FINANCIAL PLANNING TASK FORCE
February 25, 1997
3:00 p.m.


Absent: Williams.

Dr. Reneau expressed appreciation to each of the members for serving on this Task Force. He indicated that Dr. Roger Williams was at Clemson University presenting a paper and could not attend the meeting.

Dr. Reneau summarized the Strategic Planning process and discussed the eight Key Strategic Directions identified by the Strategic Planning Task Force and adopted by the University.

To familiarize each member with the current budgeting process at the University, each Vice President presented a brief summary of the budgeting process in his respective area (see attached). Each Vice President prioritizes budget requests before submitting to the President. The President then works closely with the Vice Presidents and the budget officer to ascertain how much, if any, monies are available for additional items since most of the budget is rollover. If special allocations are provided by the State for specific items such as equipment, salary increases, etc. directions and allocations are determined and provided to the Vice Presidents. After a priority listing for the entire University is finalized, taking into account the mission of the University, emergency situations, etc., the budget is finalized and submitted to the University of Louisiana Board of Trustees for approval. Budget hearings are scheduled where the budgets for each System institution is approved, disapproved, questioned, changed, etc. The budgets then go the Board of Regents for the same process. Following Regents approval, there is a review process by the Division of Administration and the Joint Legislative Committee on Budgets.

In addition to the operating budgets, the University also prepares a Capital Outlay Budget for construction and renovation. We develop a five-year plan which is usually due to the University of Louisiana Board of Trustees in August. Following Trustee consideration and approval, the budget is submitted to the Board of Regents. Following Board of Regent approval, there is a review process by the Division of Administration and the Joint Legislative Committee on Capital Outlay.

Dr. Reneau indicated that the Strategic Plan was completed in the Fall of 1996; however, a draft copy was used by university administrators in planning for the 1996-97 school year.
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Although the accomplishments of numerous objectives has been documented, the priorities for the development of the 1996-97 budget were the following Key Strategic Directions:

- Recruiting, Retention, Graduation Rates
- Technology
- Research

Dr. Reneau requested a consensus from the committee regarding focus areas for 1997-98. He felt these three areas should continue to be priority items but welcomed differing opinions from the group. Comments were as follows:

Dr. Deutsch stated that the University could be more entrepreneurial with additional generated dollars through research. Research will generate money to accomplish and implement the goals of the Strategic Plan; therefore, he felt the top priority should be research.

Dr. Hall indicated that he felt recruiting, retention, and graduation rates should be given top priority since this affects all areas of the University and is what we’re all about. He also stressed the importance of keeping quality employees and maintaining our facilities.

Dr. Reagan felt that these three items should continue as the three most important. Recruiting, retention, and graduation rates are most important. The importance of technology is nationwide. People are changing as well as modes of operation. Our students must be technology literate in the workplace.

Dr. Hilgenkamp felt that these three items were the most crucial. She noted the importance of student recruitment and tuition income. Technology should be structured to provide equal access to all students. The availability of technology is also important to student retention rates. Research is important; however, without technology, research can be hampered.

Mr. Byrnsid stated that technology is extremely important and would touch every segment of the University. He also noted that technology is very expensive, and if grants could assist, the more the better.

Mr. Edmiston felt that recruiting and retention were our lifeblood, our focus. But without technology and research, it is difficult to attract students. Therefore, the three deserve our priority.

Dr. Rea felt that all three were important and should be continued as priorities. He indicated that technology is crucial with the State infrastructure putting a great deal of money into the school systems resulting in students being more technology literate upon high school graduation. These students will be seeking colleges and universities with technology capabilities.
Therefore, without focusing on technology, we cannot succeed with recruiting and retention at a selective admissions university.

Dr. Deutsch indicated that we have funding opportunities for technology available such as LEQSF and should diligently pursue these opportunities. He also indicated that our greatest leverage is at the graduate recruiting level since a much higher funding rate is applicable to graduate students from the weighted SCH allocation assigned by the State. We must take control of what we can. Research is important and can provide more operating money to buy equipment, etc.

Dr. Reneau summarized the statements in that the general consensus was to continue with these same three directives as priorities in 1997-98. The committee concurred.

The first part of the described task for this Task Force is the review of the financial planning processes at similar institutions. This data must be gathered prior to completion of the second part - the development of a plan which synthesizes strengths from those plans assessed. In May 1996, the Formula Review Steering Committee of the Board of Regents endorsed a procedure of considering the use of "benchmark institutions" as a way to determine the relative funding requirements of the state's universities. A selection process and criteria to be followed by the management boards in identifying benchmark institutions was developed and disseminated. After several revisions, a set of 10 "benchmark institutions" was determined for Tech. Dr. Reneau suggested that these ten institutions be utilized for data gathering. Assignments were made as follows:

- University of Mississippi - Dr. Reneau
- Western Kentucky University - Dr. Reneau
- Florida International University - Dr. Deutsch
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County Campus - Dr. Williams
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte - Mr. Edmiston
- University of Arkansas at Little Rock - Dr. Reagan
- University of South Alabama - Dr. Hilgenkamp
- Old Dominion University - Mr. Byrnside
- Tennessee Technological University - Dr. Rea
- University of Texas at Arlington - Dr. Hall

The next meeting was scheduled for 2:00 pm., Tuesday, March 18, 1997, in the President's Conference Room. At that time, data gathered will be shared.

Meeting adjourned, 3:50 p.m.