

UMW University Budget Advisory Committee

2022-2023 Final Report

This final report has been prepared for the Administration and the University Faculty Council by Laura Bylenok, Brad Hansen, Dan Hubbard, Drew Delaney, Liane Houghtalin, Alexis Rutt, Smita Jain Oxford, Arin Doerfler, Kim McManus-Carini, Ryan Snellings, Patrick Catullo, and Ellelyshia Ardo.

During the Fall 2022 semester, the University Budget Advisory Committee met with or received information from ten different stakeholders from across the campus to discuss budget structures, concerns, and priorities. These meetings included Administration and Finance, the Office of the Provost, Admissions, Information Technologies, Student Affairs, Marketing, the Office of Disability Resources, the James Farmer Multicultural Center, the Talley Center, and Campus Police. This final report represents the committee's recommendations for budget priorities that arose from this year's meetings, presentations, and discussions.

Recommendations:

1. Admissions and Marketing: Increase funding in both offices to leverage momentum of year-round marketing and to facilitate staff recruitment in Admissions.

Admissions and Marketing both serve the mission-critical function of ensuring an incoming class of appropriate size and quality each year. Adequately funding these areas should, therefore, be a high-priority item in the University's budget.

Admissions: A competitive environment for recruiting admissions counselors, coupled with cost of living and inflation, has created a need for increased salaries to recruit and, equally important, retain employees. Admissions requires recruiters to spend weeks on the road and to work weekends and evenings. High- and mid-level positions in particular are responsible for developing relationships and strategy, yet we have salaries that do not account for industry demands and cost-of-living. Multiple assistant director positions remain unfilled in December, including positions focused on transfers, diversity, and events, areas considered to be institutional priorities. Enhancement of these important positions requires increased salary funding.

Marketing: We must be in a strong position to recruit the best students in our competitive environment, and this recruitment can only occur with a robust and far-reaching marketing campaign. Enrollment profiles are changing at institutions across the country, and we are no exception. Through consultant research and anecdotal evidence, UMW has identified low name recognition among potential students. There is a need to reach students who are likely to be successful at UMW and likely to be interested in the kind of education we offer. These students exist beyond the current focus of our marketing and increased funds will allow for a broader recruiting pool.

2. Campus Police: Increase funding in order to maintain a well-equipped and professional police force.

Sadly, recent events have made it clear that university campuses are no longer the safe refuges from societal ills that they once were. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for all our constituent stakeholders, UMW must have a quality police operation, particularly given the requirement for special procedures to support students needing emergency psychological assistance:

- Add at least one full-time patrol officer to our existing police force.
- Achieve salary and benefit parity with surrounding jurisdictions in order to forestall the loss of experienced officers with their institutional knowledge.
- Increase funding to maintain and upgrade vital protective equipment for our officers, as well as improve maintenance of campus security measures, such as entrance cameras and our emergency “blue light” stations.

3. The Talley Center: Increase funding to establish a telehealth psychiatry and counseling service which would work in partnership with the Talley Center to meet the growing mental health needs of the student body.

Our campus is seeing an increase in a variety of mental health concerns following the isolation of the Covid pandemic, and we are seeing these mental health concerns at a rate higher than the national average. Clinical appointments are up 14% compared to before the pandemic, yet the Talley Center is working with fewer staff. In addition to a need for additional clinical hours to meet student demand, especially outside of traditional working hours, there is an acute need for a psychiatry clinician who could prescribe medication for students struggling with psychotropic mental health challenges. We have a number of students who are diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and/or other types of psychotic symptoms that do not respond well to counseling but are very effectively controlled by medication, yet these students cannot receive the psychotropic medications they need because no psychiatry services are offered on campus. This concern is compounded by the limited psychiatry options in the Fredericksburg area, leaving students who need psychiatry services to wait up to six months to get the care they need.

Telehealth has been shown to be very effective for counseling and psychiatry support, and it can provide the after-hours and weekend care that many students request. The Talley Center would expand their clinical offerings by contracting telehealth counseling *and* psychiatry services. The first year cost would be \$129,000, with each subsequent year costing \$94,000, which would be less than the cost of hiring one full-time counselor. This investment is critical not only to ensure student well-being, but also to support their academic progress and success, both of which suffer when students are not receiving the care they need.

4. James Farmer Multicultural Center: Reset budget base to 2017-18 level and add funding to accommodate the needs of our growing diverse populations.

