Faculty Senate Resource and Policy Allocation Council

RPA Agenda: Nov. 2, 2006  8:00AM LOM

(1) BMRIC Report.

The report from BMRIC has been submitted to President Geoffroy. He now will decide whether to send it back to BMRIC for more work, reject it, or sent it on to the university community for discussion as to whether it should be adopted. I believe this latter is what will happen, and may happen before our meeting. Assuming this is the case we will need to make a recommendation to the Senate. A copy of this report is attached. As of now (Tuesday Oct. 31) when I am sending this agenda out, this is only a BMRIC report and it has not been approved for release to the university community. I received specific approval to share it with RPA so as to not delay the Senate review, but would ask RPA members to keep it confidential until President Geoffroy decides what to do.

I think that there are a series of questions we need to ask:

1. The recommendations of the report. Do we agree with them? Do we have suggestions for changes?

2. Is this worth it? The report makes clear that implementing this budget philosophy will have significant costs. The advisory committees recommended in the report have 115 positions to be filled. As well additional committees / staff will be needed in each college and the Senate will have to increase its activities in certain areas. Will the savings from this model will exceed the costs? If not, how much are we willing to pay for the benefits this model brings?

3. What else needs to be done to protect academic quality? The BMRIC report and the committees it proposes mostly deal with the administrative units’ budgets. Other review activities will be needed that only the Senate can do. For example: curricular control. How can we set up rules to prevent colleges from manipulating the curriculum purely for profit, or to “poach” students from another college? How can we prevent colleges from sacrificing quality for short term budget gain (decreasing tenure track faculty and hiring lecturers). Other examples could be made.

I think that we need to establish that RPA will review the academic budget (the budgets of the colleges) as part of our role to advise the Provost. We will also continue to be involved in academic planning and policy formation.

4. Other points? I invite the RPA members to examine the report and come up with other points. Now is the time for us to speak!

(2) Update on the Business and Finance committee.

We are currently staffing this committee and are planning on our first meeting in 2 – 3 weeks.