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Response to Resource Allocation Review

Finance Committee

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UMM Finance Committee

Members of the Finance Committee reviewed the document “RAR Summary January 2014.pdf” that summarizes the recommendations of the vice chancellor group related to all programs reviewed during the resource allocation review process and discussed it at two meetings, one on January 24, 2014 and another on February 28, 2014.

In most of the 55 reevaluated cases, committee members did not find enough information to either support the recommendations of the vice chancellor group or to support different recommendations. In many cases, the missing data that caused the RAR Phase III prioritization team to call for revisiting those programs was still not in evidence. While this does not seem like a tidy ending for the RAR process, no one wants to prolong it.

Committee members felt that the RAR process was not worthwhile. It required a very large investment of time from people across the campus, induced a lot of anxiety, and produced almost no tangible result. There is no support for a repeat.

Instead, there ought to be a regular review of unit costs and productivity that happens routinely without disrupting the fabric of the campus.

The faculty and the academic programs are highly scrutinized already. Much data already exists. Discipline-based data is available in the UMM Data Book and on UM Reports. Disciplines write reports on the assessment of student learning each year. Disciplines are required to submit detailed written documents every time they seek to hire a tenure-track faculty member. Academic programs conduct thorough program reviews every several years. Costs could be added to the mix by reviving the UMM Data Profile spreadsheet or something like it. No additional reporting burdens should be imposed upon faculty.

An annual process in which all administrative and support units are held to comparable levels of accountability needs to be implemented campus-wide. In the RAR process, many units were unable to describe what they accomplish each year or to clearly describe their costs of operation so that a cost-benefit analysis could be done. The vice chancellors must work with each of their units to develop measures of effectiveness and efficiency that will form the basis for annual reviews of these units. As this takes shape, probably over the course of a couple of years, vice chancellors should meet with every director to assist in shaping each unit’s annual report. The annual process should include meaningful feedback from the vice chancellor to each unit head that both evaluates the performance of that unit and helps shape the future direction that unit should take.

Approved by the Finance Committee on April 11, 2014.