

B. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

C. MEETINGS

D. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Outlook

UNBC is facing two major concerns relating to their funding. Firstly, this year, operating funding (provincial grant) for post-secondary institutions in British Columbia remains the same as last year's overall funding. Secondly, student enrolment is still below target. Traditionally, student enrolment at universities increases during recessions. Unfortunately, UNBC has not benefited from this development. Our total enrolment target (09/10), as set by the Provincial Government was 3,396 full time equivalent student numbers, whereas our total actual enrolment was 3,005 FTE, resulting in a gap of 12%. At the undergraduate level, the gap between target and actual enrolment is even larger (19%). Provincial Government funding is based on targeted numbers, not actual, for that reason UNBC has received funding based on 3,396 FTE. In June 2010, UNBC received a letter from the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (ALMD) which stated that the Minister may request universities that "remain, substantially below target to submit a plan for achieving greater enrolment in future year. Further, ALMD may review funding allocations for targeted programs with low enrolment, which may result in reallocation of resources to higher demand programming". In addition, planning projections for the budget years ahead (2012/2013 –

Use of Current Resources

The current uncertainty with respect to UNBC's budgetary prospects and student enrolment as outlined in the previous sections is a challenge for the administration of UNBC. In order to increase student enrolment with a zero-budget and a budget deficit on the horizon, a more comprehensive approach is needed and incumbent on Senate to ensure that in considering any program changes, new programs or initiatives that it seek explicit explanations from the proposing units how such proposals will be resourced. Growth and new program development can be accomplished but only through the reallocation of existing resources. Internal reallocation of resources to those (new) programs and/or (new) majors with the best chance of securing increasing enrolment might be an option to consider although we realize that not all academic disciplines/programs are suitable for this approach. Support of faculty adequate coordination by management are necessary to execute this operation. It is clear that previous ways of behaviour, in which units have proposed new programs or initiatives in the expectation that, if they prove successful, additional resources will be forthcoming, is not sustainable for the foreseeable future.

Coherence between Budget and Action Plan

In 2010, UNBC launched a University Action Plan with the following themes:

- Leader in renewable energy;
- Engaging undergraduate students in research and experiential learning;
- Enriching learning experience through new pedagogical models;
- Increasing the impact of our research through capacity and external linkages;
- Encouraging a respectful, supportive, exciting, and friendly environment;
- Transforming our communities through the contributions of our alumni.

This largely consolidates other aims of the university (such as being a small research intensive university committed to teaching excellence; Canada's Green University; and having special relationships with First Nations communities).

However, it is presently unclear how the University Action Plan is reflected in the budget

the result is that the Committee believes that UNBC is not as competitive as it could be in attracting graduate students.

This general point has been made in the past additional staffing resources have been allocated to Graduate Admissions. However, slow decision making remains a problem. Graduate applications cannot currently be tracked as a result of the process being manual, but that upon transitioning to an automated system, this will be possible. Developing an automated system for graduate applications is a necessary need for attracting graduate students in a competitive world. We believe that this automated system should be part of the graduate student retention plan. In the meantime, waiting for a 'technological fix', should not be used as a reason for accepting the status quo; in order to compete in the market, UNBC must offer comparable, if not better, applicant service in terms of speed of decision making on applications and scholarships.

International Recruitment

International students are not included in the provincial government's funding formula. However, tuition fees for international undergraduate students are much higher than for domestic students. Further, international student retention rate is good, with only approximately 5% of students leaving. UNBC focuses on recruitment activities in China, where relationships have already been established. Some universities in Canada developed "two-plus-two" programs with other universities, an approach which can be beneficial to UNBC.

With regard to international recruitment, web presence is crucial. We strongly believe that improvement of UNBC website by standardizing program web pages, focusing more on students, and providing accurate and up-to-date information are important. Resources should be allocated to support existing and build new websites.

Budget Process

With regard to the budget process, transparency and communication are essential when new developments or plans are proposed or implemented. A well-balanced number of

Town hall meetings can be used to disseminate new plans to faculty and staff. Rumor and uncertainty among faculty and staff can be minimized through open communication and transparency. More clarity on the process regarding the budget is needed once it leaves the administrative unit. Furthermore, we believe that the budgeting process should be initiated in July or August, and that a more substantive approach to the full budget would be useful. This will allow for greater consultation between budget holders. We also suggest that decisions made by Reg regarding critical needs, which are not part of the current budget package will be communicated to Senate in a later stage (April/May).

Private Funding

Given the constraints on public funding, many universities have inevitably turned to the private sector to fund some new faculty positions, for example: Endowed Chair positions.