

University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC)
Fall 2021 Report to the University Faculty Council (UFC)

According to the Faculty Handbook (2.8.2.2), the University Budget Advisory Committee is to submit a report each year by mid-November indicating the committee's priorities for the present budgeting year through an annual review process and summarizing their priorities on future budgets to the CFO, CAO, and the UFC.

Priorities for the Present Budgeting Year (2021-2022)

In the spring of 2021, UBAC submitted its 2020-2021 Final Report to the CFO, CAO, and UFC with twenty-three recommendations, including nine that it deemed "highest priority." The full list of recommendations may be accessed at UBAC's committee minutes and reports web page. <https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2021/05/UBAC-2020-2021-Final-Report-FINAL-Final.pdf>

UBAC is pleased to report that multiple items that it recommended have received attention from the Administration in 2021-2022, either through actions already taken, or through UMW's 2022-24 State Budget Requests, which are pending approval by the Secretary of Education.

A summary of those State Budget Requests is as follows,

- a. Continue Funding for Unavoidable Cost Increases.
- b. Enhance UMW's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- c. Support Students and Employees with Disabilities.
- d. Increase Retention for Selected Student Populations.
- e. Provide Funding to Support Faculty and Staff Diversity.
- f. Develop and Implement a Life-Design Curriculum.
- g. Establish an Office of Transfer Student Services.
- h. Expand the Development and Use of Open Education Resources.
- i. Refresh Classroom and Campus Information Technology Infrastructure.
- j. Streamline Information Systems.
- k. Expand Adult Degree Completion and Continuing Education Programs.
- l. Enhance Support for the Commonwealth's Museums at UMW.

A fuller explanation of the UMW's 2022-24 State Budget Requests may be found in UBAC's minutes for 9/20/2021,

<https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2021/09/UBAC-Meeting-Minutes-2021-0920-FINAL.pdf>

Among the list of UBAC's recommendations for 2021-2022, the following have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed.

- 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.

In making this recommendation, UBAC noted that UMW needed to make its website current, relevant, and innovative, because it interfaces with the public and acts as a recruitment tool.

A web refresh project is currently under way. According to Tim O'Donnell, UMW is investing resources with MindPower to develop the website and to manage it from strategic and content-development perspectives. Jeff McClurken is managing the project, which is still in its early stages (the kickoff meeting was November 10th). The goal is that by the end of this academic year, UMW will roll out a new website that goes several levels down and focuses on those programs and offices that matter to the students we are trying to recruit. The overhaul will continue beyond 2021-22. According to Jeff McClurken, the Mindpower Project will focus on the recruiting process, so there will be other parts of the website, more focused on internal audiences, that UMW will need to get to later.

- 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

*UMW's 2022-24 State Budget Requests include (under "i. Refresh Classroom and Campus Information Technology Infrastructure") a request for "funding to support further investments in classroom technology and **personnel** to support flexible instruction and multiple modalities so that UMW is better equipped to support [distance learning for] regional economic and workforce needs."*

UBAC continues to be concerned, however, over the funding for Information Technology. According to Hall Cheshire, in 2009, IT employed 45 full-time equivalents (FTEs) and now employs 24 FTEs, which means staffing has been cut nearly in half. Because of this, there is very little redundancy in skills and knowledge among staff, and there is a risk that if certain staff members leave the University, it would be very difficult to replace them. One strategy to address reduced staff has been to move critical systems, such as Banner (Fall 2021), to the Cloud, which is also the general trend in higher education and other industries.

- Continue to improve campus residence halls to enhance the perceived desirability of living on campus, thus increasing revenue.

UMW strategically purchased the William St. and Eagle Village apartments from the UMW Foundation in June 2021 in order to manage the properties more productively. In addition, the successful renovation of Virginia Hall (reopened August 2021) was a solid step forward in improving campus housing. Further, over Winter Break 2021-22, UMW

will raze Alvey Hall, which has been closed, due to moisture and mold issues, since Summer 2018. As Paul Messplay wrote in a message to the entire campus, UMW has sufficient student housing—both currently and in terms of projected needs—without Alvey, and razing rather than renovating will not only save the cost of renovating, but will also provide additional green space, reduce some of UMW’s deferred maintenance, and reduce utility costs.

- Improve the accessibility, safety, and sustainability of campus buildings (academic, administrative, athletic venues, resident halls) and facilities (sidewalks, parking lots, etc.).

UMW’s 2022-24 State Budget Requests include (under “c. Support Students and Employees with Disabilities) a request for funding to renovate classroom buildings and staff office spaces, specifically to lend support to students and staff with disabilities.

- Restore faculty supplemental funding, including faculty development funds, travel funds, and faculty research funds through grants and sabbaticals.

Limited headway has been made for the restoration of faculty funding to pre-pandemic levels. Faculty Development Funds (previously \$500/faculty member) are currently not part of the budget. Some departments have attempted to support faculty development by using their own operating budgets, a practice that is not sustainable. While Faculty Development Supplemental Grants are being awarded, they are capped at lower levels than the previous \$2000—they are capped at \$900 for Fall 2021 and \$1800 for Spring 2022. The increase in funding for Spring 2022 was due to a general lack of applications and also the remote nature of conferences due to the pandemic. UBAC is concerned that future budgets will not restore anywhere near the previous \$2000 cap when applications once again rebound and conferences are once again in person. In addition, applications for Faculty Research Grants (previously \$4000, plus up to \$500 in project expenses) are not currently being accepted. Finally, although sabbaticals granted for 2020-21 are being honored this year and next (2021-23), sabbatical applications are similarly not being accepted at this time.

Priorities on Future Budgets

As of Fall 2021, UBAC is in the process of meeting with representatives from offices across UMW and has several meetings still forthcoming. It is still in the process of determining which of its recommendations from Spring 2021 are seeing attention from the administration, which have fallen out of usefulness, and which must be brought up again in its Spring 2022 list of recommendations. UBAC anticipates that its Spring 2022 recommendations will prioritize funding for items projected to aid in the recruitment and retention of students.