

General Fee Advisory Committee: Report for the Fiscal Year 2010

Prepared for:
Ohio University Budget Planning Council

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Committee Membership:

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Executive Summary

The General Fee Advisory Committee (The Committee) was officially convened February 26th, 2009 to discuss the charge for this year's committee. With the struggling world economy tremendously affecting the federal and state budget; Budget Planning Council has needed to adjust its approach to allocating general fee funding. Applications were sent to all units asking for a prioritization of each unit's programs, after thorough review of each unit's application, the committee outlined and prioritized the programs it felt most important. Additionally, the committee has included a recommendation as to how the \$700,000 of general fee funds that the Division of Student Affairs has given back should be spent. This money is available because of a voluntary one time only budget reduction implemented by the Division for FY 2010.

Due to time constraints the Committee was unable to offer interviews to every unit, rather the Committee scheduled utilized the chairman of the committee to contact the units budget manager or the committee's fiscal advisor Rebecca Vazquez-Skillings to help clarify points of confusion.

Introduction

Beginning in the 2006 – 2007 academic year, Vice President of Finance and Administration Bill Decatur and Vice President for Student Affairs Kent Smith, among other members of the University administration, agreed to form the General Fee Advisory Committee (the Committee). The Committee initially was created with the intent of allocating any increase in general fee revenues; however, beginning with the extremely uncertain budget climate last year, its purpose was expanded to include providing recommendations for reallocation within the General Fee as well as analyzing possible budget reduction scenarios and making recommendations about program budget reductions.

Due to the state of the world economy, the Committee's objectives for FY 2010 remained largely unknown for most of the academic school year, until February 2009 when the committee was officially convened. Because of the severely reduced time frame the committee had to work, the committee assumed responsibility for two objectives, prioritizing which programs were the highest priorities for us, and outlining exactly how the \$700,000 of general fee funding that the Division of Student Affairs has given back should be reallocated.

Background Information

The Committee first convened on February 26, 2009 and received its charge from the Office of Budget and Analysis. After discussion, the Committee decided to by in large part use the same application packet distributed to all general fee units the previous year, with the addition of incorporating the 5 C's of Ohio University. In this packet, attached as Appendix A, is the application that was sent out. The committee was expected to report back to The Budget

Planning Council April 17, 2009; application packets were made available on or about March 5, 2009, with an original due date of March 17, 2009. Because of the short time in which the budget unit managers had to prepare the information needed, it was determined that late submissions would be accepted, all applications were submitted on or about March 27, 2009. Committee members were responsible for reviewing the materials over spring break, and throughout the first week of the Spring 2009 Quarter.

Summary of Proceedings

The Division of Student Affairs

- Student Health Service
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Dean of Students
- Vice-President Office
- Baker University Center and Event Management
- Campus Life/Student Programming/Health Promotion
- Career Services

The Committee voted the Division of Student Affairs our number one priority. It is our recommendation to hold the division harmless from any additional budget reductions. With the newly created WellBeing Plan and, the implementation of third party billing of student's insurance plans the division has reduced its need for general fee support, this reduction in need amounts to \$700,000. Additionally, the division announced a restructuring which will be effective July 1st, 2009. Under this restructuring the division eliminated two senior level administrative positions within the division, an Associate Vice President for Budget and Operations and an Executive Director of Student Health and Counseling Services. The division decided to make use of a shared services contract through the Business Service Center to assume the responsibilities of the Associate Vice President and decided to split the responsibilities of the Executive Director between two existing positions. The Division of Student Affairs has been able to restructure itself to become a leaner more efficient operation, while also reducing its dependency on the general fee, therefore it should not suffer any further reduction while the new structure is evaluated; this recommendation was unanimous.

Provost

- International Student and Faculty Services
- Office of Disability Services
- Office of Multicultural Programs/ Multicultural Center
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center

International Student and Faculty Services, the Office of Disability Services, the Office of Multicultural Programs/ Multicultural Center and the LGBT are vital areas that cultivate the diversity initiatives at the University. International Student and Faculty Services provides significant support services for the University's international student population. Enhancing this offices ability to provide quality support is of the utmost importance to this committee. The Office of Disability Services aids faculty, staff and students as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Committee feels that the work that this office does, complements the work that the University is doing with making all building on campus handicap accessible. The Office of Multicultural Programs/ the Multicultural Center, and the LGBT Center are areas that are integral in the University's mission to be more diverse. Whether the areas provide a comfortable space for minority students to gather to release stress from classes or if the department is sponsoring programs that address issues related to each community, the continuation of these units is imperative. Therefore, the committee voted unanimously to prioritize the Provost's as a collective number two.

