This document is in response to the November 17 Rules Committee (RC) memo entitled, “Consultations on Planning and Budget.” The charge for the Program & Budget Council (P&BC) was to gather member input to produce a report for the Faculty Senate. The due date for the final report is February 2, 2015. The Rules Committee ends their memo with the following statement:

Having witnessed the benefits of wide consultation in the current Strategic Planning process, and having in mind not only the possible enhancement of college/school centrality in the campus’s method of resource allocation but the desire for greater transparency about financial resources and their allocation under whatever resource allocation method is adopted, there seems to be a need for more intentional consideration of the adequacy and effectiveness of planning and budget consultations at the college/school level. To engage that process, the Rules Committee is distributing this information to the Academic Priorities Council and the Program and Budget Council with a request that they use it for further discussion of structuring ongoing and perhaps permanent planning and budget discussions in the colleges and schools.

Recommendation

The Program & Budget Council (P&BC) supports the creation of college level College Program & Budget Advisory Councils (CPBAC).

This recommendation arises from the sense of P&BC members that college-level councils would support a campus-wide culture of openness with two clear accompanying benefits: 1) broader input leading to better decisions by respective college deans and administrative staff, and 2) broader participation for greater buy-in by faculty of strategic and other initiatives.

In essence, the creation of CPBAC will enhance collaboration between two important constituencies on campus, administration and the faculty, for better overall engagement and decision-making culture.

Qualifications

Members of the P&BC are cognizant of counterarguments for the above recommendation (See Appendix A). In particular, Council members acknowledge that it is difficult to anticipate unintended consequences, such as possible impediments to fluid decision making and interdepartmental conflict over allocation of resources or budgetary priorities.

Such possible adverse consequences, even though on balance outweighed by the positives of better decisions/greater buy-in, remain a concern. In light of such concerns, the Council is of the opinion that college level structures comprise both faculty and administrative staff, and that these structures be monitored for periodic evaluation/modification by the Program and Budget Council. This issue of joint membership is particularly important given the need to obviate possible us versus them divisions.

Moreover, given the diversity of cultures, traditions, and size of the various colleges, the Council refrains from prescribing uniform structures across campus. Instead, acknowledging the complexities inherent in
this endeavor, the P&BC recommends four (4) general principles to guide the development and structuring of College Planning and Budget Advisory Councils (CPBAC).

1. Faculty should have regular access to meaningful and timely information (including estimates) about budget development and budgetary expenditures.
2. Faculty should have the opportunity—direct or indirect—to provide timely advice and input to the college budget development process, and to receive appropriate information regarding expenditures.
3. The campus should develop useful, consistent, and timely budgetary information to support this process at the school and department levels. Colleges may also develop supplemental information as appropriate.
4. Formal mechanisms to provide for the above should be developed in each college, reflecting the different cultures and traditions. These mechanisms should be integrated into the overall campus budget development process, and they should reflect the principle of shared governance and collaboration among faculty, department heads, and deans.

Discussion

The contents of this report were developed based on a Budget Subcommittee meeting on December 3, 2014, followed by a meeting of the full Program & Budget Council on December 17, 2014. The first meeting clarified the issues in an interim document, which was then reviewed by the full Council and became the basis for the discussion in the second meeting. The current document incorporates sentiments expressed and member comments from both meetings.

Budget Subcommittee Meeting

Member comments in the Subcommittee meeting on December 3, 2014 could be summarized around two broad questions:

1. Need Assessment: Should the advisory/consultative role of faculty in the college budgeting process be encouraged through formal structures within each college?
2. Structuring: What principles should undergird such a structure?

Below is a brief review of the discussion around the two questions:

1. Need Assessment

Those present were generally in agreement that broader participation of faculty in the budgeting process is important. This is especially so because of the anticipated move on campus toward some version of the RCM budgeting model which, as stated in the RC memo, would enhance the “college/school centrality in the campus’s method of resource allocation.”

Several of those present noted that faculty were unaware of their college budgets in large part because such information is not published by the colleges. As such, even in the current budgeting model on campus, faculty could be better informed about the resource allocation processes and decisions in their respective colleges. That is, college level faculty participation would help improve transparency of the budgeting process.

Even though some colleges do engage faculty through formal and informal consultation, the variance across the colleges suggests a need for institutionalization—via formal structure—to make such
consultations “intentional” and a uniform expectation across campus. Such expressed intention would likely energize the faculty, improve engagement, and enhance buy-in on resource allocation decisions.

It was noted that, per the Wellman document as invoked by the RC, faculty have primary responsibility in academic affairs and advisory/consultative role in other matters such as the budget. As such, those present emphasized that faculty participation must not interfere with the administrative responsibilities of the Dean and that faculty when so engaged would play primarily a consultative role.

