

To: Geoffrey Feiss, Provost
From: FUPC faculty members
Date: April 30, 2006
Re: Faculty University Priorities Committee Report (DRAFT)

Faculty members of the Faculty University Priorities Committee (FUPC) have reviewed the 2007-2008 budget proposals submitted by William and Mary's academic and administrative units. As we told members of FUPC earlier this year, enhancing academic excellence would be the guiding theme in our review of budget increase requests. Since almost any issue can be presented as an academic excellence issue, we tried to judge the extent to which a given budget proposal really enhances academic excellence. We recommend that you use this same theme (enhancing academic excellence) in making your decisions on the proposals in the packet that we reviewed.

As you suggested, we excluded construction projects from our report. Also as you suggested, we excluded budget requests that you had already elevated to the university-wide priorities category called category 101. These category 101 requests were primarily for faculty salary increases and graduate student support and, as you know, these two items remain very, very high in our hierarchy of things needed in support of academic excellence at the College.

Throughout our discussions, we recognized the need for a balanced restoration of funds to all units that endured budget cuts in the past.

Finally, to instill a sense of fiscal reality in our deliberations, we adopted your estimate that the total available new funds to be in the two million dollar range, roughly ten percent of the total requested by deans and administrators in the budget sheets.

In this report, we have not tried to rank all of proposals in the budget package. Instead, we have identified a few proposals that seem to have highest priority (Sections A, B, and C), and in Section D we comment on proposals that seem not to have as high priority and on issues that raised concerns.

A. Faculty excellence

A-1) Hiring new faculty members to replace retirees may involve the College in paying higher salaries to, and lowering teaching assignments for, new junior faculty. This may lead to an increase in the number of faculty at William and Mary, but may be necessary if we are to hire at the top of competitive markets. This was mentioned in only one budget proposal, but we see it as important to every unit.

A-2) To retain our strongest faculty members, the College may be called upon to counter outside offers, and this may involve commitments of university-level resources. We expect this to be a problem in all of our academic units. This problem is our reward for excellent hiring decisions over the last ten years.

A-3) An attractive faculty leave program is critical to recruit and retain the best faculty, but it must not erode our undergraduate educational program. This may require additional faculty positions in some units. The proposal to move the Grants Office to the E&G budget would free overhead recovery funds to support the leave program. However, the proposed cost of returning the Grants Office to E&G funding is considerable and might need to be spread over several years.

A-4) Restoration of earlier M&O cuts is important to maintain the quality of the educational program and to provide adequate research resources for faculty. We believe that such restorations should normally have higher priority than requests for new M&O money. M&O restoration requests come from Arts and Science, and the Schools of Business and Education, and from the Admissions Office.

A-5) Among Swem Library's budget requests, we judge technology infrastructure and library collections to be of most importance to the widest number of faculty

B. Educational program excellence

B-1) Maintaining our ability to offer the number and nature of courses that our students need is critical to educational program excellence. If hiring new faculty to replace retirements or implement the new faculty research leave program causes a unit to lose teaching power, then maintaining the integrity of our educational program will require net new faculty positions in various parts of the College. Although the Business School is the only academic unit to mention the market forces problem in its submission, we know that Arts and Sciences and Education both face the same problem. We recommend that for each net new faculty position allocated to an academic unit, the dean should be asked how that new faculty position will be used to maintain the units teaching power and to implement the proposed faculty semester leave program.

B-2) Restoration of earlier M&O cuts is important to maintain the quality of the educational program. M&O restoration requests come from Arts and Science, and the Schools of Business and Education.

B-3) Adequate funding of the undergraduate assessment program is vital to help us maintain educational quality. We wonder whether the Assessment Office request is large enough. Maybe a typographical error dropped a zero in the request.

B-4) Budget requests that are directly related to educational programs should have higher priority than those intended to add support staff or travel money to administrative budgets or to shift more peripheral expenses such as the Muscarelle back to E&G. Budget requests directly related to Williamsburg campus educational needs should have higher priority than requests for the Washington Program Office or from the International Affairs section of the Provost's office.

B-5) The SACS QEP project, which will implement the remainder of the 1993

curriculum revision, would strengthen our undergraduate program and might make us more attractive to the best potential freshmen.

B-6) Additional support for Reves Center Study Abroad programs would enhance our undergraduate program and make us more attractive to the best high school seniors.

C. Student Issues

C-1) The physical security of our students should have a very high priority, so we support proposals for additional campus police and for additional security personnel in Swem Library. In importance, campus security outweighs campus beautification. We cannot judge whether the pay scales for campus security personnel are right.

C-2) We strongly endorse graduate student support as a high university priority. Additional funds for graduate students are requested by Arts and Sciences and Education. We applaud the proposal from several units (Student Affairs, the Admissions Office, the Registrar, and the Institutional Research Office) for the appointment of graduate students to work in other College offices. This is another way to support graduate education at the College and we suggest that whenever possible, graduate students should be hired instead of new part-time and classified personnel. For example, this approach to staffing should be considered by Swem Library.

C-3) The quality of our undergraduates is at the heart of our national reputation. We endorse the proposal for additional funds in the admissions office to replace earlier budget cuts. Increasing diversity among undergraduate students is a high priority and attaining this goal will require additional resources.

C-4) Additional undergraduate financial aid is vital if we are to broaden access and diversify our student body, both of which are issues of interest to the faculty and to Richmond.

D. Issues of concern

D-1) Arts and Sciences, Business, Education each ask that the university take over financial commitments that deans have made out of decanal private funds. We are concerned that off-loading such private funds commitments onto the College E&G budget may involve the College in a slippery-slope situation: it would free private funds that might be committed to other decanal priorities with the hope that these new expenditures can be off-loaded to E&G in a future budget request. What are private funds for except to enhance our academic programs? Or put differently, why are we putting development officers into dean's offices, if not to raise the private funds needed to support the dean's highest priorities? A skeptical, conservative approach to such off-loading requests seems warranted.

D-2) We could not determine how the Business School's million dollar request would be divided among the parts of its proposal. To some degree, the same applies to Arts and

Sciences' request for three new positions that might end up in some of half a dozen departments. More details would have been helpful. Without such additional details, we wonder how the College will determine whether allocations made on the basis of such requests were used as intended.

D-3) Even though we have not considered capital outlay projects included in these budget proposals, we do not understand the relatively low priority assigned to rapid payback energy reduction projects. We believe such projects should receive serious consideration.

D-4) The Facilities Management request for the first year exceeds four million dollars. Some of the requests sound like legally mandated expenses (code compliance, hazardous waste, fire suppression systems) but the relatively low priority assigned to them makes us unsure. However, we do not have much insight into the relative importance of the Facilities proposals.

D-5) One budget item from the Provost's Office seems to suggest that we will have almost \$300,000 in new benefit costs for retiring faculty over the next two years and that this will be a continuing E&G expense. How was this figure calculated?

E. Improvements Needed For Next Year's Review Process

E-1) The data that we received this year did not allow us to determine whether a given budget request represented a marginal change in a unit's budget, or a massive increase. It would be very helpful to future committees if each budget request would include each unit's current budget level, or would indicate the percentage increase being requested.

E-2) As noted in item D-2, we found that some budget requests were of such a general nature that we could not tell how requested funds were to be used, and it was clear that the requested funds could not possibly cover all of the items listed. More detail would facilitate our review and would be needed as part of budget follow-up studies.