

Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting, 4/8/2010

Comment Section - Verbatim

Regent Chalmers: to begin with comments from the faculty senate, staff and students.

Doug Brown: I don't have any particular comments other than what I made at the budget summit about bond debt and debt service, and trying not to increase student fees because funding streams dry up , and faculty senate is concerned about total level of debt we have and trying not to get further into debt.

Elisha Allen: Thank you Chairman Chalmers, members of the committee. You all heard a lot of what I think a couple of days ago at the budget summit. I'm certainly not a financial expert but like President Fields, I'm concerned about the level of debt and cash balances, especially when you see the academic programs are on the line and probably will continue to be on the line with possible rescission. In any decision that you all make today, you have an impact on what we are going to be able to do in the future. Just to remind everybody that the special fee for facilities, as recently as last year we were approving new bond funded projects based on revenue that we now know do not exist.

Regent Chalmers: and the students? undergrad or grad? no one here.

Anne Brooks: My name is Anne Brooks, and I'm the chair of the faculty senate budget committee. I'm substituting for Fran, who usually sits here for us. Our concerns are definitely expressed with what Doug Fields and what Elisha said. But also wanted to take a moment because I'm also serving on the president's task force for strategic cost containment. I just thought it was important. I approached that committee, and I think most of us were on the task force with a lot of skepticism and reservation wondering if all our work was really going to turn out really fruitful and used. I just want to say it has been a breath of fresh air to see how President Schmidly has approached us with openness and candor, has validated a lot of work that we have done by accepting our recommendation, and we have a lot of work ahead trying to flush out the long-term recommendations, but it has been such a positive experience seeing administration, faculty, deans, students and staff working together for the common good of this University. And I just hope that we have to keep working on the long-term, but I really hope it's a start of more collaboration because as whole we can do a lot more together when all the constituents are there together at the table. And I want to thank President Schmidly because you have really kept your word, and you have really validated our work. Faculty senate also validated by accepting those recommendations on your work with President Schmidly on continuing the recommendations and flushing them out. But again, I really hope going forward that shared governance collaboration really keeps this tone because again I think it's been really positive and I think it sets a new path for how this university approaches things.

Doug Fields: Can I build on that for just a second if you allow me because I totally agree with what Anne said there. In fact, the budget summit was disappointing in that sense in that it was basically decisions made beforehand and it was kind of a formality. We got a moment to speak, but I'd like to build on that

model that President Schmildy built with that team and have them actually come up with good plans for the budget, with input from the entire different constituency. In that venue, they really have a voice, everybody understands each other, and it reduces the level of tension, and then come together jointly we'd all agree to what is being presented to the Board of Regents. I think that could be a very powerful paradigm change for the University.

Regent Chalmers: Well, I can only speak as one Regent, but I knowing I think what the other regents feel, we were also very pleased and we didn't come to the budget summit without seeing the recommendations, so opinions are beginning to be formed before we get there that you can't get away from that. But we too, were very pleased with the process, and in fact, encouraged not only to keep it going but to expand on that. And if any other regents would like to make a comment on that, I think we all felt very positive on that....[pause]... ok, looking at the agenda, action item number 1