

Chair Report
Senate Financial and Physical Planning Committee (FPPC)
May 3, 2016

At a Senate meeting in September 2015, I made the observation that, despite the scope of the FPPC's mandate as set out by the Faculty Senate (with approval of the Board of Trustees), it is an ongoing challenge to define in workable terms the precise charge of the committee. Even with the President and Provost present at that meeting (my comments raised some hackles in the President's wing, at least initially), I noted that the FPPC primarily functions as place where the university administration states its short- and long-range financial and capital-project plans to the faculty without in any meaningful sense extending an invitation to faculty to share in the decision-making process. This is so despite the fact that the description of the the committee includes the following statements:

1. This committee *shall have responsibility for matters relating to planning and use of the institution's physical resources and for matters related to the formulation of the University budget* with the exception of items subject to collective bargaining.
2. It shall *assist in the formulation of the University budget* so that the Bylaws reflect the instructional, intellectual, and service priorities of the institution.

The language here (and elsewhere) no doubt overstates the committee's authority as well as the expertise of most of the individual committee members. "Have responsibility for ..." and "assist" are quite different concepts, but they are vague enough to leave the committee's working powers open to interpretation. In general, university administrators, while more than happy to visit committee meetings, simply tell us things that they will do, are doing, or already have done. That's not a consultative process let alone a model of shared governance.

With that as backdrop, I report now that the committee has focused much of its attention this year simply trying to define its purpose. The committee's primary focus has been on the financial planning side rather than on the physical planning (though our final meeting of the year did start to consider that aspect of our mandate). More to the point, most of our attention has been given over to the Senate's role in IBB.

In conjunction with the Senate Executive and with the Senate as a whole, the FPPC has been exploring what faculty know about IBB and, more commonly, why they generally know so little about it – including what it will mean or might mean or won't mean for individual faculty members and their departments or programs. Two things really stand out from our investigative efforts: 1) faculty do absolutely need (and they want) a fuller understanding of IBB; 2) they do not necessarily want to receive information from university administrators. FPPC may end up taking the lead on this venture, but minimally there is an expectation that next fall the Senate will organize and / or convene one or more educational events for faculty. Whatever their precise form, these events will

endeavor to go beyond the basic facts of IBB to a real discussion of its promises and potential pitfalls.

In preparing for its role in those events and simply to have a clearer sense of what IBB means for faculty, the committee has undertaken two related initiatives. The first is the gathering of information from other universities that use an IBB model (more broadly referred to as Resource [or Responsibility] Centered Management, with IBB as just one type of such a budgeting model). We are now collecting responses to our queries, but both now and as part of an ongoing process we will be reviewing the experiences, suggestions, advice, and warnings that come from colleagues elsewhere.

Second, we have been interviewing the Deans about their particular experiences with IBB to date as it has taken shape at UVM. (I should note that the Deans have been very accommodating.) We decided to give special attention to decanal perspectives because IBB claims to shift responsibility for budgeting to the colleges (or “responsibility centers” in IBB lingo). These meetings have been conversational, but they have been guided (though not scripted) by the questions I have included at the very end of the report. Since we have only just completed these interviews, I hesitate to draw any firm conclusions except to say that the Deans are themselves aware both of the challenges posed by the implementation of IBB and of the problems posed the ongoing structural deficit at UVM, problems that make change of some kind necessary. The FPPC is engaged in trying to figure out if an RCM budget model was and is the best response. It is also doing what it can to make this model work more efficiently to benefit the university’s core educational mission. In that context, committee members are deeply cognizant of one of the other stated tasks:

3. The committee shall *assume responsibility for informing the administration of educational priorities and needs and see that these are considered in all planning.*

That said, we need to do a better job with this particular task.

Respected submitted,
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FPPC: Questions for Deans of Responsibility Centers

1. Budget Planning.
 - a. How has IBB changed the way you and your college approach the making of the annual budget?
 - b. Do you understand how the reduction in subvention was determined for FY17 and can you predict further changes in future years?
 - c. Within the college, to whom are you most likely turn to for advice / ideas regarding budgeting and budget priorities? Are all faculty involved?

- d. How is graduate education being affected? Do you expect to alter your current system for allocating of teaching assistantships and other graduate support?
2. Implementation.
 - a. Has the implementation of IBB led to particular problems or new opportunities?
 - b. Any noteworthy surprises, good or bad, with the implementation?
 - c. Do you envision increasing college staff because of IBB (e.g. to take on the responsibilities for summer courses that used to fall to CE)?
 3. Transparency.
 - a. Do faculty in your college have a real understanding of IBB and are they engaging in it in a way you consider productive and forward-looking?
 - b. What should faculty understand about IBB that they don't currently know?
 - c. Are you anticipating new programs (majors, minors, certificate programs, summer institutes, etc.) and how will those be first proposed, discussed, vetted?
 - d. How will your faculty be involved in decisions to cut programs?
 4. Interdisciplinarity.
 - a. Are you planning to pursue inter-collegiate initiatives and what is the college's incentive for those?
 - b. In general, do you feel the colleges (at least the Deans) are working cooperatively?
 5. Miscellaneous.
 - a. What plans for improving the first-year experience does the college have? How else do you plan on improving retention?
 - b. With regard to the admission process, does the college have any say in how financial aid will be awarded, e.g. any targeting of students showing interest in certain majors?
 - c. Do you feel your college has a productive relationship with the Foundation and are the college's fundraising goals being given priority in a way you deem appropriate?
 - d. Do you have any specific ideas about what IBB 2.0 might look?