

## CLAS Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 11, 2022, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Present: John Palmer (Chair), Galia Hatav, Daniel Talham, Matthieu Felt, Jorge Valdes Kroff, José Ponciano Castellanos, Uma Sethuram (Dean's Office), Chris McCarty (Dean's Office), Fahad Qazi (Student Rep), Catherine Tucker (Secretary)

1. Call to order and approval of minutes from previous meeting.
  - Meeting called to order: 3:02 pm
  - Minutes from last meeting: one correction to a misspelled name, then approved.
2. Discussion of recommendations from Working Groups for Stage-1 cuts.
  - John Palmer thanks the Working Groups for sending their reports, with updates in light of the responses we received from the units to our requests for additional information, and with preliminary proposals for base OPS after the Stage 1 review.
    - These reports have been posted on the committee Canvas page (Files > 2021-22 > Unit OPS Requests for 2022-23 > 21-22 Group Reports > Final Group Recommendations)
  - The members of Working Group 3 have expressed reservations about this committee making actual recommendations to the College, given that we have incomplete knowledge of department culture and best practices. Rather than making positive recommendations regarding the base OPS for their units, they have indicated a *possible base* for each of the units they have reviewed.
  - Working Group 3 shares its concerns regarding whether the teams should present their reports as recommendations for base OPS given that the committee has incomplete information regarding the particular realities, cultural practices and constraints in each unit. This means that our assessments and input is limited in its applicability.
    - For example, it is difficult for committee members to judge the class size that works best for a foreign language class.
    - Palmer notes that the comments appear appropriate and we may all want to add a similar caveat to our recommendations, considering them as proposals.
  - Working Group 5 expresses concern for how the severity of the cuts may affect departments' capacity to maintain high quality liberal arts education. Some innovative and promising new initiatives within departments may need to be eliminated. Severe cuts could negatively impact students' educational experience and impact recruitment of undergrads and graduate students. Therefore it would be good to be transparent about the decision-making process and consider including chairs more directly in making suggestions for base OPS changes.
  - Further, It is suggested that communications could be made in ways that make it clear that sacrifices are across the board. It would be helpful to foster a culture of shared sacrifice through inclusion and transparency.
  - Associate Dean McCarty responds: This process is much more transparent than in the past, when an Associate Dean made decisions without any faculty governance participation, and departments made do. The College has endeavored to provide all information requested. Information provided by the chairs constitutes their participation in the process. Moreover, chairs have received the information provided to the committee. It is necessary that the OPS be cut, and adjustments must be made. It has been many years since this has happened. This is a business decision. In addition, the committee is advisory in capacity then the dean will make the decision.

- A comment is offered in response to McCarty: The committee appreciates that this is a more transparent process than in the past. Yet it is not apparent that there will be transparency in decision-making about how cuts are made after our report goes to the Dean's Office.
- One member notes that in prior committee work as part of faculty governance, it has not been clear whether committee effort was taken into consideration in decisions made.
- John Palmer notes that it could be helpful for the dean to explain how the committee report is used and contributes to his decision-making process regarding OPS cuts.
- Palmer also proposes that the committee could present our final report as a work product that contains proposals, as an alternative to the terminology of "recommendations."
- There is also a question about whether the Center for African Studies has a base OPS for the current year. They have requested \$62,084 for AY 22-23, all for specialists (in communications and marketing, and in editing the journal *African Studies Quarterly*.)
- Palmer reports that he has reviewed the reports from all the Working Groups in an effort to ensure that the Stage-1 recommendations uniformly reflect cuts made from the total amounts requested by the units in their OPS Requests for 2022-23 (rather than from their current year OPS). This is needed to ensure proper alignment before we proceed to Stage-2 cuts.
- Palmer then presents three spreadsheets, all of which are initial drafts:

(1) Base OPS Draft A (Stage 1) – contains the preliminary base OPS reductions as proposed by the teams. It shows that the Stage 1 process barely cut to the level of the 2019-20 OPS, leaving an additional \$3M to cut;

(2) SCH Multiplier Table: A possible approach for Stage 2 cuts to remove the additional \$3M, using a % multiplier based on SCH /\$1000 generated by each department. It is noted that this is just one possibility among many other possible approaches

(3) Base OPS Draft B (Stage 2), applies the SCH multiplier approach. However, some Stage 1 proposals (Draft A) indicated an increase for certain units rather than a cut. Therefore the starting point for those departments was the current year allocation to assure greater fairness across departments. (The exception of WTS to which \$30,000 was included given that the unit did not receive any base OPS increment to increase GA's to 0.50 FTE, while all other units did receive an increase; and the \$30,000 partially addressed that shortfall but not entirely, even though the department has had steady growth in SCH).

- Uma notes that she would like to have an algorithm that could be applied now and going forward, which would be helpful to explain to chairs/units how cuts were decided.
- McCarty responds that the committee is not being asked to develop an algorithm. It is tasked with making recommendations to cut OPS.
- Palmer wraps up the by requesting in the coming 2 weeks before our next meeting:
  - Teams should review the other teams' assessments and comments.
  - All teams are asked to provide input on Stage 2 alternatives / approaches for achieving the \$3M cut.
- The next meeting will be Friday, Feb 25.
- Members express thanks to John Palmer for his hard work as chair of this committee.

3. The meeting adjourns at 4:02 pm.