

**University Senate Budget Committee
Annual Report
Academic Year 21-22**

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:

- *Robert Bird, Co-Chair, Business, Marketing
- *Carol Polifroni, Co-Chair, School of Nursing
- *Elena Dormidontova, CLAS, Physics
- *Stephen Dyson, CLAS, Political Science
- *Jeffrey McCutcheon, Engineering, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- *Erika Skoe, CLAS, Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences
- *Lisa Park Boush, CLAS, Geosciences
- *Paulo Verardi, CAHNR, Pathobiology
- *Michael Vertefeuille, SFA, Digital Media and Design
- *Michael White, Dining Services
- Christopher Bergen, Undergraduate Student Government Representative
- Lloyd Blanchard, Interim EXVP and CFO (Ex-Officio Member)
- Jeffrey Crouse, School of Education
- Jeff Gagnon, Enrollment Planning & Management
- Michael Jones, CETL
- Philip Mannheim, CLAS, Physics
- Sandip Roy, Graduate Student Representative
- Christine Scott-Dougan, Waterbury Campus Finance Director
- Lauren Slingsluff, University Libraries
- Paula Wilmot, Dean of Students Office
- Edward Zelikman, Undergraduate Student Government Representative
- Reka Wrynn, represents CFO

*Senate Member 2021-22

Agenda:

The University Senate Budget Committee (USBC) started the year with establishing an agenda for the committee. Our areas of expected focus were the potential mass retirement of employees in 2022 and the financial status of the library. We also anticipated facilitating the rollout of the new common curriculum, and specifically the budgetary implications introducing a new curriculum across the university. Our committee also anticipated a continuing evaluation of the university budget and continuing impacts of COVID. These issues and others were addressed to varying degrees.

Common Curriculum:

Regarding the proposed new Common Curriculum (CC), the DeltaGE committee completed its work on October 1, with continuing work shifted to the Senate Curriculum and Courses Committee (CC&C).

Questions considered by the USBC included the impact of the CC on the university, particularly its impact on lab courses. Approximately between 6,000 and 7,300 students are enrolled in lab courses each semester.

Furthermore, we investigated the cost of faculty navigators that would be necessary to ensure smooth transition from the current curriculum to the new CC. The university communicated that we would use the adjunct rate for determining costs, but the USBC concluded that this rate is unsupported given the cost of full-time faculty who will assume the navigator role. This would be in effect an unfunded mandate, and the USBC recommends a percentage of full-time salary or a similar metric to measure costs of faculty time dedicated to the navigator role.

Members of USBC will serve on the committee to draft the implementation plan and fiscal impact statement which will be presented to the Senate for action in Fall 2022.

Athletics:

The USBC began with discussions of the Kevin Ollie arbitration process and the unfavorable award against UConn. The USBC inquired about where the costs would be placed on the university. The USBC also discussed the decrease in athletics conference revenue, the impact on conference alignments and team wins, as well as the athletic subsidy overall. The USBC addressed the need to enforce the previously assessed \$10million dollar reduction in reliance on university support. New models for funding athletics are in preliminary discussion.

Library:

The budgetary status of the library was a significant focus of the USBC. We heard from Dean Langley and other library staff regarding the implicates of \$1.2 million in rescissions in FY20 and FY21, with the largest cuts impacting collections. We discussed a new plan to introduce Article Galaxy Scholar, a program that lowers journal costs through the use of rapidly filled ILLs to obtain journal articles instead of paying outright for continuous access.

Three areas of concern with Article Galaxy were raised by the USBC: 1. The inability to see the whole journal and related articles without doing a separate request 2. How will plan be monitored to know if it is successful or not, 3. If program delivers materials within five minutes of request as claimed, why are no other research universities using this system.

University Budget:

The university budget was a continuing theme. Regarding the sources of the university budget, 26% of budget comes from state's block grant (including fringe), 47% originates from tuition and fees including

housing, and 27% comes from grants, philanthropy, sales, and entrepreneurial endeavors. UConn's budget is still impacted by COVID-19. Federal dollars related to COVID will cease at the end of FY22. This results in a FY23 starting with a \$26 million deficit. There will be rescissions across to board to address the deficit. If the budget gap cannot be closed entirely, the university will draw on reserves but only for a limited amount. The USBC was informed that a hiring slowdown was not an official policy.

In the spring, the USBC addressed issues of transparency of budgetary information. While the USBC commends Lloyd Blanchard and his staff regarding information about budgetary allocations, the USBC desired greater transparency over budgetary policy and the motivations behind certain decisions at the university level. Toward this end, the USBC drafted a motion, which was presented at the March University Senate meeting and stated as amended: "The USBC moves starting immediately that there be direct USBC participation in the establishment of fiscal priorities and direct participation in the budget development process across university programs and offices." This motion was approved by the full Senate 54-yes, 1-no, 1-abstention.

In the USBC's most recent meeting, the committee heard from Lloyd Blanchard, Reka Wrynn, Bridget Inzirillo, and Kelly Wihbey regarding the budget approval process and individual requests specified by school and campus. The result was a productive meeting whereby the bases for improved transparency will be built for USBC meetings in the following year. Additionally, the USBC recommended to the CFO that a different budget process be considered, the use of zero- based budgeting rather than the current model of global modeling which is an inflationary increase over what is without justification of the extant budget. It is also recommended that every unit, not solely the academic units, have full budget hearings on an annual basis. IDCs currently are split with 70% to the OVPR and its office, and 30% to the school/college with 10 to the Dean, 10 to the Department and 10 to the PI; no funds are allocated for the library which supports the research endeavor. The USBC recommended an examination of this approach.

Retirements of Faculty and Staff:

Early in the academic year there was a concern that a substantial number of faculty & staff would retire in order to take advantage of benefits provided by the current SEBAC contract rather than a renegotiated SEBAC contract. This has been informally expressed as a 'silver tsunami'. As the year progressed, it appeared that the tsunami may not manifest as projected and that a spike in retirements would more likely be spread out over the next two to three years. The latest estimate provided is that 300 retirements may be expected, which is about twice the normal rate of retirements for each year.

Planned agenda for 2022-2023:

1. Common Curriculum fiscal impact
2. Monitor Article Galaxy implementation and evaluation
3. Review FY 2023 final budget (will be presented to BOT in June 2022)
4. Assess impact of increased planned undergraduate enrollment
5. Assess change in regional campus funding to increase full time faculty
6. Contribute to development of FY 24 budgets