FINANCIAL PLANNING TASK FORCE
April 8, 1998
2:00 p.m.

Present: Reneau, Rea, Drewett, Thomas, Hall, Reagan, Edmiston, Elmore.
Absent: McConathy, Hilgenkamp.

President Reneau brought the meeting to order.

He also welcomed Dr. Bill Elmore, the newest member of the Task Force (replacing Dr. Roger Williams) who recently resigned to accept other employment. Dr. Elmore was among those originally recommended by the University Senate for membership on this committee.

President Reneau reminded Task Force members that he plans to continue to use this group as the budget planning advisory committee that was included in the Budgeting/Financial Planning Process which received final approval in December 1997. All full-time faculty and staff and the University Senate were given opportunity for review, evaluation, and suggestions during the development process. According to the approved plan, this group is to meet to review the Strategic Plan and other relevant information to determine appropriate action priorities for next budget year and to make recommendations to APC. SACS guidelines require the University to have a functioning planning and evaluation process which identifies and integrates projected educational, physical and financial development, and incorporates procedures for program review and institutional improvement. They also require each institution to have a clearly defined purpose or mission statement to serve as a foundation for all institutional operations, programs and activities. A copy of the latest mission statement approved by the Board of Trustees was distributed with the agenda for utilization at this meeting.

Several items were discussed that must take priority in budgeting. They were fixed costs such as utilities, insurance, phone, unfunded mandates (i.e. classified pay raises, national guard tuition waivers), accreditation, and library costs. The Task Force felt that our students and our faculty and staff are our most important assets. For that reason, they felt that promotions and raises, whenever possible, should be added to the priority list for funding. President Reneau indicated that fixed costs will often utilize most of the excess money in a budget year.

President Reneau reminded the task Force that the priorities they set for development of the 1997-98 budget were the following Key Strategic Directions from the 1997-2001 Strategic Plan:

- Recruiting, Retention, Graduation Rates
- Technology
- Research

President Reneau indicated that Dr. Hilgenkamp was away from campus presenting a paper and Dr. McConathy was in Atlanta attending a conference on “Outcomes Assessment in Higher Education
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Linked with Strategic Planning and Budgeting.” He distributed copies of their comments, suggestions, and insights regarding today’s agenda. In regard to Dr. Hilgenkamp’s suggestion regarding research data analysis assistance, it was noted that this assistance is already available in the Math Department. Vice President Rea indicated that his office would distribute a reminder of these services.

President Reneau asked if each Task Force member had read the progress reports on each Key Strategic Direction, and if there were any comments or questions. Discussion ensued. Mr. Thomas indicated that a matrix showing dollars tied to each KSD and if the expenditure was recurring or not would be helpful. President Reneau indicated that similar information was attached.

Discussion ensued regarding faculty/staff development, KSD #2. President Reneau discussed Dr. McConathy’s alternate suggestion that the structure of the professional development program be folded into the job description for the Director of Continuing Education. Professional development falls under the rubric of continuing education, and the expertise that the successful candidate will bring to the position will enhance the quality and scope of professional development activities for on- and off-campus clients. She further proposed that the $70,000 requested for salaries be applied to the Director of Continuing Education’s salary and to clerical and student worker support for the position. The $48,000 (non-recurring) would be applied to furniture/equipment for professional development and continuing education activities. The Task Force endorsed the concept of including professional development under Continuing Education.

Dean Reagan emphasized that faculty/staff training is an important aspect of our operations as is evidenced by wording in our mission statement. Therefore, she felt that a Faculty Development Center is of great importance; however, she did not feel strongly where it would be housed.

Vice President Hall said that centralization and coordination of technology and technology information was of the utmost importance.

Assistant Vice President Thomas indicated that the State is not funding the Year 2000 problem and we have many systems operating at Tech that are not compatible with SCT products being purchased.

Dean Reagan asked if Assistant Vice President Drewett and Vice President Rea could issue information regarding the specific services of Technical Services and the Computing Center.

At this time, the Task Force voted unanimously to recommend that Technology be one of the budgeting priorities for 1998-99 as it is a major focus of our mission statement.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of recruiting, retention and graduation rates. President Reneau reported that applications for admissions and dorm applications are up over this time last
year. The Task Force felt that this KSD is one of the major components of our mission statement and should definitely be a priority.

Discussion ensued regarding research. The Task Force felt that research is also a viable part of our mission and should, therefore, be continued as a budgeting priority.

Assistant Vice President Thomas commented that the research area encompasses two separate needs. The first need to be addressed should be to get faculty the mechanical support needed on grants that are now funded. Assistance in proposal writing would be the next step.

Assistant Vice President Thomas noted the need for faculty/staff development will have an impact on all three areas already mentioned. It will lead to the betterment of delivery of services to our students.

Assistant Vice President Thomas said he felt there were two separate areas of need in faculty and staff development. One need is orienting our employees. We need to provide information training in such areas as violence in the workplace, sexual harassment, retirement options, etc. We do some of this training on an intermittent basis now; however, a more structured approach would be advantageous.

President Reneau indicated that faculty/staff training (particularly in the area of registration and advising) is included in the price for the SCT products we are purchasing over a three-year period.

President Reneau discussed the list of expenditures (see attached) for each Key Strategic Direction during this year. He indicated that these expenditures came from three different sources: operating budget, private funds, and Student Technology Fee. Also, the items listed were in addition to regularly budgeted operating funds. He also indicated which items were recurring. Expenditures for the three KSD’s given priority for funding in 1997-98 were:

- Recruiting, retention, graduate rates - $355,558
- Integrating Advanced Technology - $1,369,045
- Infrastructure to Encourage and Support Research Efforts - $273,744

He indicated that equipment maintenance is one area we will need to address soon. All of the new equipment purchased this year had short-term maintenance coverage.

A Hall/Edmiston motion/second to accept the following KSD’s as budgeting priorities received unanimous approval:

- Recruiting, Retention, Graduation rates
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- Integrating Advanced Technology
- Infrastructure to Encourage and Support Research Efforts
- Faculty/Staff/Administrator Development

Vice President Hall asked if both faculty and staff development would be administered by the Continuing Education unit. President Reneau said that had not yet been determined. The Task Force felt that it would be advantageous for the same office to coordinate these efforts.

Vice President Rea indicated that the Board of Regents is supplying $80,000 to Tech for distance learning. A distance learning studio will be housed in Woodard Hall. Mr. David Cargill, housed on the 10th floor of the Library, will be in charge of central booking. First priority usage will be for duplicated programs. The Board of Regents will pick up the tab for distance learning broadcasts among the various universities in the System. However, they will “back out” funding each year until we are finally fully responsible.

President Reneau reported on the status of capital outlay funding:

- Professional Aviation and Multi-classroom Building is under construction.
- Bids for the flight operations center at the airport will be let soon.
- Bids will be opened in April for the Trenchless Technology Center.
- The Field House is under design.
- The Environmental Safety Building will soon be submitted for final construction costs.
- Hale Hall is under design.

Some concern was expressed over the impact of the changes in the TOPS Scholarship Program being made by the Legislature. President Reneau said he felt the commitments by the State to fund the TOPS Program would be honored and the program should impact Tech favorably.

President Reneau indicated that we continue to spend approximately two million dollars per year on deferred maintenance. The State will, beginning next year, allow us to expend some of this money ($500,000) on dormitories.

Vice President Hall commended the students and the SGA on their mature leadership in the development and utilization of the Technology Fee.

President Reneau commended Vice President Hall on the revenue budgets. Each area will have a positive balance. Foundation assets have grown to $31.5 million.

Meeting adjourned, 3:15 p.m.