

**Strategic Plan  
Financial Structure Group**

**Minutes for 7/8/14 (2:00pm)  
Miller Oval**

Committee Members:

Present: Sean Goodlett, Cathy Daggett, Tim Hilliard, Michael Nosek, Audrey Pereira

Absent: Shylah Maloney (student rep)

Guests: Paul Weizer (Executive Planning Council), Jane Fiske (EPC), Heidi Swift, Pam McCafferty

I. Call to Order by Sean Goodlett (approximately 2:05)

II. Approval of Minutes from June 8, 2014

Sean distributed and committee members reviewed the minutes. No discussion.

Motion to Approve: Michael Nosek

Second: Cathy Daggett

Vote: 5 (in favor); 0 (opposed); 0 (abstention): 0

III. Discussion with Jay Bry on the "Operations" Portion of the Charge

- Difficult to associate costs and savings associated with cost containment measures. Due to time constraints these costs and savings were not always quantified.
- Sean suggested that the group should consider cost containment as well as cost reductions.
- Motion to Add "and containment" to charge. With change, charge will read:

This Working Group of the SPC is responsible for addressing the challenges and opportunities related to net revenue increases, cost reductions and containment, and debt obligation, service, and burden. The working group will also identify the resources necessary to maintain and enhance robust university programs consistent with Fitchburg State University's mission and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's "Vision Project."

N.B.: "debt service" refers to the annual payments of interest and principal on loans; "debt burden" refers to the effect on the operating budget.

Discussion: none

Motion: Audrey Pereira  
Second: Mike Nosek

Vote: 5 (in favor); 0 (opposed); 0 (abstention): 0

### III. General Discussion

- Paul recommended that committee members read the following: *Checklist for Change* (book can be borrowed from Academic Affairs office), *Lean Higher Education* (book can be borrowed from Academic Affairs office), and *Anatomy of College Tuition* (article can be downloaded from Blackboard).
- Sean suggested the following question is worth exploring: Is it legal for us to assess fees for different majors as a public institution? Would it make sense for our institution? Majors that may be applicable (i.e., cost intensive): nursing, game design, chemistry, exercise science. Concentrations that may be applicable: film video concentration.
- Tim also suggested correlating with unemployment data and family income.
- Would it be possible to determine if other schools (our sister schools and/or others) assess fees for different majors or concentrations?
- How to forecast financial aid needed given population of students that will likely have increased needs over time? What tools do we have available to us to analyze this?
  - Pam explained that the gap between student need and what the University provided grows each year. There may be a breaking point where students are no longer willing to take on required loans.
  - College score card is on the Registrar's page, Veterans services. That can be searched to compare our school with other schools.

### III. Distribution of Data-Gathering and Other Tasks

#### Revenue and Forecasts and Increases:

- Jay and Cathy will attempt to determine if other schools have differentiated fee structures.
- Sean will post schedule of scholarship fund distribution to Blackboard site.
- Pam will supply average need, unmet need, student load, average borrowing, and Pel grant recipients from as far back as 2002 and Sean will post to the Blackboard site.
- Sean will coordinate with an economist on elasticity calculations.

#### Income Growth and Demographic Trends:

- Tim will analyze demographic trends and admitted students (question #3).

#### IV. Potential Recommendations:

- Develop a framework for making decisions about cost reduction.
- Consider differential fee structures.

#### V. Establishing an Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- Remaining summer meetings:
  - Tuesday, July 22 from 1:00p.m.-3:00p.m.
  - Tuesday, August 5 from 1:00p.m.-3:00p.m.
- Academic year meetings:
  - Monday, September 15 from 3:30p.m.-5:00p.m.
  - Monday, September 29 from 3:30p.m.-5:00p.m.
  - Friday, October 17 from 1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.
  - Monday, October 27 from 3:30p.m.-5:00p.m.
  - Monday, November 3 from 1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.

#### VI. Voted to adjourn (3:50) – passed unanimously

Submitted by Audrey Pereira