Joint Planning & Budget committee.

During the fall semester, the Joint Planning & Budget committee participated in the campus Growth & Access planning process and began studying aspects of the Growth & Access proposal and its relation to the campus budget. This primarily focused on questions related to increasing the number of students in the lowest two economic quintiles, increasing the number of U.S. students of color, tuition resources for financial aid, increase in faculty and staff as well as the impact on existing campus budget shortages. During this time the Budget Review committee would occasionally meet briefly after the regular Joint Planning & Budget meetings to discuss whether or not there were issues we needed to independently pursue.

By the end of the semester there were two issues of particular concern to the committee members. The committee met on Dec 20th with Bill Colclough to discuss, and to express faculty concern regarding the situation with the campus match of the differential tuition program and current budget shortages. Committee members were concerned that the intended cap on the campus match to the differential tuition program was not being followed. The committee met again on Jan 17th and Jan 24th to continue these discussions as well as to discuss the anticipated timeline for Growth & Access planning during the spring semester. These topics continued to receive discussion at Joint Planning & Budget meetings.

During the spring semester Joint Planning & Budget began work on models for implementing the Growth & Access plan in terms of a timeline for increasing faculty and staff position relative to increases in new students. This model was presented to the Faculty Senate at its Mar 22nd meeting. On Apr 19th the Budget Review committee met with Chancellor Gow to directly express concerns that faculty had regarding the Growth & Access plan and the necessity of restoring faculty positions whether or not the plan was eventually approved by the state.

There are several broader issues that concern the members of the Budget Review committee. One is that the fraction of the campus budget that goes to instruction continues to decline. Since 1990 the campus budget (excluding financial aid and debt service) has grown by 73% while the budget assigned to instruction has increased by only 65%. This is closely related to the fact that UW-L is 60-70 tenure-track faculty behind our peer campuses in the UW-System.

It is also of concern that Joint Planning & Budget, and the faculty, are no longer involved in areas that have historically been a part of the budget planning process. Some years ago, Joint Planning & Budget (and subsequently the Senate) would be presented with short summaries of expenditure proposals for review and comment. Joint Planning & Budget would also annually make recommendations concerning funds such as the IT migration fund and the campus reserve. Continuing campus budget shortages and the need to support extra sections of courses given the increasing student population of the last few years have mooted these questions. A return to an annual process of specific budget proposals and substantive faculty input would improve the climate.