Faculty Senate Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
11/1/10

Present: Conrad Plaut, Chair; Clea McNeely; Scott Gilpatric; Jim Larson; Harold Roth; Jeff Kovac

Not Present: Beauvais Lyons; Mike Angle; David Atkins; Jerzy Dydak; Scott Wall

Motion: Minutes are tabled until they are circulated tomorrow, November 2 for an email vote. Unanimously passed.

The rest of the meeting was spent discussing the criteria for understanding expenditures and assessing effectiveness of non-academic programs at UTK. This section of the minutes describes ideas that the group decided by consensus were worth pursuing.

o   Zero-based budgeting. Described by Jeff Kovac, this is a budgeting technique that requires all elements of a department's or program's budget be justified, rather than just the increases be justified as in traditional budget planning. Jeff pointed out several advantages to zero-based budgeting:
  o   It has the potential to allocate resources more efficiently.
  o   It helps program leaders prioritize the activities most closely linked to their mission.
  o   It can identify wasteful areas of the budget.
The committee acknowledged disadvantages of zero-based budgeting as well, in particular the burden of zero-based budgeting in an institution as large as UTK.

o   For each major area of non-academic programming, broad criteria for deciding the worth of an investment are possible. Examples:
  o   For student support services: how many students are served and how does the service further their success as students?
  o   Faculty support: how many faculty/instructors/post-docs are served and how is it furthering their success as faculty?
  o   Research support—external funding, research productivity (publications), stature of research (NAS membership, awards, etc.)
  o   Facilities support—this is an important yet very distinct area of non-academic programs.

o   Is there something to learn from Research Council's review process of research centers?

o   Because showing impact is difficult and expensive (even when large impacts exist), it may not be efficient to require every program to demonstrate impact. Rather, programs could be asked to demonstrate that they are implementing evidence-based practice, as appropriately adapted for their context. This places the burden on the reviewer in the provost's office to have some expertise in that programming area, which may not be realistic.

- User satisfaction can be very informative, especially for tutoring services. These types of surveys can also help the program improve quality of programming by identifying who is benefitting most and least, how the program seems to be working, and which program components or tools work best?

Meeting adjourned.