

UMW University Budget Advisory Committee

2020-2021 Final Report

This final report is prepared for the Administration and the University Faculty Council by:

Nabil Al-Tikriti, Stephen Davies, Laura Bylenok, Kyle T. Schultz, Suzanne Sumner, Liane Houghtalin, Chris Garcia, Patrick Catullo, and Michelle Pickham.

During the 2020-2021 Academic Year, the University Budget Advisory Committee met with sixteen (16) different stakeholders from across campus to discuss their budget structures, concerns, priorities, and wish lists. These areas included Facilities, the UMW Libraries, Procurement, Business Services, Advancement and University Relations, the UMW Foundation, the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education, Student Affairs, Continuing and Professional Studies, Information Technology, Residence Life and Housing, Athletics, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Administration and Finance to get the best full picture of the University's activities. This final report includes the committee's recommendations for budget priorities that culminated from the year's presentations. Endnotes are provided to give context and justifications for the items listed.

Highest Priority Recommendations

- Hire or designate a web specialist, or offer a stipend for website maintenance, to ensure all university and departmental webpages present current content, functional links, uniformity of appearance and layout, accessibility, and a professional and contemporary aesthetic. ¹
- Prioritize staffing needs in the following areas, listed in order of priority: Information Technology, Athletics (sports information, assistant coaches, grounds, athletic trainers), the Library, and Mental Health and Disability Resources. ²
- Continue to improve campus residence halls to enhance the perceived desirability of living on campus, thus increasing revenue. ³
- Restore resources for Simpson Library acquisitions. ⁴
- Improve the accessibility, safety, and sustainability of campus buildings (academic, administrative, athletic venues, resident halls) and facilities (sidewalks, parking lots, etc.). ⁵
- Restore faculty supplemental funding, including faculty development funds, travel funds, and faculty research funds through grants and sabbaticals. ⁶
- Increase student athlete funding to a target of \$1,200 per athlete from the current \$960. ⁷
- Survey the surrounding community to determine strategies for establishing and enhancing academic programs, including developing new revenue-generating initiatives and growing existing ones, enabling us to best serve our communities' future needs. Examples include adult education options, professional development courses for continuing education, consulting services, and career-switcher programs. ⁸
- Focus on enhancing the University's ability to attract and support targeted international students. ⁹

Medium Priority Recommendations

- Invest in or restructure the Honors Program to ensure the program can be maintained at optimal size and quality. ¹⁰
- Refrain from utilizing the Adjunct budget when cuts are needed or when funds need to be allocated elsewhere, particularly to non-academic areas. ¹¹
- Reduce the university's reliance on housing fees to support UMW operations. ¹²
- Reinstate and increase Residence Assistant (RA) stipends. ¹³
- Create a grants office or grants officer position to augment external funding opportunities.
- Increase marketing for and enhance development of music and theatre/dance programs to increase recruitment as we plan to build a brand-new arts facility.
- Make enhancements to athletic venues to remain attractive to current and prospective student athletes.
- Prioritize funding for enterprise software (enterprise e-signature software, secure document sharing/storage, virtual/e-calling software).

Lower Priority Recommendations

- Improve marketing of UMW properties (Belmont, JAEC, Stafford Campus, etc.) for outside community events such as conferences and weddings.
- Increase community awareness through advertisement that buying Pepsi products on campus (via vending machines, dining hall, bookstore) can lead to a hefty donation back to the University. In the past, this donation has been as much as \$125,000.
- Create programs to incentivize and reward budgetary innovation on a small scale. ¹⁴

External Advocacy Points

- Advocate for adding a faculty member to the UMW Foundation Board in an ex officio capacity. ¹⁵
- Review UMW/UMW Foundation contractual agreements with the aim of moving the University toward more financial flexibility and self-sustainability. Review the Foundation's portfolio to improve balance between real estate and other assets.
- Explore options for Virginia universities to collaborate in advocating for a program designed to encourage Virginia residents to attend in-state public universities.

