

**University Senate Budget Committee
Annual Report
Academic Year 19-20**

Purpose:

This committee shall review the planning, negotiation, and allocation of the University operating, capital, and other budgets, the process of making budgetary and financial decisions and the determination of priorities among academic and other programs having financial implications. This committee may recommend any desirable expressions of Senate opinion on these matters. The committee shall include two undergraduate students and one graduate student. (https://policy.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/243/2019/11/bylaws.20191104.Final_.pdf)

Members:

*Carol Polifroni, Chair, *Rajeev Bansal, Lloyd Blanchard (Ex-Officio Member), *Lisa Park Boush, Angela Brightly, Michael Cerulli, Nafis Fuad, Joerg Graf, Michael Jones, Philip Mannheim, *Jeffrey McCutcheon, Michael Morrell, *Dylan Nenadal, Lisa Sanchez, Lauren Slingluff, Daniel Stolzenberg, Paulo Verardi, *Michael White. *=Senate member

The chair was appointed as the Senate representative to the Board of Trustees Fiscal Affairs Committee.

Agenda:

We started the year with eight priorities for Fall...fringe rates, tuition plan, athletics, pay equity, foundation, library, campus security, and campus facilities and all but campus facilities were addressed.

Fringe rates:

Robust discussions were held with Michael Glasgow and Michele Williams in October. It was clear that President Katsouleas made this a priority and mandated action. Several options were explored including the different rates between the academic year and summer, the need to differentiate between the unfunded liability and true overhead costs for the conduct of research, and the rates assigned to different roles. In December a temporary “fix” was put into place using one-time university allocated funds to reduce the fringe rates on research grants. A role for the committee is to monitor whether this reduction made a difference in applications and secured funding.

Tuition plan:

The current four year plan expired. The university’s goal is to create a new four year plan which maintained the cost competitiveness for out of state students and continued to attract in state students. The committee appreciated the need for an across the board tuition increase and encouraged consideration of a rolling plan so that every student knew what their four year tuition

would be regardless of year they entered. The increase was approved at the Board of Trustees with the rolling plan in place.

Pay equity:

This was not discussed in detail per se as the Senate Executive Committee, the AAUP and the Administration created a Task Force to address Pay Equity. The committee members, led by John Volin, are Carol Polifroni, Preston Green, Oskar Harmon, Mari Luz Fernandez, Amy Howell, Lyle Scruggs, Sarah Croucher and Lloyd Blanchard. Their work will be done in five subcommittees on data, spousal hires, retention, PTR and merit. The data work is being done now and the others will do their work in the Fall. A December report is anticipated. The Budget Committee will review the report when available.

Foundation:

We met with Scott Roberts, President of the Foundation. We discussed the short and long term strategy of fundraising given that philanthropy has lessened throughout the nation. Our endowment is much lower than other land grant institutions and this has a major impact on how we address the state's limited fiscal resources. Our investment gains for the last few years are in line with other universities of the same size endowment. Mr. Roberts spoke about re-organizing the staff and areas of responsibility in order to maximize opportunities to reach donors...new and established. The traditional day of giving, phone-athons and school/college run events are being assessed to determine the cost benefit ratio. The naming of buildings is being examined as potential interest for donors.

Athletics:

A concern of the committee was the limited responsiveness of the Division of Athletics to the committee's 2017 report and request for a fiscal plan to decrease the subsidy from the university. Mr. Benedict was open and forthcoming about the challenges faced by his division when there are no professional sports in the state and the expectations to play at arenas off campus. As conference realignment occurs the fiscal implications are simultaneously advantageous (less travel) and disadvantageous (exit fees). He stressed that as the fiscal status of the division is examined "everything is on the table". Every consideration has a consequence and these are being weighed carefully for the short as well as the long term.

The Budget Committee presented a resolution to the University Senate place a cap on the current annual subsidy (approximately \$30million), a \$15 million decrease in the subsidy within 10 years, examination of all competitive sports, and presentation of an actionable plan for these actions (<https://senate.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1323/2020/03/2020-0302-Senate-Minutes-COMplete.pdf>). The resolution passed and a report is expected at the May 4, 2020 meeting as well as at the first meeting in Fall 2020.

Library:

Lauren Slingluff, Assistant Dean in the library, presented a detailed view of the fiscal status within the library. Staff has been reduced in response to repeated cutbacks; this is particularly

true in the area of academic liaisons. The library for the 21st century is different from libraries of the past. More services are offered online. Simultaneously, students are more present in the building than before and are requesting longer hours of service.

Campus Security:

We received an update on the reorganization within campus security on all campuses. We learned that UConn police have the same authority as the local police in towns throughout Connecticut. Security guards are not police officers and have no police authority. The committee shared that campus security and safety has improved and thanked the department for their efforts.

Covid-19

Our April meeting was scheduled to address CETL and facilities. However, COVID-19 arrived and the campuses were physically closed but virtually operational. Our April meeting was committed to learning of the university's plan to address the growing fiscal deficit as international students may not be able to return, the loss of housing and lodging revenue as well as that associated with all events from the arts to sports. The Spring 2020 loss may be as high as \$27million (after CARES award) and the Fall deficit may range from 40-100million (excluding UConn Health) dependent on when and how we are able to reopen. The committee expressed concern about the graduate students, graduate assistantships and medical insurance. With research labs closed, the uncertainty for graduate student support is greater now than ever. The committee identified several strategies from all online to delayed physical reopening, a hiring freeze to cancellation of professional development activities, and furloughs to construction cancellation. There is no one single solution and the committee advocated for a balanced approach to mitigation using reserves, hiring freezes, protecting graduate students, and protecting untenured and contingent faculty from the same fiscal reductions which may be required of tenured faculty.

The chair has been appointed to the University's Fiscal Working Group to recommend plans using varied scenarios of options for Fall 2020.