

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Student Participation in University Governance through College Councils

For information only.

Overview

Each year, the Regents approve the budget at the conclusion of the university's budgeting process. The budgeting process touches every part of the university, including tuition and financial aid, faculty and staff salaries, capital projects, program expenditures, strategic investments, etc. The Regents have an interest in ensuring this process is sound, robust, and includes all the relevant stakeholders.

Student input in the budgeting process was strengthened with creation of the Provost's Advisory Committee for Students (PACS) and has recently expanded to some academic units through the creation of College Councils. These councils, comprised of students from within a particular school or college, have been formed in order to facilitate student input in budgeting decisions at the Dean level and to improve PACS's institutional knowledge and ability to advise the Provost.

ASUW and GPSS partnered with students and Deans in several colleges to pilot this concept. Students are now asking all Deans to adopt a College Council and seek student input regarding local budget decisions that impact tuition (especially at the graduate level), scholarships, student services, etc. Currently, 25 percent of colleges have a fully functioning College Council, while 19 percent have a council in early stages of implementation. 56 percent of schools and colleges across the UW currently have no council.

As the cost burden on students continues to increase, it is appropriate that key budget decision-makers at the UW engage students as critical stakeholders and actively seek student input on budget decisions through a collaborative process that is beneficial to all. The university should continue to embrace student input in budgeting decisions by encouraging and supporting each college in adopting a College Council, with a goal of making College Councils a regular "business practice" of the UW going forward.

Background: Students Seek a Seat at the Table in Response to Budget Cuts, Tuition Increases

In June of 2011, UW changed the Student Handbook to make it the official policy of the UW Provost to, "seek and consider the input and advice of the UW student

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body though the Provost's Advisory Committee for Students (PACS)." The student committee charged with advising the UW on budget matters was created after a one-year pilot testing the concept proved successful.

Students urged the creation of PACS in response to the State of Washington stepping back from its historical role in funding public higher education at the UW. While just ten years ago, the state covered 70 percent of the cost of each UW student's degree, today, students are responsible for covering 70 percent of the cost.

As state funding dropped, tuition increased rapidly to fill the gap, and the legislature gave tuition-setting authority to the Board of Regents. UW students have sought a more active and collaborative role in the annual budget process at the university as a result. This collaborative approach has several key benefits for the University of Washington, including:

- **Collaboration, Informed Input**
 - Students gain greater knowledge about the UW budget and budget decisions, reducing misunderstandings, misinformation, and increasing opportunity for informed input and collaboration with key decision-makers.
- **Informed Decision-Making**
 - Administrators gain valuable perspective and input from students, thus providing an opportunity to vet ideas and decisions through critical stakeholders before those decisions reach a wider audience.
- **Accountability**
 - The Provost retains authority as the chief budget officer; however, by sharing all non-confidential budget information and providing a regular forum for students to ask tough questions and weigh in on pressing budget issues, PACS provides a useful advisory function and a healthy layer of accountability and oversight.
- **Improved Communication and Alignment**
 - While disagreements will remain and are healthy, through information-sharing and consultation, PACS boosts mutual understanding between the administration and students, thus increasing alignment across the university.

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Students Propose Strengthening Student Input in Budgeting Through College Councils

As PACS continues to develop, students have become more informed about the university's budgeting process and have determined:

1. While the Provost oversees UW's overall budget, Deans wield substantial discretion in budget decisions at the college-level that have a major impact on student life and academic programs, especially on graduate students whose tuition varies by college and program.
2. PACS would be better able to provide effective, informed advice to the Provost if it had more information about college-level budgets, which filter up to the Provost's Office before being approved by the Board of Regents.

In light of this, ASUW and GPSS have proposed that the Dean of each college and school at the UW adopt some PACS-like structure for annually seeking student input in their college's budget decisions. Students have proposed that these College Councils be:

- **Representative**
 - o Membership on the councils should be generally representative of the student population within the school or college and include a representative from ASUW and/or GPSS.
- **Flexible**
 - o Students recognize that a few colleges have existing structures potentially capable of serving this advisory function. While students prefer a standardized structure, students are willing to work with flexible structures; the key is that input and consultation take place.
- **Informed**
 - o Deans should meet with their council periodically, engage collaboratively with the students, and provide all non-confidential budget information at the students' request. Where possible, student members should serve two year terms to reduce time spent constantly bringing new members up to speed.
- **Integrated**
 - o In addition to advising the Dean, College Councils should filter information to PACS to better inform PACS about the overall budget picture across the UW, thus improving the depth at which it can provide advice to the Provost.

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- **Advisory**
 - o While students are seeking a more active role in budgeting decisions, the purpose is to seek information and advise decision-makers so that the quality of decisions is improved and relevant stakeholders are consulted. Deans should ultimately retain their flexibility, discretion, and authority to do what is in the best interest of their school or college.

Current Status of College Councils Across UW

Students have presented their proposal for College Councils twice to the Board of Deans and Chancellors, first to seek volunteers to pilot the concept and now to ask all Deans to adopt a College Council.

See the attached summary for an overview of which colleges have adopted a College Council as of April 23rd, 2013.

Next Steps: Bringing Student Input to Every College at UW

Initiatives that are primarily driven by student leaders are inherently limited by the one-year terms of leaders. Each year, new students enter leadership positions with new priorities, areas of focus, and levels of institutional knowledge. However, given the massive shift in cost burden to students and their families, student interest in campus budget issues is likely to be sustained for years to come.