¹ UMW's website needs to be made current, relevant, and innovative as it interfaces with the public and acts as a recruitment tool. At this time, most departments have a faculty member or office manager designated to keep the department web page up-to-date, but it is just another task on the shoulders of overburdened employees who may or may not be familiar with the software tool they are required to work with.

² IT does not have enough staff to provide services to the entire UMW community, including imaging, troubleshooting, maintaining, and installing equipment; we do not have the human resources to participate in large scale university projects to onboard new systems or change processes. We cannot try to increase the number of student athletes we

recruit, which increases our retention of students, without also increasing the support in athletics with assistant coaches, training, and other support staff for students and facilities. In recent years, the library has been required to do more with less staff, such as scanning course materials for online courses. Also, UMW continues to serve a high percentage of students with mental health and disability needs, compared to other schools in the Commonwealth.

³ Renovations and upkeep of Residence halls, and other enhancements to the on-campus living environment, will improve the perceived desirability of living on campus. We should aim to increase the number of students who *want* to stay on campus all four years.

⁴ Funding to acquire new books is also vital since some resources are only available for a short time, and libraries nationwide have been forced to suspend purchasing. The danger is that these important resources for faculty and student research will not be available in the future, even via interlibrary loans.

⁵ The University is currently out of compliance with ADA standards as it comes to accessibility of buildings on campus. Improving accessibility may aid in marketing on campus housing options for students with various disabilities and reduce frustrations for all community members having troubles accessing academic or administrative buildings, etc.

⁶ Without these supports, faculty (and especially junior faculty via research grant funds) will not have the resources needed to stay active in their field. This support is absolutely critical in terms of maintaining academic currency, for faculty to stay vibrant in and out of the classroom. This funding also has bearing on reputation and recruitment. In addition, such funding is particularly crucial in light of the modest salaries paid to faculty at UMW.

⁷ This goal allows UMW Athletics (a crucial component for Admissions / Enrollment Management and Retention) to continue to support student athletes and provide the best possible student athlete experience, without which recruitment of student athletes is negatively impacted.

⁸ A holistic look needs to be taken to the academic programs offered by UMW to attract today's students to the liberal arts education. Additionally, the demographic of the typical student is changing so the university should put focus on the adult learner and programs for that demographic to increase revenue streams to the University.

⁹ UMW has under-used residential facilities, and a great educational product. International students usually pay full tuition and can help a great deal towards enhancing university diversity while adding additional revenue.

¹⁰ The Honors Program is currently above the threshold of ten percent of admitted students as set by the National Collegiate Honors Council. To support its students, the Honors Program would benefit from additional Honors-designated course offerings, increased staffing resources, and restored funding for Honors undergraduate research.

¹¹ Fewer adjuncts mean fewer courses offered to our students, particularly in disciplines like music. Fewer course offerings make UMW less attractive to prospective students.

¹² Eventually may have the effect in being able to lower the cost of housing for students and attracting them back to campus living. Also, less reliance on housing fees would make the institution's budget more stable.

¹³ Stipends have remained stagnant since 2014 despite an increase in the cost of housing, meaning their net salaries have decreased. Could be an incentive for more individuals to live or remain on campus.

¹⁴ Consider whether there is a way for UMW to enable its units to identify areas of waste and reward them for being more efficient. For example, instead of finding a way to cut 15% in one area, we could identify ways to cut 0.5% or 1% in multiple areas. An awards program for the UMW community could be created where proposals are submitted, evaluated, and rewarded based on merit.

¹⁵ To enhance institutional oversight over an institution explicitly devoted to supporting UMW as an institution. The argument for adding faculty is that (tenure track) faculty have built in protections against potential internal political reprisals, and usually remain associated with the university longer than other institutional profiles (other than alumni). In addition, adding university personnel to the UMW Foundation board will enhance institutional cooperation between the Foundation and the University.