

Excerpts from **The Faculty Role in Planning and Budgeting**
http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/FacultyRole_Budgeting.htm

Recommendations to Local Senates

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommends that local academic senates exercise their authority under Title 5 §53200(c)(10) to develop institutional planning and budget processes in collegial consultation with their governing boards, this authority being grounded in the recognition that the faculty will ensure that planning and budgeting in our community colleges remains focused on the goal of providing quality instruction to students. The Academic Senate urges local academic senates to incorporate the following principles into their planning and budget processes:

- Planning should drive budgeting, never the reverse;
- Planning should always be for the first-rate, even in the face of second- or third-rate budget allocations;
- Planning, coupled with a critical assessment of successes and failures, is a means of taking conscious control of the process of serving students, and enables the emergence and elaboration of best practices;
- Planning, in an academic context, should be a bottom-up process, that trusts to the expertise of faculty to determine what is needed to serve students most effectively;
- Budget requests should be evaluated in accordance with explicit, detailed criteria that have been agreed to in advance by the affected constituencies;
- Among the criteria for evaluating requests, the requesting department's priority ranking of the activity for which the request is being made should be given special, positive, consideration;
- The evaluation of budget requests must be perceived as fair and impartial in order to encourage the expression of real needs in the planning process;
- The bulk of the work of planning and budgeting should be done by small, efficient subcommittees. One or two larger "shared governance committees" (either a single planning and budget committee, or two committees, one for planning and one for budgeting) should exist only at the top of the process, and should perform the function of synthesizing the input from the smaller subcommittees;
- The workload of planning and budgeting should be distributed among all committees and subcommittees such that each group has a manageable share of the total work to be done;
- Proposed changes to the institutional master plan should be the result of observing trends and problems reflected in the annual plans of departments;
- The allocation models used in the distribution of general funds and in the funding of augmentation requests should be specified in the written budget processes developed by the governing board in collegial consultation with the academic senate. Variations on the adopted models, when introduced, should be the product of collegial consultation between the academic senate and the board;
- Standards for establishing base budgets of departments should be specified in written budget policy, and should be employed in periodic reviews of base budgets;
- Final recommendations of the planning and budget committee(s) should be reviewed by the academic senate, as well as by other campus constituencies;

- If the academic senate finds that existing planning and budget processes are not issuing in recommendations that result in serving students with an education of the highest possible quality, the academic senate should initiate appropriate changes to existing planning and budget processes;
- Written policy should specify that revision of the planning and budget processes can be initiated by either the governing board or the academic senate;
- Written policy should specify that the college president shall bring back to the planning and budget committee(s) for further discussion any recommendations the president does not intend to pursue;
- Academic senates in multi-college districts should specify in written policy that the district budget allocation formula shall be equitable with respect to each college in the district;
- Multi-college districts should take a “students first” approach to budgeting, such that, when revenues are less than anticipated, the class schedules of the colleges are the last to suffer cuts;
- Centralized services offered by district offices in multi-college districts should be subject to regular review and evaluation by the colleges;
- District-level planning committees should be constrained to initiate only such projects as are of service to, and are desired by, all of the colleges in the district.
- District master plans in multi-college districts should be composed of the master plans of the individual colleges, plus the products of district-level planning;
- Facilities planning should involve extensive interviews with departments, and review and sign-off on the plan by the academic senate, certifying that the proposed plan is a logical product of the specified processes; and
- Local academic senates should have instructional computing committees, which draft the college’s instructional computing plan, and which work with district information systems to ensure that faculty are provided with the hardware and software they need to carry on high quality instruction.

Addenda

The following two principles were added by amendment to Resolution 17.01 at the Fall 2001 Plenary Session:

- The academic senate should take responsibility for ensuring that collegewide priorities and programs (such as general education as well as new programs) are addressed in the planning and budget processes; and
- The academic senate that has responsibility for hiring criteria, policies, and processes, should have a principal role in hiring and allocation of FTEF, and primary responsibility for developing priorities for faculty hiring.

The Relation of Planning to Budgeting

The first principle of all planning and budget processes is that planning should drive budgeting, and not vice versa. As obvious as this stricture may seem, its implications are profound. It means, for example, that processes must be carefully constructed so as to elicit bold and honest statements of real needs, even when those needs may appear, from a budgetary standpoint, to be “unrealistic.” If, in the planning phases, people limit their aspirations to what is fiscally possible in the short term, they are allowing the budget to drive planning, and—since the budget is almost guaranteed to be mediocre—they are settling for mediocre goals. Planning must always be for the first-rate, even in the face of a second- or third-rate fiscal allocation. A college should always be in the position, for example, to tell a legislator exactly what it could accomplish were its allocation to be increased to a more nearly adequate level.

Although planning has primacy, it cannot be divorced from budgeting. For even when the implementation of a plan does not involve the outlay of funds, it will nevertheless involve a consumption of resources, and the allocation of resources is budgeting in its broadest sense. For example, as part of a faculty development plan, faculty might decide to institute a book club, which meets at regular intervals to discuss agreed-upon texts. Although implementing this plan may not require any funding by the college, college resources will be consumed in the form of a meeting room, electricity, etc.

The college discussed in the example of the last section performed both the planning and the budget functions in one committee, the Planning and Budget Committee. Other colleges have two separate committees for planning and for budgeting. In such cases, it is critical to recognize both the intimate relationship of the two functions, as well as the primacy of planning, and to ensure that the budget committee’s work is that of meeting the fiscal demands of a prior plan, and not the reverse.