University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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Consultative Committee   Campus Governance

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Consultative minutes 03/02/2012

Consultative Committee

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Consultative Committee Meeting
Friday, March 2nd, 2012
9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bonnie Tipcke, Jim Barbour, Nic McPhee, Jennifer Zych Herrmann, Troy Goodnough, Holly Gruntner, Manjari Govada, Dennis Stewart, LeAnn Dean, Brook Miller

Members Absent:
Guest: Chancellor Johnson

Jacquie Johnson was present at the meeting to check in with the Consultative Committee.

She explained that the campus is busy getting ready for the budget meeting, which will take place in two weeks. To prepare for that meeting, UMM has to do all of the calculations based on a set of assumptions. For one thing, it is anticipated that there will be a 2.5% salary increase. The senate has made a recommendation that half of the increase be held back for merit increases. Another parameter is a 3.5% increase in tuition.

UMM is working with central administration regarding the details associated with funding for a need-based scholarships. We've had funding for such programs for many years but the programs have seen many changes in the name and criteria for eligibility. There is some concern from central administration that some of this money was used to fund our merit scholarship program but there is some disagreement for what the money was originally earmarked. Either way, we have fewer resources to fund a growing merit-based scholarship program and need to find a long-term solution

The tuition raise has also made funding for merit-based scholarships a high priority. The Morris Scholarship, for example, used to cover half tuition. Since tuition has gone up, it covers a smaller percentage. Now we have to ask: should we put more money into these scholarships? Reduce the number of scholarships we give out? Conduct more interviews and make them even more competitive? Would a lowered chance of earning a scholarship make the award more prestigious or would that group of students (with high ACTs, GPAs, etc.) be turned off?

Jacquie continued by updating the Committee on the salary study. There are currently two different conclusions, she explained: to bring us to the average, it would cost about $800,000 per year, but to bring UMM salaries to the 60th percentile, it would cost $300,000 per year. Jacquie thought it pragmatic to focus on being in the 60th percentile, as it would make us even with the rest of the University of Minnesota system.

Additionally, UMM is also asking for recurring funds to support a new position: an American Indian Financial Aid Counselor. This individual receive advanced training and would be responsible for administering the application and approval process for students seeking eligibility for the Native American Tuition Waiver. Having such a position would help eliminate the danger that UMM is denying people eligibility who should have it, or granting people eligibility who should not have it.

Another new thing UMM will be pushing for in the budget meeting is collaboration with the Twin Cities school of nursing, and funds to hire a professional nurse, who would work with us and the Twin Cities campus to develop a cohort nursing program to be offered at UMM. It would still be under the authority of the Twin Cities School of Nursing, as they have accreditation, but after students go through the program, they would be able to sit the nursing exam. By offering a master of nursing program, we would be staying true to our liberal arts mission and strengthening our science program offerings.

LeAnn: Nursing resources are expensive. Can you include something in the proposal about library resources? Then the committee would know that we're considering all of the requirements.

Jacquie: I think that's a good thing to bring up.

Nic: LeAnn, Manjari, and I are on a taskforce together. Something that came up is funding for the I.T. position; Jim Hall's position runs out soon. How do we move to fund that position down the road?

Jacque: That's a next year question. However, literally every position is listed in the budget, along with how long the position will exist. Next year we'll be planning for how to pay for extending these positions.

Touching back to scholarships, we've gotten the sense that private schools have moved away from automatic scholarships, and developed more criteria. We (Scholastic, Finance, and Planning Committees) have talked about doing away with the Associates Scholarship, which gives $1,000 per year, and putting that money into other scholarships.

Nic: Are there any ties between scholarships and underrepresented groups? Will putting money into merit-based scholarships cut back on UMM as an option for families like that?

Jacquie: Need-based scholarships are managed by the Twin Cities campus, but they're tied to expected family contribution, FAFSA, etc. In a sense, those are also automatic.

Nic: So it's not like we can take the money from the Prairie and turn it into a need-based? They're two separate things?

Jacquie: Right. We've been accused of taking money for need and applying it to merit. We've gone through all files and can't find any evidence of this, so that's where I have to plead no contest. Because of this accusation, we're committing more of our campus resources to merit-based scholarships, as this isn't coming from all-University sources.

Do you have any thoughts or advice relating to the ongoing resource allocation review process?

Dennis: What I've wondered about is when the process is over, is there a appeal process? Can a department come back and say that they don't think something was applied right?

Jacquie: Yes. There are three phases to this: 1) developing criteria, creating rubric to apply to data 2) evaluation team applies data to rubric 3) implementation team takes list of prioritized program, can make adjustments.

So it's possible for groups to get more resources if they were underfunded. Part of the process is an opportunity for further consideration.

Furthermore, the process makes us reconsider the process of the office; it forces us to think about intentionality. I don't see it as a bad thing, although it's difficult to get to the end with a prioritized list.

Nic: You have three groups for 3 phases. What do you see as the value of having 3 separate groups? Seems like it's difficult to get each group to speed up, catch up with what last group did, etc.?

Jacquie: This came up at one of the January meetings. We do intend to have forums so that people can ask these questions. One of the reasons is that people who work on this have really invested a lot in it. So it has burnout potential. The idea is that the evaluation team will be smaller. I envision implementation group as being smaller also.

Jim: How does one decide what counts as a programmatic unit? Plant Services, for example: Are we one program or several?

Jacquie: We'll look at the organization and the units within. Associated with units are activities. Right now, we're asking units to identify activities they're engaged in. We ask: What's the purpose of my unit? How does it align with my mission? How do I know whether I'm being successful in this office or not? Answers should align with the stated purpose or mission.

Jen: When we start talking to the units, I think there's a lot of potential for unevenness in reporting. Do I talk about every little thing I do? Or are you just looking for more general things?

Jacquie: In most cases, I think we have the data, even related to academic programs. In many of our offices, we also track how many people come through.

Nic: Computer science did a program review last year. We collected a lot of data. Some of that data tracks how many students are in classes, etc. But we also did things like survey alumni. And now we don't have to do it again because we've done it. And I worry about this unevenness because time is short and a discipline might not have time to think about it and talk about the right things. It doesn't seem fair to that area.

Jen: It's hard to capture outcomes. Is it working?

Nic: We think we're doing something useful, but we don't know for sure until we talk to alumni. It took time, though; there were months of putting the survey together, and getting people to take it.

Jacquie: It speaks to something that's been missing in this institution: I don't think we've paid the kind of attention to outcomes that other institutions have. Are we going to punish people who aren't there yet in terms of assessment? As a whole, our institution needs to improve in this important area.