University Planning and Budgeting Committee

Minutes of February 17, 2020 Meeting

The meeting convened at 3:32 p.m. in 2700 Posvar Hall

UPBC members present: Ann Cudd, Tammeka Banks, Chris Bonneau, Robin Choo, Jacqueline Dunbar-Jacob, Jude Hays, Christine Jackson, Robin Kear, John Keeler, John Lyon, Deborah Miller, Emily Murphy, Hari Sastry, Jem Spectar, Andrew Stephany, John Stoner, Kornelia Tancheva, Jean Truman, Franklin Wilson and Chad Zutter.

Also present: Thomas Crawford, Dave DeJong, Richard Henderson, Lucy Russell, Paul Supowitiz, Nancy Tannery, Kathy Tosh, Thurman Wingrove, and Steve Wisniewski.

UPBC members not present: Ashima Agarwai, Yashar Aucie, William Kory, Arthur Levine and Greg Scott.

Minutes of April 26, 2019 Meeting
There was a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2019 meeting. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Pitt Seed Project Funding
Gloria Mou presented an overview of the Pitt Seed Funding, now in its’ 3rd year. Pitt Seed Projects are well-defined actions that advance the goals of The Plan for Pitt. Last year 24 projects were funded. Mou displayed the listing of the previously funded Pitt Seed Projects on the Plan for Pitt 2025 web site. She described the review criteria and mentioned she would be seeking reviewers from the UPBC membership.

New Budget Process
Hari Sastry updated the committee about the new budget process. In an effort to align budgeting and planning a new budget planning approach has been instituted. This new approach requires each Responsibility Center to reallocate 2% of their E&G budget to new strategic initiative(s) and develop Responsibility Center Resource Proposals (RCRP) for new resources to support these new initiatives. All initiatives listed in the RCRPs are ranked. The description, justification, and budget for each academic unit RCRP are due to be submitted to the CFO’s office by February 28, 2020. The CFO and Provost will meet individually with the Deans throughout the month of March to review their proposals. The proposals will be shared with the Chancellor. Kathy Tosh mentioned there are liaisons from her office for each Responsibility Center to assist with this process. They have also held a number of information sessions.
Update from the Chair

Provost Cudd presented an overview of enrollment trends and initiatives, educational excellence metrics, and academic initiatives that are being pursued in order for Pitt to remain in a strong position in the face of coming headwinds for higher education. Cudd noted the demographic decline in PA, Ohio and the Northeast into 2026. There are already signs of declining population in rural Western PA. She mentioned there is not a large enrollment of international undergraduate students, but that is an increased focus. There are a significant numbers of international graduate students, however, at Pitt. Affordability is a growing concern putting more pressure on Pitt to cut or freeze tuition and more demands for scholarship aid. Cudd described Pitt’s position in the higher education market as strong, and even improving in terms of some important rankings of overall quality.

She stated our graduate enrollment has fallen by 400 over five years which is nearly a 5% loss and accounts for half of the total losses in enrollments on all campuses. This year’s undergraduate enrollment is down over 600 or 2.5% across all campuses from the high point on 2017. However, net tuition revenue at the undergraduate level has risen. This is largely because the mix of students has shifted to include more out-of-state students. A targeted out-of-state recruiting effort is underway and has proved to be effective in increasing the share of the out-of-state students from the targeted states. (New England, Texas, California, Virginia/Maryland/DC, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey) She mentioned the Pitt Success Program as a new financial aid program aimed at meeting more of the financial need of our lowest income students. This new model broadens the pool of applicants and reverses the downward trend in Pell eligible students in the student body.

Despite the headwinds, it is important to consider how strong the Pitt brand is and how well we are doing educating our students. Quality indicators include a rising freshman to sophomore retention rate, rising six-year graduation rate and student’s positive response to their experiences at Pitt.

She concluded by describing academic initiatives over the past 5 years. New undergraduate initiatives include personalizing each student’s education, a new customized advising tool, redesign of large enrollment classes and internship guarantees. Graduate initiatives include new revenue generating professional programs, new graduate and professional student recruiting and the expansion of online and hybrid programs.

Following the discussion, Paul Supowitz provided an update on the governor’s budget and the current political situation in Harrisburg. He reported that Governor Wolf released a draft budget last week, with a flat appropriation for Pitt. Supowitz also mentioned state leadership retirements and those choosing not to run for reelection could shift the leadership towards the central and eastern part of the state.
The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.