December 19, 2008

University Planning Council

Minutes for December 19, 2008

Present: Melissa Acker, Gwen Ashburn, Buffy Bagwell, Becky Doyle, Jane Fernandes, Bill Haas, Archer Gravely, Bill Haggard, Jeff Konz, Jim Kuhlman, Amy Lanou, Keya Maitra, Bill Massey, Linda Nelms, Adrienne Oliver, Dan Pierce John Pierce, Anne Ponder, Christine Riley, Barbara Svenson, Betsy Wilson

Absent: Amanda Alvarez, Nick Ladd

Guests: Lisa Friedenberg, Pat Catterfeld, Bill Spellman, Gregg Kormanik, Bruce Larson, Pat McClellan, Patrice Mitchell, Judy Leffe, Lothar Dohse

UPC convened a special meeting to discuss the state budget crisis on December 19 at 8:00 am in the Ramsey Library Whitman Room. Chancellor Ponder noted that our strategic plan provides a reference point on what’s most important. Mr. Pierce, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Campus Operations, reported that on December 10th, we received a directive from UNC-GA to submit a plan for further budget cuts by mid to late February. Governor Easley then issued a requirement for all State agencies to submit a plan for 3%, 5%, an 7% cuts by January 14th. In response to this change, UNC-GA then asked that we submit these plans for them to review by January 5th, so that they can prepare a consolidated report to the Board of Governors on January 8 & 9. The planned budget cuts will require details by purpose code. Mr. Pierce stated that if we will use our “ears” rather than “scissors” or a “chainsaw,” that we can manage the situation and come out stronger for it. Additionally, he indicated that it was important to get the best ideas and thinking on campus and invited email suggestions (jpierce@unca.edu).

Chancellor Ponder reported that several campus groups (CSAC, Faculty leadership, Deans, Senior Staff, Provost’s Cabinet, Academic Department Chairs, etc.) have been or will be briefed on the current budget situation. She noted that President Bowles has asked for examples of how much the cuts will hurt each campus. After the plan is submitted, we will likely have some flexibility in implementation.

Ms. Doyle reported that staff members at CSAC have suggested reduced work hours and pay and furloughs as cost saving measures. In response, Mr. Pierce stated that at this point, furloughs may be problematic from the State’s perspective. He indicated that, in addition to the advice gathered on campus, we will use ideas from Senior Staff and the UNC PACE Study of Administrative Efficiency conducted in 2006. The problem with across-the-board cuts is that some departments are unequally staffed and resourced according to the PACE benchmarks. Dr. Larson raised three questions for us to consider as we review suggestions: (1) does this change support the strategic plan; (2) will the cuts be consistent with our values; and (3) are we willing for this change to be permanent? To illustrate some potential cuts, Chancellor Ponder suggested that we will eliminate a vacant position for Community Relations (formerly held by Jesse Ray) in the Chancellor’s Office, even though it is directly related to a goal in the strategic plan. We will also look to reduce or eliminate temporary positions where feasible. She also noted that we spend $1.6M on travel each year. Mr. Kuhlman reported that we can save 20-30% on printing costs through investing in network printing and print management software without changing printing habits.
Additionally, he suggested that we can look at ways of integrating digitized course materials into Moodle. Dr. Friedenberg stated that given the nature of faculty academic specialization, too narrow a focus on vacant positions could create problems in our ability to deliver the curriculum. Several individuals will be working over the break to quantify the suggestions made by various individuals and groups, so that a plan can be ready by early January.