Moreover, because of the possible conflict or perception of conflict between the responsibilities of the Deans and the desire of the faculty to engage in an advisory capacity, the words “Advisory” or “Consultation” ought to be clear and perhaps be included in the title (e.g., Budget Advisory Council).

Another concern raised at the meeting pertained to the willingness of faculty to step up to formally engage the budgeting process in their college. Budgeting is a complex task and digging into the specifics requires a good deal of sustained commitment. As such, one question posed during the discussions was: Why would an individual faculty member be involved in college level budget council? Indeed, several members agreed that the process will be unsuccessful in its goal of greater transparency if high level of faculty engagement were not forthcoming.

There was also a sentiment that the presence of such a council may strain relations with the deans. One of the concerns expressed was that once the college level council is institutionalized, faculty may reach beyond the advisory/consultative role and expect a decision making role in resource allocation choices.

Clearly, the subcommittee members would like the proposed councils to be helpful and a positive addition to governing structures on campus. Continuing to maintain good relations between the faculty and the administration remains an important consideration whatever the final outcome of current deliberations. As subcommittee members pointed out, that such relations are important is already visible in the ongoing work of JTFSO and JTFRA, which comprise both faculty and administration; the idea of the college level faculty advisory councils would be to continue such dialogue and collaboration in colleges.

2. Structuring College-Level Councils

Several points were raised with respect to the structure of the potential college level councils, were they to be implemented. For one, members acknowledged that colleges vary tremendously in size (e.g., CNS versus Nursing), and they have different engagement cultures/administrative structures. As such, one size does not fit all and colleges will need flexibility in how they structure/organize the councils.

The discussion of structuring the college councils raised more questions than answers and below are some of the salient issues that came up in the meeting.

Members raised the issue that, in spite of differences among colleges, some threshold of information must be disclosed in the spirit of transparency. Perhaps a template needs to be developed to outline the bare-minimum requisite information and then colleges may choose information disclosure beyond the template shared by all. What the minimum threshold ought to be and what the template might look like was not discussed in particular depth.

Members pointed out that the larger context of the budgeting process is still evolving, as the work of JFTRA is not quite done. Hence, it is not clear how and when the proposed college councils would be staged. That is, it is not yet clear how the larger context ought to influence the design and implementation of college councils.
Another issue raised was that budget discussions need to connect with planning, as the two are joined at the hip. Hence the question: should the proposed councils be limited to budget only or should they include strategic planning aspects as well? Perhaps the title of such a council should have “advisory” in it, e.g., College Planning and Budget Advisory Council. What, in other words, will be the scope of these councils? What are the thresholds and limits to faculty engagement in planning and budget where administration has primary responsibilities?

The discussion also touched upon membership of college councils and raised questions such as: Who will be on such a council? How will members be selected? Will these be elected or appointed positions? For what duration? Should the membership be limited to faculty or should they include staff and administration?

Finally, subcommittee members raised the issue of overall campus-wide structure. Will the various college councils across campus coordinate? Would it be necessary to have an umbrella structure comprising representatives from the different college councils?

Program & Budget Council Meeting

Member comments in the full Council meeting on December 17, 2014 could be summarized around two broad considerations:

1. Complexity of engaging faculty alongside existing administrative structures, and
2. Collaboration necessary for shared governance.

Below is a brief review of the discussion around the two questions:

1. Complexity

Council members were sensitive to the complexity inherent in the proposal to establish a new college level structure for faculty engagement. As was the case during the Budget Subcommittee meeting, members recognized the great diversity across colleges on campus. There are great differences among colleges and in faculty involvement or desire for involvement in what are primarily the responsibilities of the administration. Also important to recognize was that organizing and disseminating budgetary information to faculty could be intensive and divert resources away from other productive endeavors in the colleges. This issue of additional staff time and effort must be monitored and revisited if the councils as proposed were to be operationalized.

Moreover, because some colleges such as Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) already actively engage faculty in budget and governance related issues, there was a sense that recommendations of the Council should acknowledge the tremendous effort underway in some colleges as they strive to engage faculty and other constituents with openness in their planning and budgeting processes.

Even so, Council members expressed the need for transparency and engagement to be part of the culture across campus and in all colleges: Faculty engagement varies greatly across colleges and such variation needs to be diminished. There was also a sense that faculty ought to be involved ex ante in the budgeting process and not just be informed ex post after priority/allocation decisions have already been made.

In this respect, perhaps the best practices in some colleges need to be diffused across campus without, of course, imposing a uniform structure that ignores the specifics of each college. That is, the Council had a clear sense for a need to have a common set of expectations but to not be prescriptive in the
recommendations. It was in this context that the discussion moved to general principles as outlined in the recommendations in a section above.

