Guest Column: Update From the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee

Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee
February 2016

The UA's Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, or SPBAC, provides advice and guidance to campus leadership on the University's budget and strategic priorities.

This University-level committee is comprised of 21 voting members and 12 ex-officio members - including faculty, deans, staff, appointed professionals and students, both graduate and undergraduate. The body has existed since 1995, with committee chairs appointed to a two-year term by the UA president, in consultation with the chair of the faculty.

Below, committee co-chairs Mika Galilee-Belfer, director of faculty affairs and strategic planning in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Randy Richardson, professor of geosciences, provide an update on some of the top issues and priorities for SPBAC during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Randy Richardson
At the beginning of the academic year, the UA Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee identified its highest priorities for the year, along with ways to determine if it had addressed these priorities successfully.

The committee identified four main areas of focus: Responsibility Centered Management; strategic planning and quality measures; student engagement and experience; and defining the UA vision.

SPBAC has been meeting twice a month to address these issues, inviting experts to help inform SPBAC members and then providing feedback to these experts and to the UA administration.

We are happy to now update you ? the greater campus community ? about our work in these four key areas.

**RCM**

As the University transitions to a Responsibility Centered Management, or RCM, budget model, we are working to identify any unintended consequences of the shift and to facilitate campus communication around RCM decision-making at the college level.

Specifically, we have had structured discussions about how RCM is affecting planning and approval processes for new academic programs and courses being developed across campus.

We also have worked with Provost Andrew Comrie and Chief Financial Officer Gregg Goldman to identify and weigh the highest budget priorities for the UA, including faculty and staff salaries; investments to more fully realize our fundraising and development potential; operational support, particularly as it affects student engagement and success; and growth of the faculty to meet the needs of our student body.

**Strategic Planning and Quality Measures**

After working with institutional leaders to develop the University's Never Settle strategic academic and business plan, SPBAC is now involved in campus conversations around "quality measures" to track successes under Never Settle.

These conversations align with those held by the Arizona Board of Regents, which has adopted a new strategic plan that reduces 32 university performance metrics to 12, and that includes consideration of "quality indicators" that are customizable by each state university.

These quality measures, some quantitative and some qualitative, will allow the UA to track success while identifying areas for improvement.

**Student Engagement and Experience**
We plan to have structured discussions this spring that focus on the impact of tuition increases on student demographics, indebtedness, success and retention. We also will continue conversations about the vision for UA online education.

Our discussions so far have included the student experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as the experience of postdoctoral fellows.

SPBAC also will be welcoming members of the University's Honors Re-Envisioning Task Force, which is currently soliciting campus feedback on new directions and opportunities for students served by the UA Honors College.

Defining Our University Vision

SPBAC is focused on the question of "What kind of university are we?"

This question informs our conversations about our research and land-grant mission, our focus on interdisciplinarity, our commitment to our students and our overall institutional quality.

SPBAC discussions with President Ann Weaver Hart have focused on the University vision, including campus climate, especially in light of national events around diversity and inclusion on other campuses; the evolving relationship with the state in terms of funding; and serious issues around faculty salaries.

In the fall, SPBAC also welcomed Kimberly Espy, senior vice president for research, for a structured discussion about the UA research mission, and Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia, senior vice president for UA health sciences, to help SPBAC better understand the transformative UA-Banner health partnership.

We also have contributed to discussions on three areas of potential strategic advantage for the institution: sustainability, diversity, and global initiatives and partnerships, and have created recommendations for fully integrating these priority areas across the UA's teaching, research, and service arenas.

What makes SPBAC unique is that our membership represents all facets of University life, ensuring multiple perspectives are considered in service to sound decision-making.

To this end, we welcome your feedback, suggestions and input as we work to serve the University. Please feel free to contact either one of us at rmr@email.arizona.edu [3] or mikagb@email.arizona.edu [4]. We look forward to hearing from you!

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