

Report on Committee Dissolution
University Budget Advisory Committee
Spring 2018

After careful deliberation during the 2017-2018 academic year, the members of the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) would like to recommend the dissolution of the committee and the redistribution of its responsibilities back to the University Faculty Council and to an ad-hoc Budget Advisory Committee as necessary.

The main part of UBAC's charge (see *Faculty Handbook* §2.8.2.1-3) relates to advising the President's cabinet "on short- and long-term University budget priorities, broadly conceived, including planning, the operating budget and capital improvements, fundraising, and development." Specifically, the committee is charged with generating a report on its budgetary priorities and with communicating the President's budgetary decisions back to UFC. In recent years, this has largely taken the form of hearing reports from administrators in charge of various units within the University about their budget status and communicating that information in the form of meeting minutes to UFC. As university budgets have grown tighter in recent years, UBAC's scope for meaningful advising has correspondingly shrunk.

This narrowing of UBAC's practical relevance has left the committee serving almost exclusively a communications role. The members of the committee feel that as a result the committee's work is largely duplicative of other faculty governance bodies. The President regularly communicates his public budgetary priorities at all-faculty/staff meetings at the beginning of each semester. President Paino has also hosted a series of "Budget Conversations with the President" open to all faculty and staff; while these events obviously lie beyond the faculty governance process, UFC certainly has the power to request more "Budget Conversations" if they cease. Currently, UFC already regularly hears reports from senior administrators on their areas of responsibility, and these reports regularly contain budgetary information. Practically speaking, UFC is also better positioned to hear faculty suggestions, inquiries, and complaints and to solicit public answers from relevant administrators. Since all of these fora for budgetary discussion are more public than UBAC meetings, they are more effective vehicles for communication of budgetary priorities than the existing committee structure.

The remainder of UBAC's charge consists of advising the President in periods of financial exigency, which is defined as "an imminent financial crisis that threatens the University as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by less drastic means than termination of academic appointments" (§4.1.1). UBAC is responsible for consulting with the President prior to a declaration of financial exigency (§4.1.1) and for "assist[ing] the President, Provost, and Vice Presidents in developing principles and setting priorities for budget reductions" (§2.8.2.4). Given the rarity of such circumstances, the members of UBAC do not believe that it makes sense for a standing committee to exist for this purpose. We recommend the insertion into the *Faculty Handbook* of language requiring the formation and consultation of an ad hoc Budget Advisory Committee in times of impending financial exigency. That ad hoc committee would have the same charge as the existing UBAC in such circumstances.

In conclusion, the member of UBAC recommend that the committee be dissolved; that its routine communication functions be absorbed into the existing communications pathways established by the UFC; and that the *Faculty Handbook* be amended to require the creation of an ad hoc Budget Advisory Committee in times of financial exigency.

Rob Barr
Brooke Di Lauro
Dana Hall
Jane Huffman
Michael Lapke
Pam Lowery
Will Mackintosh
Abbie Tomba