Graduate College

- Graduate Student Senate
- Multicultural Graduate Awards

The Committee voted the Graduate College comprised of Graduate Student Senate and the Multicultural Graduate Awards its number three priority. The Multicultural Graduate Awards showcases the outstanding achievements that graduate students of all cultures and ethnicities have accomplished during the academic year. Graduate Student Senate is the official voice that specifically represents graduate students to the university, further they administer various grant application processes to assist other graduate students in research and travel.

Intercollegiate Athletics

After much discussion, the Committee voted Intercollegiate Athletics as its fourth priority. The committee was hopeful that Athletics would reach its goal of closing its \$1.3 million dollar shortfall projected in FY2010. The committee believes that athletics plays a vital role in our institutions competitive advantage over other universities and does not want to see the University lose its Division 1-A standing and is cautiously optimistic that Athletics will be a self supporting operation, or at the very least, reduce its need for general fee support.

Campus Recreation

The Committee would like to highlight and commend the thoroughness with which the Department of Campus Recreation has again put forth in their proposal. The Committee also recognizes the importance of this department on student employment and retention, in addition to the amount of students that enjoying playing both club and intramural sports. To this end the Committee voted the Department of Campus Recreation its fifth priority. It is worth noting that the Committee recognizes the merits of the installation of a “pay to play” policy but would like to emphasize its commitment to maintaining programs and activities that do not cost students additional dollars.

Vice President for Finance and Administration

- CatCab
- Shuttle Service

The Committee recognizes the efforts that administrators who oversee the execution of the CatCab and Shuttle Service are operating in a highly efficient manner. The committee would like to see these efforts continued and has voted the Vice President for Finance and Administration priority number six.

Marching 110

Although the Marching 110 is a vital part of the tradition of the University, it is the opinion of the Committee that the average student does not have enough interaction with our illustrious band. That being stated, the Committee recognizes and appreciates the work that Marching 110 does for the University. The Committee voted Marching 110 to be its seventh and final priority.

College of Art and Sciences

After much discussion, the Committee has unanimously rejected the proposal by the Psychology Department to fund the ADD/ADHD assessment program, while the committee believes that there is probably a need for this service, the general fee should not be the funding source supporting it. The Committee reemphasizes its commitment to fund academic support units, rather than academic units; it is the responsibility of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Executive Vice-President and Provost to find the money to finance this program.

Recommendations for Reallocations

The Committee acknowledges and appreciates the Division of Student Affairs commitment to being as efficient as possible with the general fee support it receives; the Committee believes it is its right to allocate any additional funds that become available. Below is a recommendation as to how the Committee believes \$700,000 should be reallocated:

Marching 110 should receive an additional \$120,000 to be spent on new band uniforms, new instruments if needed and sustaining travel to MAC championship games, the committee voted unanimously for this recommendation and is the committee's first priority in this category.

Disability Services should receive \$6,000 to purchase more up to date technology including but not limited to: SAM V2- Document Management System, Kurzweil 3000 Black & White Professional Licenses for text to speech technology, Membership to AMAC to access textbook in handicap friendly formats, the committee voted unanimously for this recommendation and this is our second priority in this category.

Campus Recreation should receive \$220,000 in order to halt any plans to institute a "pay to play" initiative; additionally this money can be used to begin the process of renovating intramural fields, sustaining hours of operation for the Ping Center, and sustaining student employment, the committee voted unanimously for this recommendation and this is our third priority in this category.

The Student Activities Commission should receive \$50,000 to increase the ability of student organizations that program to address specific needs of the University community as seen by the students; the committee voted this to be our fourth priority unanimously.

Student Senate should receive an additional \$4,000 to help cover the cost of the minimum wage increase for secretaries, as well as the unveiling of several new public relations initiatives, the committee voted unanimously that this be our fifth priority.

The Graduate College should receive \$150,000 in order to increase the amount of money contribute to the "General Fee buy down", the committee struggled with this recommendation as half of the committee believed that it would make the University more competitive and in line with other graduate programs, while the other half believes if this money can not be sustained, it will send the wrong message to graduate students, who potentially will believe their fees have been increased. A very divided committee makes this recommendation and lists it has our sixth priority.

The remaining \$150,000 should be placed in a reserve account for the Division of Student Affairs, in the event that an unexpected reduction in enrollment into the WellBeing Plan should occur it is vitally important that Student Health Services continue to offer the improved services that they have begun, additionally in the event that new medical instruments need to be purchased, or that a machine should need to be replaced, this money is there for use.

Conclusion

The Committee believes that the Division of Student Affairs is headed in the right direction, with its efforts to reduce its need for General Fee support, the committee is also found it refreshing to be able to award specific programs with increases in its budget to continue the work that each area does. Most notably is was the award to Campus Recreation; students of all walks of the community use Ping Center, the Aquatic Center, Bird Arena as well as the other activities Campus Recreation offers (club and intramural sports, etc.) however the committee wishes to emphasize its desire for the “pay to play” policy that the department is constructing be scrapped in light of the \$220,000 in increased support.