In the past five budget cycles, Multicultural Affairs has seen annual reductions totaling \$26,084, a 33% decrease, in addition to existing cuts implemented from 2010 to 2017. If we are to honor diversity at our institution, we must provide the following funds, some of which are new and some of which reflect increases:

- \$15,000 to continue the Diversity Peer Educators/Farmer Fellows Program.
- \$21,465 to allow the RISE Peer Mentoring Program to raise the stipend for each peer mentor from \$300 to \$500; to increase the number of peer mentors to 30; to fund supplies, social and cultural activities, and workshops.
- \$11,700 to pay the three student workers in Multicultural Affairs the new minimum wage in Virginia.
- \$6,600 for various social justice initiatives that are currently not in the budget (the Social Justice Leadership Summit, the Human Rights Film Series, and five Social Justice Teachers).
- \$20,270 for the Cultural Awareness Series to provide dedicated funding for Women's History Month and Disability Awareness Month speakers and for increased funds for the ten Cultural Awareness Series speakers and performers.

With these allocations, Multicultural Affairs will be able to provide cultural celebrations, social justice initiatives, leadership opportunities for students, and diversity education, all of which would improve the student experience in general and support the retention of diverse students in particular.

5. Disability Resources and ADA Coordinator: Establish a dedicated budget line to support our campus community's accessibility needs.

Currently, the ADA Coordinator has no accessibility budget, and so the Office of Disability Resources continually fields requests for items beyond its responsibility, such as providing closed captioning, ASL interpreters, live captioning, training, tools, and support for events. In addition, the following is needed to foster improved accessibility:

- Funds for an accessibility map indicating accessible routes and marking barriers.
- Funds for adding digital accessibility tools to the UMW website.
- Funds for establishing accessible transportation around campus.

6. Simpson Library: Restore Simpson Library hours to their pre-Covid level.

Simpson Library is open Monday through Thursday 8am-10pm, Friday 8am-5pm, Saturday 11am-5pm, and Sunday 1pm-10pm. Funding which was already in the library budget made it possible for the library to be open until 10pm for this academic year. Pre-Covid, the library was open until midnight Sunday through Thursday. The library's current hours are not in line with those at other state universities in Virginia such as Christopher Newport University, George Mason University, James Madison University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and the College of William and Mary.

Having shorter hours makes it difficult for students to access items on reserve and conduct proper research for their papers and projects. While the Hurley Convergence Center provides 24/7 study and collaboration spaces, it does not provide quiet areas. Simpson Library facilitates research, provides unique resources, and offers quiet spaces to help students focus and study.

7. Office of the Provost: Restore funding for faculty summer research and pedagogy grants and make permanent restorations of pre-Covid faculty funding and undergraduate research funding.

Funds for research and faculty development have been partly restored to pre-Covid levels but this restoration has not been made permanent. Because of inflation, even full restoration of funding to pre-Covid levels provides less support than in the past. When combined with this decrease in purchasing power, cuts in funding result in a significant shift in the financial burden of professional development onto individual faculty members. This burden is particularly onerous for newer faculty, who typically have lower salaries and are under greater pressure to engage in professional activity while building a case for promotion and tenure.

Inadequate support for professional development impairs the ability of faculty members to stay current in their fields, to generate work that brings positive attention to the University, and to recruit and retain outstanding and diverse new faculty members. These consequences ultimately undermine the foundation of outstanding education that is necessary to recruit and retain outstanding students.

8. Student Affairs: Increase R.A. stipends.

Resident Assistant stipends have remained stagnant since 2014, despite increases in inflation and the cost of housing, meaning the net salaries of R.A.s have effectively decreased. R.A. duties have also increased in recent years, yet the stipends have not reflected these additional duties.

A healthy stipend is necessary to attract more and better R.A. candidates. A high-quality residential experience is important to the recruitment and retention of students, and R.A.s are a significant component of residential life.

9. Staff Salaries: Conduct a salary review and implement appropriate salary adjustments across all staff positions.

Recruitment and retention have been a focus of the committee in recent years, and those efforts must extend to the staff that support all areas of the University. Multiple areas, including Admissions, Campus Police, Disability Resources, and Information Technologies, have reported challenges in recruiting and retaining staff due to deficient salaries.

Without offering competitive salaries, UMW will be unable to recruit or retain the staff necessary to ensure the long-term health of the institution and fulfillment of its mission.