

CLAS Finance Committee
Friday, April 1, 2022

Present: John Palmer (Chair), Jorge Valdes Kroff, Thomas David Knight, Daniel Talham, Galia Hatav, José Miguel Ponciano, Tarek Saab, Matthieu Felt, Fahad Qazi (student representative), Uma Sethuram (Dean's office), Chris McCarty (Dean's Office), Catherine Tucker (Secretary)

Agenda:

1. Call to order and approval of minutes of the previous meeting.

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm

Minutes approved by acclamation

2. Criteria for Stage 2 reductions to unit base OPS budgets: highlights of discussion:

- Palmer notes that he has updated the final report draft to reflect feedback from committee members, and it is posted on Canvas in the committee folder ("CLAS FC 21-22 Final Report - DRAFT2.docx").
- At the last meeting at least one committee member was interested in the possibility of incorporating data on graduate degree production into Stage-2 calculations.
- Chris McCarty promptly supplied me with raw data on graduate degrees awarded in CLAS over the past five years, and I then used this data to count the total number of graduate degrees (master's and doctoral) awarded by each CLAS department during that period.
- Data possibly relevant for Stage 2 reductions include: (1) 5yr grad degrees/Faculty FTE, and (2) Majors/FTE Faculty+Grads, and he presents the raw and normalized data by unit.
- As another approach for the Stage 2 reductions, the average of the three variables: *SCH/\$1K*, *Grad Degrees/#Faculty*, and *Majors/#faculty+grads* (normalized) is used as the basis for generating an average score for determining the multiplier. Applying that multiplier to the Stage-1 OPS Budget result, reductions are achieved that reach the OPS total of ~\$14.5M.
- Palmer also prepared a "Veil of Ignorance" comparison of the four proposed approaches to Stage-2 reductions on OPS, which is then discussed.
- Comments offered: Do we care more about amount per dollar or #degrees/FTE faculty? But other indicators include Grad student outcomes (e.g., employment, time to degree) that have not been considered.
- It is also noted that FTE Faculty as a variable is problematic because some departments have lecturers, and not all faculty have teaching/mentoring assignments. This means that FTE faculty is problematic as an indicator of productivity of student majors or grad degree production.
- *SCH/\$1K* appears to be useful as an indicator of efficiency of \$, but it does not seem related to efficiency of OPS expenditures for producing graduate student degrees. Thus these approaches have not adequately evaluated efficiency/productivity of OPS use. One idea is to use the OPS budget as the divisor rather than total unit budget.
- Including grad student degree production is not fair for several departments who only recently have begun accepting graduate students.
- It is very challenging to find a single variable that is appropriately meaningful and fair (equitable) for adjusting each unit's OPS budget to reduce the overall imposed reduction to \$14.5M.
- The committee wonders which of the proposed options best reflects the College's interests.
- Palmer asks whether the committee has a preference among the four different approaches for which spreadsheets have been generated. The proposal does not generate a decisive discussion.

3. Remaining issues relevant to finalization of committee's report.

The Final Report will consist of the following documents:

- The Narrative Overview of the Committee's Process and Suggestions
- The Reports on Individual Units from each of our five Working Groups
- The GA Workload Profiles spreadsheet.
- The set of spreadsheets showing some of the various ways the Stage-2 cuts might be achieved to reach the \$14.5M target.

Palmer adds that in the last meeting of the CLAS faculty council, Dean Richardson reported that he had a conversation with the Provost about the severe impact of the loss of DL fees for many departments. The provost indicated that he understood the issue and was open to addressing the situation. As a possible approach, some monies might be used from an additional \$40M that the state has allocated to UF. While typically this would go toward faculty salary increments, the provost was open to consulting with the faculty. Richardson would like to learn the opinion of the faculty, to see whether there is support for some of those funds to be directed to OPS for graduate student funding.

Tucker supports this possibility and proposes that the final report recommend that additional funds be allocated to OPS to mitigate the negative ramifications of the severe cut in OPS funding for College departments, graduate students and undergraduate education.

Palmer asks whether the committee supports strengthening the language in the final report, and there appears to be informal agreement to strengthen the statement on the impacts of the OPS cuts on the College. Tucker agrees to help with this wording.

4. AOB

Ponciano shares a report from the Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/30/us-graduate-students-protest-against-low-pay-while-universities-profit-from-their-work>), which reports that many of UF's graduate students struggle to make ends meet, and stipends fall below the level required for renting a studio apartment in Gainesville.

Others note that it would be valuable to compare our graduate student stipend with that of comparable universities. It is already clear that our graduate student funding packages are below comparable universities. Several note that outstanding graduate students are declining UF to accept better offers, with implications for the quality of our graduate programs.

There is concern among committee members for the impact of the proposed cuts on departments, and ramifications of cuts for the quality of undergraduate education (as undergrad sections will likely be cut when graduate student support is reduced). Moreover, less funding for graduate students will impact graduate student well-being. It is noted that OPS budgets support the ability of the College to meet the mission of excellence in student education, and to fund graduate students whose efforts provide key support for teaching and research.

Palmer notes that graduate student funding, and the competitiveness of graduate student stipends, could be taken up by the Finance Committee next year.

The meeting is adjourned at 4:11 pm.