January 21, 2011

University Planning Council

Minutes for January 21, 2011


Absent: Vic Foster, Courtney Galatioto, Chris Miller, Gary Nallan, Dave Peifer, John Pierce

Guests: Rachel Whaley, Rob Nelson, Senior Advisor for Higher Education Policy and Finance, Fuquay Solutions, Former VP Finance, UNC General Administration

UPC met on January 21 from 8:55 to 9:55 in HU 221.

1. Ms. Nelms convened UPC’s first meeting of the Spring semester and announced that all meetings would be on Fridays starting at 8:55. In her opening remarks, Chancellor Ponder noted that there are a number of empty chairs at UNC General Administration during this transition period, and Ms. Riley is working with Jeff Davies, Chief of Staff, to clarify communications with our campus and ensure continuity. At the December Board of Trustees meeting, the major action was to pass the Tuition and Fee proposal. This proposal provided a 6.5% campus based tuition increase. The fee component was below the 6.5% maximum and in the middle of the range for all UNC schools. Chancellor Ponder reported that there is a strong need for these increases as our state allocations have declined sharply and UNC Asheville remains the least expensive option in our peer group. The new NC state legislative leadership has stated that tuition increases should remain on the campuses, as opposed to reverting to the state as suggested earlier, but these increases will not close the budget gap. Chancellor Ponder requested UPC’s advice on how to help our campus understand the seriousness of the budget crisis while maintaining focus on student success and optimism about our future. The budget problems we previously thought would occur next year are now with us this year as the Governor is pulling resources from agencies to address the current shortfall. Chancellor Ponder expressed hope that we wouldn’t have a 15% cut that we’ve been asked to plan for, but reminded us that President Bowles said last semester that even 10% would be devastating. In response to UPC questions, Chancellor Ponder reported that decisions about how to manage the budget cuts will be made at the Provost/Vice Chancellor level. She also reported that pay cuts have not been discussed at the UNC system level, but it was being discussed at the state level. At least one UNC Chancellor has stated that he would rather have fewer people than underpay everyone. Chancellor Ponder stated that we would continue to manage vacancies carefully. We would only fill highest priority positions, such as those in academic support, development and public safety. UPC members asked a number of questions and made budget suggestions.

2. Mr. Nelson gave a presentation on the Campus Master Planning Process. The purpose of the plan is to make sure our facilities match our vision for the future and help us reach our strategic plan goals. The planning process will take 18-24 months of work by campus constituents, landscape architects and planners. At this point, we have identified a campus working group and steering committee. The working group will identify all possible alternatives and the steering committee will serve as a governing
committee. These two groups will have a joint meeting next Tuesday. Mr. Nelson noted that there will be a focus on the use of space and that our utilization is quite good compared to the UNC system average. The planning process will include a review of national space standards and the development of UNC Asheville standards. The master planning process will address the following elements: academics, housing, recreation, parking, aesthetics and architectural character of campus, safety, information technology to include wireless networking and on-line learning, and the financial feasibility of the facilities plan.

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