

Tuition Advisory Council
Monday, March 9, 2020

Council Members (✓ indicates the member was present)

Stephen Battaglia – Student

Katie Carr – Student

- ✓ Leslie Eldridge – Faculty Member
- ✓ Sarah Guenther – Student
- ✓ Johanna Pardo – Student
- ✓ Dennis Slattery – Faculty Member
- ✓ Matt Stillman – Administrator
- ✓ Susan Walsh – (Chair) Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Guests Present

Josh Lovern, Chris Stanek

The meeting started at 1:33pm.

BUDGET MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Lovern introduced Chris Stanek, Director of Institutional Research, and said Stanek is present to help explain and provide an additional perspective on enrollment projections and modeling. Lovern said there are slight differences in the way Institutional Research, the Registrar, and the Budget office do their modeling.

Lovern displayed a PowerPoint slide with a variety of metrics. Stanek pointed out different sections of this “dashboard,” including the Admission Funnel, Degrees Awarded, Admitted Student FTE, and other metrics that are tracked by Institutional Research. Stanek pointed out in the Admitted Student FTE section that the slope between fall and winter terms this year did not go down as steeply as it has in previous years. He said this makes it appear that we may be doing a little better with retention from term to term than we have in the past. Stanek continued to explain the numbers and charts shown on the dashboard.

Slattery asked about the difference between headcount and FTE. Stanek said at SOU FTE is pretty consistently right at 70% of headcount.

Stillman discussed the Admission Funnel and explained that we look at it weekly to see how our applied, admitted, and confirmed students compare to the same week last year.

Lovern said the point of looking at these pieces of data with the Council is to illustrate how we’re informed by different models as we create our projections. He said we also look at HECC data and some other data sources.

Lovern showed a slide labeled “Budgeted SCH Projection Model.” He said this model takes raw data and compiles it based on tuition categories, then uses a weighted moving average to make projections. He pointed out that each tuition category has a different dollar amount associated with it. Stillman said this is a really important concept: when we talk about the importance of enrollment in terms of budget and revenue, we have to be aware that there’s also a mix when it comes to the volume of credit hours. Depending on that mix, the overall picture can change drastically.

Lovern said that the Budget office’s model is the most conservative. He said it allows a little extra room for safety, but not too much. Slattery asked for clarification about whether the model created by the Budget office is approved at a higher level. Lovern said the model is not formalized, it’s created just to provide the Council with something it can use to inform its recommendations.

Walsh noted that the model appears to indicate that graduate enrollment is projected to be down 1.4%. She said graduate enrollment has been growing and additional programs are being added, so she was curious about why the projection would be down. Stanek said he didn’t know why that would be the case and agreed that it would be something worth looking at in more detail. He said his model, like that of the Budget office, is also showing a drop in the new graduate students category. Walsh added that we might be looking at improved enrollment based on economic factors.

Stillman said he, Stanek, and Lovern look at the numbers available and have to make educated guesses about a variety of environmental factors. He said we’re just suggesting a starting point for that conversation.

Walsh asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes from the March 2nd meeting.

Pardo/Guenther moved to approve the minutes from the March 2nd meeting; the motion passed, 4Y/0N/1A (Slattery abstained because he was absent from the last meeting).

Lovern briefly previewed the pro forma. He said the version that will be shared this year is new and improved, including additional data that can be shown so it will be clear what is feeding the different totals. He demonstrated some additional improvements to the pro forma.

The meeting ended at 2:28pm.