

Faculty Senate Resources Committee Report

From: Gregory Parks (Professor of Law), Committee Chair

To: Faculty Senate

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The Faculty Senate Resources Committee monitors, evaluates, and participates “in the University’s program planning, capital planning and other long-range planning processes. The Senate President shall appoint one Resources Committee member from the Reynolda campus to serve a three-year term on the University Capital Planning Committee. The Committee shall also make recommendations to the Senate involving initiatives with long-term implications for the University or the faculty.” Ellen Kirkman (Professor of Mathematics) and Julie Wayne (Professor of Organizational Behavior) serve as committee members.

This year, the Faculty Senate Resources Committee was not as busy as it was in past years. COVID placed considerable constraints on how the university employed its financial resources. Various university administrators—e.g., Provost Rogan Kersh and Executive Vice President Hof Milam—played a more active role in keeping university constituencies apprised of the institution’s financial picture. A Presidential search required being mindful that university financial priorities may shift once a new President takes the helm. Added, I was both new to being Chair of the Faculty Senate Resources Committee and the Faculty Senate.

This year, we sifted through the prior five years of Faculty Senate minutes to gain some sense of what the Resources Committee had done. We spoke with one recent Chair to gain an even better understanding of what the committee had grappled with, in recent years. And we reached out to a range of institutional administrators and leaders to gain a clearer sense of the issues that fall within our charge. While most of our findings have been communicated to faculty in various fora during this academic year, the following are important to note:

- The university didn’t have a budget for this academic year. Instead, it had a Board approved provisional budget.
- To survive the pandemic financially, the university did so on a semester-by-semester basis. Financially, the university is okay. We had a good fall with a \$10,000,000 surplus. We received an additional \$7,000,000 from tuition from the Fall and retained it by not giving it to programs like Study Abroad. There was a \$3,000,000 savings from last Spring, mostly on from utilities and travel. We’ve cut back on discretionary expenses. The university is fortunate to maintain everyone’s pay, including those who work for Aramark, Harvest Table, custodial services, Rhino (security for athletics), bookstore, and maintain retirement contributions. We got some CAREs Act money—half to student aid and half to budget relief. The university did voluntary furloughs—some less than voluntary, e.g., Grayland. The university also took advantage of federal unemployment benefit.
- Concerning tuition, the intention is to raise it, but there hasn’t been an announcement. We’re watching other schools and need some confidence that faculty will be willing to teach in the classroom. In the professional schools, approaches are mixed.

- Concerning the number of students, we need to increase them to address the university's bottom line, but there are other considerations—e.g., impact on faculty load, and pressure on facilities. We need to do it, but the costs are prohibitive now.
- There is hope that faculty will get raises, and there is planning for next year's budget. Given that we're increasing tuition, it makes it more likely. However, we'll have a thin margin on the budget for next year.
- The new professional studies program in Charlotte will require an up-front investment. The Board has improved \$3,000,000. It will take a few years to make it profitable. Other than that, it's too early to say what its financial impact will be.
- The faculty/staff who were encouraged to retire will be replaced. Of note, only 15/132 took advantage of the program.
- While there was a hiring freeze, there are likely to be new faculty hires, but that's a decision at the Dean level. Notably, a number of staff may not be replaced. Technology may make some obsolete.
- In our aim to continue the institution's dual mission of teacher-scholar, soon we'll have resources to support scholarly activities—e.g., association memberships, conference participation either virtually or travel for in-person. We may see some of that opening up this semester. Provost Kersh will be in discussion with Deans about this.

In the future, this committee will continue to clarify the university's financial picture for faculty. We intended to develop some focus points to engage the new university President, Susan Wentz, come this summer. And we are actively recruiting new members for the committee.