

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.77-99

MEMORANDUM

To..... SENATE

From..... SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY
BUDGET

Subject..... ANNUAL REPORT - FOR INFORMATION

Date..... SEPTEMBER 15, 1977

SCUB Membership:

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ANNUAL REPORT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY BUDGET (SCUB)

INTRODUCTION

This second annual report of the Senate Committee on University Budget covers the period July, 1976 through July, 1977. Following the format of the first report submitted to Senate at its meeting of August, 1976, this report will provide Senate with an overview of the Committee's deliberations and actions, the impact of its activities, and further reflections on the Committee's role in the preparation, submission, and allocation of the University budget.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

In the period covered by the second report, the Committee has held twenty-one meetings. It has considered the impact of the 1976/77 operating budget allocations, reviewed the 1977/78 operating budget submission to the Universities Council, examined the five year capital program, commented upon the allocation of "strike savings," and had an opportunity to discuss the 1978/79 operating budget request to be submitted to the Universities Council.

In July, 1976, the Committee met with the Dean of Arts, Science, Education, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Continuing Studies in order to assess the impact of the 1976/77 operating budget allocations. The Committee also discussed the 1977/78 operating budget submission to the Universities Council with the President and the Vice-Presidents of the University.

Discussion on the allocation of "strike savings" were rather extended. The Committee found the distribution acceptable after several modifications of the original proposal were made. It should be noted that the Committee was concerned only with the allocation by broad expenditure categories and not with the specific components of each category.

After a discussion with the Director of the Department of Physical Plant and Planning on the University's Five Year Capital Plan, the Committee agreed that the multi-purpose complex (now under construction), the teaching and laboratory complex, and the classroom and office complex require immediate implementation.

The Committee discussed with the President the budget incorporated in S.F.U.'s response to the Winegard Report and recommended that the full planning proposal be reviewed by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning.

During the early months of 1977, the Committee's attention was focussed upon the impact of the Provincial Government grant for 1977/78. Members of the Committee sat in on a meeting at which the Deans and the Academic Vice-President discussed areas where (fund) allocations could be reduced. The Committee, after several discussions with the President and the Academic Vice-President, agreed with the President that a twenty-five per cent fee increase was necessary in order to meet University requirements. The Committee's recommendations were subsequently reported to and were approved by Senate.

Concern was felt by the Committee about its role and its relationship with the University Review Committee established by the President. Following discussions with the President, it was agreed that the Committee would be kept informed of the Review Committee's activities by the SCUB member serving on the Review Committee. The Committee would be expected to analyze the report of the Review Committee and make its comments and recommendations to the President.

In July, 1977, the Committee reviewed the operating budget increases to be requested of the Universities Council and found the submission reasonable in view of the data available.

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF SCUB'S ACTIVITIES

Committee members gained greater familiarity with internal budgetary procedures and with the role of the Universities Council during its second year of operation. It has established and now maintains effective communication links with the President and the Vice-Presidents. Because no actions appear to have been taken on some of the Committee's recommendations submitted in March, 1976, these recommendations will be brought to the attention of the relevant task forces established by the University Review Committee. The pressure of work prevented the Committee from reviewing and reformulating, where appropriate, its original recommendations which dealt with budgetary matters.

THE COMMITTEE'S ROLE IN BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

As noted in its first report, the Committee has two major functions. The first function is to offer advice and counsel to the President on the development of the operating and capital grant submissions to the Universities Council. The second function is to offer advice and counsel to the President on the development of the operating budget. During the period covered by this report, the Committee had an opportunity to review two operating budget requests to the Universities Council, namely those for 1977/78 and 1978/79. The Committee is concerned about the last minute rush to complete the submissions which make a reasonably detailed review extremely difficult. It is anticipated that the situation will improve with the recent appointment of a budget officer.

The inability of the Committee to undertake full and detailed discussions because of the urgency of meeting deadlines has been a source of considerable frustration. Meetings have had to be called on very short notice and often without the necessary documents being available in advance of the meeting. For example, the Committee did not have an opportunity to comment upon the 1977/78 operating budget allocations until after Board of Governors approval had been secured. The detailed 1977/78 operating budget was not available at the end of July, 1977. Although the deadlines are in some cases arbitrarily imposed upon the University from the outside, the Committee feels that submissions should be prepared with adequate lead time so that the Committee can meet its responsibilities.

One area of interest to the Committee is actual expenditures by budget units. That information was first requested in the fall of 1976 and, again, in the spring of 1977, however, the material requested had not been received at the time of the writing of this second annual report.

As the end of the fiscal year approaches, there may be considerable under-expenditures in some areas; these funds are then reallocated. The Committee has requested the President to consult with the Committee when such reallocations are under discussion.

One area of concern to the Committee is new programs that are proposed for Senate approval. Given a period of severe budget constraint, it is essential that a priority ordering be given to new programs. The Committee, while it does not welcome the task, may be forced to make recommendations in this area if no other committee should accept the responsibility.

The year under review has been one of considerable activity for the Committee. Members have frequently commented about the difficulties of getting "behind" the data and the material presented with an attendant feeling of frustration. Perhaps this is the "human condition" faced by any committee charged with SCUB's responsibilities dealing with full-time administrators.