

UF Budget Council 2011-12 Annual Report

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The Budget Council convened on:

2011: September 9, October 7, November 18, and December 2

2012: January 13, February 10, March 9, and April 13

Senate Chair Scott Nygren charged the Council to:

1. Assess the impact of the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget model on interdisciplinary activities (as recommended in the “University of Florida Budget Council April 25, 2011 Report on Responsibility Center Management” document)
2. Assess the impacts of benefit restructuring (elimination of sick leave ‘cash out’ and capping of annual leave) to address the legislature-enacted 3% reduction in State contribution to retirement

Council members structured their deliberations to address three issues:

1. RCM impact on Teaching
2. RCM impact on Research
3. Review the financial implications of benefit restructuring (short and longer term costs), monitor Senate blog section related to this area. Matt Fajack and Jim Ferrer provided information on the blog site to clarify issues raised in the postings.

Council members agreed that most interdisciplinary externally-funded research initiatives are addressed adequately when developing budgets (i.e., not dependent of State funds). Interdisciplinary teaching, on the other hand, is affected by the RCM model. We met with senior administrators from units with major interdisciplinary teaching commitments (Doug Jones, Director, Florida Museum of Natural History; Steve Humphreys, Director, School of Natural Resources and Environment; Paul D’Anieri, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences; and Mark Rieger, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) to elucidate their concerns.

Summary of those discussions: (1) management strategies under RCM include the need to develop new revenue streams (e.g., increase summer teaching) and decrease

the cost of delivering coursework (increase on-line courses), (2) understand that both revenue stream amounts and costs vary for undergraduate versus graduate students (different SCH weightings for undergraduate and graduate courses and need for graduate stipends for teaching and research assistantships), (3) no mechanism available to provide credit for 'museum teaching', and (4) problems with the 70:30 'sharing model' for SCH for interdisciplinary teaching. It was noted that many AAU institutions waive tuition and fund stipends for graduate students.

Council members expressed concern that: (1) there needs to be a clearer understanding of appropriate levels of 'credit' for interdisciplinary participation in teaching and (2) there needs to be stable and predictable levels of funding for graduate student stipends. Council members expressed the belief that the Provost's committee on graduate education will likely address the latter point.

We sought input from the sixteen college deans about RCM impacts on college-level management in a brief questionnaire e-mailed on February 1, 2012 that included the following questions:

1. Has RCM affected current or planned interdisciplinary teaching or research programs in your college? Please provide examples and, if possible, provide suggestions how RCM modifications would better support these activities.
2. Has RCM affected administrative decision-making in your college, including, but not limited to, staffing, hiring, and space allocation and assignment?
3. Has RCM increased transparency at the university level? At the college level?

The summary of those responses from the 14/16 respondents ("SYNOPSIS OF RESPONSES TO UF SENATE BUDGET COUNCIL SURVEY OF COLLEGE DEANS REGARDING RCM IMPACTS, FEBRUARY, 2012 (April 23, 2012)") was posted on the Senate web site.

Brian Harfe was unanimously elected Budget Council Chair for 2012-13.