Given the benefits to the University of this collaborative approach, the university should continue to celebrate, embrace, and encourage efforts to create avenues for gathering student input on the budget.

Possibilities for continuing to implement College Councils:

- **Early Adopters Share Success Stories** in the hopes that College Councils will organically spread across the UW.
- **University Leadership Maintains a Commitment and Focus** on promoting student input and encouraging the spread of College Councils.
- **Considering Commitment to Student Input** as a factor in Dean reappointment reviews.

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- **Prioritizing Funding Requests** that have been vetted through a College Council over those proposals that have not, providing Deans with an incentive to seek student input in order to be considered for Provost Reinvestment Funds.
- **Changing the UW Student Handbook** to make it official UW policy to adopt student input on budgeting at the college level.

Common Questions about Student Input

Are College Councils another layer of bureaucracy that will ultimately waste time?

- While there is a startup cost in time and energy to establishing a College Council, students believe through collaboration, alignment and agreement on important issues will be increased. Students also believe that as PACS and College Councils become more sophisticated in their understanding of the budget, they will be able to contribute ideas and feedback that will ultimately save the University money or allow funds to be allocated more effectively.
- While commitment to gathering student input may take some time, given that burden of paying for college has shifted to our students in recent years, considering their input as stakeholders is the right thing to do and is time well spent.

How do PACS and College Councils relate to student government?

- ASUW and GPSS are the elected opinion-making organizations of the student body. PACS members are appointed by ASUW and GPSS. PACS was created to carry out and facilitate input by ASUW and GPSS in the university's budgeting process. Students have proposed that while College Councils be made up of students within a college each council should also have a member appointed by ASUW and/or GPSS. All councils should share information with PACS.

Attachments

1. Status of College Councils across the UW as of 4-23-13
2. Timeline of Recent Developments in Student Input in University Decision-Making

Status of College Councils across the UW as of 4-23-13

COLLEGE	STATUS	NOTES
1. College of Arts & Sciences	Council functioning	
2. School of Social Work	Council functioning	
3. College of Built Environments	Council functioning	
4. School of Law	Council functioning	
5. School of Nursing	Council in early stages of implementation	
6. Evans School of Public Affairs	Council in early stages of implementation	
7. Foster School of Business	Council in early stages of implementation	
8. College of the Environment	Dean interest, but no council	Plans to launch in Fall of 2013
9. College of Education	Dean interest, but no council	Dean and students discussing form of council
10. College of Engineering	Dean interest, but no council	Awaiting new Dean
12. School of Dentistry	No council	
13 The Information School	No council	
14. School of Medicine	No council	
15. School of Pharmacy	No council	
16. School of Public Health	No council	

College Participation Overview

- 4 colleges have a College Council that ASUW and GPSS consider fully functional. Students and the Dean have generally agreed to scope, levels of participation, and information-sharing. These councils are sharing budget information with PACS.
- 3 colleges have a College Council that ASUW and GPSS consider to be in early stages of formation. Deans have expressed a commitment to seeking student input on their budget, the Council has been formed, and scope and levels of participation and information sharing are still being discussed. Some councils are sharing budget information with PACS.
- 3 colleges have expressed interest in forming a College Council or gathering student input on the budget, but no Council has been established and no format or details have yet been agreed to.
- 5 colleges have no College Council and have not yet expressed plans to gather student input on their budget as a part of this initiative.

NOTE: Lack of participation at this stage does not necessarily imply a lack of interest by the college. College Councils are a relatively new concept that is spreading across campus as “early adopters” share success stories and develop best practices. Some colleges currently without a College Council have other limited means of gathering student input on their budget (Ex: student membership on faculty council which advises the Dean).

Timeline of Recent Developments in Student Input in University Decision-Making

2007-08:

- Economic crisis causes economy to contract and a reduction in state tax revenues.

2008-09:

- Legislature cuts UW state support by roughly 20% (\$80 million)
- Legislature increases resident undergraduate tuition by 14%

2009-10:

- Legislature transfers tuition-setting authority to Board of Regents
- UW increases resident undergraduate tuition by 14%

2010-11:

- Legislature cuts UW state support by 33% (\$116 million)
- Students propose creation of advisory committee to the Provost
- Interim Provost Lidstrom works with ASUW and GPSS to create first student advisory committee for university-wide budget issues
- UW handbook changed to adopt PACS as official UW policy
- UW increases resident undergraduate tuition by 20%

2011-12:

- Students propose creation of college-level councils to advise Deans on budgets
- PACS recommends 15% undergraduate tuition increase after reviewing UW budget, presents recommendation at June Regents meeting
- Provost Cauce invests additional funds in mental health services, tables a proposal for an international student fee due to feedback from PACS
- UW increases resident undergraduate tuition by 16% bringing 4-year increase to 81% (\$5,055 increase), and the ten-year increase to 171% (\$7,138 increase)

2012-13:

- ASUW and GPSS work with Deans, 25% of colleges adopt a functioning council, 19% adopt a council still in early stages of implementation
- Students ask all Deans to adopt college-level student advisory councils
- Legislature expands PACS model to every state university and college in Washington
- PACS budget presentation moved to May to allow Regents more time to consider committee's recommendations