2. Collaboration

While some peer universities with strong tradition of faculty engagement have fairly prescriptive system for faculty engagement in governance functions, Council members were openly wary of being overly prescriptive. Instead, a strong theme in the discussion was the need for collaboration and, placing emphasis on shared governance, on the importance of recognizing that the deans and the administration have primary responsibilities and prerogatives in budget-related matters. The faculty, of course, ought to have a say in these matters because budgets directly impact academic matters. Hence, the need for broad engagement and intentional collaboration between faculty and the administration at college level.

With collaboration as a key principle guiding the discussion, the Council discussed ways in which such could be accomplished. This again brought the discussion to openness and transparency as a cultural expectation that the college level budget advisory councils sought to accomplish.

In discussing the formal mechanisms to operationalize the college level Councils, therefore, strong emphasis was placed on membership that comprised both faculty and administrative staff. The specifics of such mechanisms are best left to be developed by each college to reflect local priorities, traditions, and cultures. But the principle at play here is that of shared governance and collaboration among faculty, department heads, and deans.

In Closing

Given the complexity of the issues and especially as far as operating role of the proposed College Planning and Budget Advisory Councils (CPBAC) are concerned, members were uniformly in agreement that these ought to be advisory and consultative in nature, and that fact should be amply clear. The intent of such councils ought not be to intervene in the important work that the Deans do or impinge on their administrative prerogatives and responsibilities; the specific intent of the councils is to serve as a two-way conduit between the Dean and college faculty, with the express purpose of engaging conversations that, over time, strengthen the relations and facilitate collaborative governance.

Moreover, there was a general but clear sense that the Faculty Senate should clarify the principles of faculty engagement and leave the operating structure details to each college to sort out in line with their existing structures, priorities, traditions, and faculty culture.
APPENDIX A
COLLEGE PLANNING & BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCILS
(CPBAC)

Intent: Transparency of the Budgeting/Resource Allocation processes; Broader participation through faculty input and shared governance.

Catalyst: Ongoing joint works (JTFSO/JTFRA) re: new budget model may decentralize resources allocation decisions to colleges.

Dilemma: On one hand, more people know the better. On the other, can lead to a shadow government.

MOTIVATIONS FOR CBAC
1. Shared Governance: The intent is to engage faculty in shared governance, to get more people involved and participating as good citizens. This is a model of shared governance is already articulated in Graduate Council and Commonwealth Honors College Council.
2. Mechanisms Not Adequate: The existing mechanisms for faculty input complement the existing administrative structures. Admin committee meetings are essentially staff meetings; this will be a second body more broadly representative of faculty, staff, and students.
3. Minimum Threshold Information: Colleges do not publish the budget information so many/most faculty uninformed. Indeed, one size does not fit all, but need a minimum threshold of information made available, while acknowledging that there needs to be flexibility in structure. The intent is not to stipulate uniform structure; by laws in each college.
4. Peer Universities: Many universities already have structures like this or similar, where faculty are formally engaged as partners with the administration.

Motivations Summary: The structure is not quite there in terms of faculty engagement in the budget at the college level, especially given the evolving/imminently new budget model for the campus. Many other peer universities already do this idea in its various manifestations.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS
1. Structures Exist: Challenge is that CBC bypasses the normal infrastructure of department chairs, who work very closely with the dean and interface with faculty; the proposal suggests unit sits outside that structure.
2. Ongoing Engagement: Some colleges already have Town Meetings and other ways of engaging faculty. Besides, there are logistical issues in large colleges such as HFA that has 14 departments. So, the mechanism is already in place and so is transparency. Some colleges also have strategic planning and resource committee that comprises admin, faculty, and staff. One college has a separate Executive Committee of Faculty that engages in strategic planning and budget. It’s a mix, and we’re all in this together.
3. **Feels Forced**: CBC feels prescriptive. Should the Faculty Senate be telling the Admin what to do, that this is the form, and imposing a structure on the colleges? Something like this should be organic from within colleges.

4. **Implementation Issues**: A key problem for some colleges is that not enough faculty are engaged in the process as it exists. So, challenge always seems to be to engage more people—faculty, staff, and students—in the affairs of the college. The proposed CBC will not necessarily solve that; may encounter staffing challenges.

5. **Onerous Structure**: A new structure of faculty participation in the budgeting process will bog down decision making and hinder fluid allocation of resources. Too many cooks in the kitchen. In this way and others, such a structure may also be resource intensive and consume staff time for developing and disseminating budgetary information to faculty.

**Counter Arguments Summary**: Additional demands on the Deans. Structure for engagement is already there; department chairs are conduits between faculty and the deans. Interested faculty can participate if they want. Another structure will slow down decision making. Strategic planning and budget are conjoint, so it can’t just be the budget.