In order for the committee to have adequate time to thoroughly investigate all possible effects that the various budget reduction targets will have on a planning unit and in turn the student population, the General Fee Advisory Committee needs to be convened fall quarter or at the very latest, early winter quarter. Additionally, if the Division of Student Affairs is able to continue to or further to reduce its dependency on the general fee, because of the WellBeing Plan, or third party billing, this committee believes it should have the right to allocate those additional resources.

Appendix A



General Fee

Application for 2009

Applications are subject to change on an annual basis. Please use the version for the current year.

Due by: Tuesday, March 17th, 2009
Turn in electronically to Rebecca Skillings:
skillinr@ohio.edu

Other questions/comments should be directed to:
Chauncey Jackson, Chairman (cj329706@ohio.edu) or
Rebecca Skillings, Finance Advisor (skillinr@ohio.edu)

WHAT IS THE GENERAL FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Ohio University administration and student government leaders are working together to provide a transparent process to allocate funds from the general fee. According to the state of Ohio, the purpose of the general fee is to fund non-instructional student services. This committee is established to provide annual review and recommendations from students to the University administration on General Fee disposition.

Funding Process Timeline:

Applications are due to the Committee by March 17, 2009. The Committee will review applications by April 10th. If the committee has questions they will summon the unit before the committee. Like last year, not all units will be summoned before the committee for hearings.¹

2009 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

The Committee will give preference in the funding process to units and programs who meet the following criteria: **NOTE: The General Fee Advisory Committee will not be accepting new funding request this year.**

- Programs that demonstrate a benefit to all students / are open to all students
- Programs that can demonstrate an efficient use of their currently allocated funds
- Units that are accurately and systematically able to assess the financial success of the program(s) using a cost/benefits analysis
- Units that can accurately and systematically assess the impact of the program on the student experience
- Programs that can secure or generate other sources of funding to supplement general fee allocations
- Collaboration with other units
- Programs that provide an exclusive service not duplicated by another unit
- Units that provide a clear and meaningful prioritization of programs to the committee based on the programs' perceived value to the students
- Programs that accentuate any of the 5 C's of OHIO; Character, Community, Commitment, Citizenship, Civility
- Programs that enhance the student experience

¹ Please note that the Committee's request for a presentation will have no bearing on the outcome of our funding decisions, it merely means that the Committee has further questions about your proposal.

FUNDING PROPOSAL FORM

Please fill out the application with researched and detailed answers. The application will be reviewed by the General Fee Application Committee. Please be as specific as possible.

Department Name: _____

Main contact person: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Secondary contact person: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

The following may be used as a template for your proposal. Feel free to use a different format if you believe it better conveys information to the Committee; however each of the points below should be addressed.

- I. Summary / Narrative of Priorities and Amount Requested** (should total 1-2 pages)
 - a. Mission, Goals and Objectives for the Department as a whole
 - b. Describe challenges/issues facing the unit in the current fiscal year as well as the next 3 years
 - c. What are the major cost drivers for your department and the programs it supports
 - d. What steps will be taken in the future to further address these issues at the unit level?
- II. Prioritization** (should total 1-2 pages)
 - a. Please prioritize the support for the programs you offer from highest to lowest. Include in this prioritization programs which would be cut in the reduction targets issued by the university.
 - b. In your report, please discuss the decision criterion and other considerations used by your unit to prioritize support for the programs within your budget. In addition, please include information such as which programs are emphasized and why, as well as which programs received less emphasis
- III. Program Budgets** (Attach as separate Excel document)
 - a. Using the Excel template provided, please summarize your budget proposal for the reduction targets issued by the university.

IV. Program Descriptions (responses should be between 2-4 pages per program.)

- a. *Provide a cost/benefit analysis: Quantitatively describe the services that will be provided at this funding level. Also, describe the services, activities, or initiatives that are supported by this program.*
- b. *Describe recent cost-saving measures and operational efficiencies that have been implemented to contain or reduce costs.*
- c. *How does this program impact the student body? Provide evidence that this program enriches the student experience. Discuss to what extent is the program open and accessible to all students.*
- d. *What are the intended outcomes for this program/subunit and what metrics are used to measure its progress?*
- e. *Describe the activities or services that cannot be maintained or will be eliminated in the reduction targets set by the university. Is the program cut or scaled back, eliminated, kept fully funded, or increased through reallocation? Include the consequences associated with each of the above funding changes.*
- f. *Discuss the extent to which this program provides an exclusive service not duplicated by another unit.*
- g. *Please describe how you have and/or how you can provide other sources of funding to supplement general fee allocations including financial collaboration with other units.*
- h. *Please describe how this program accentuates the 5 C's.*
- i. *Please identify which priorities of the General Fee Advisory Committee you believe this program serves.*