Minutes – Prioritization Retreat

Friday, March 8, 2013
9:00 am-3:00 pm
SSB-414, Multipurpose Room

Present

Ara Aguiar
Celena Alcala
Bonnie Blustein
Agyeman Boateng
Phyllis Braxton
Carmen Dones
Fran Leonard
Ken Lin
Dionne Morrissette
Laura Peterson
Joyce Sweeney
Alice Taylor
Rebecca Tillberg
Kathy Walton

1. Welcome and Overview. Rebecca Tillberg welcomed and thanked the group for participating in the first college-wide effort to prioritize the resource requests that were developed through the program review process. She described the task at hand: to develop a prioritized list of the 78 resource requests. An additional 18 resource requests had been submitted for regular faculty positions. These positions are prioritized by the Faculty Position Identification and Prioritization (FPIP) Committee. The FPIP policy requires that requests to fill regular faculty positions must be initially justified and submitted through program review.

2. Proposed process. R. Tillberg proposed a process designed to make the task more manageable:

a. Identify requests that do not need to be prioritized either because they have already been accomplished or because there are other resources available to meet the need.

b. Identify requests that meet the criteria of the 'High Priority Principles' of the Prioritization Rubric, and move to the top of the final prioritized list.

c. Group the requests by type, including Personnel, Non-personnel, and Other.

d. Working with one group at a time, first identify the half of the requests that are the most important considering both the rubric and the vice presidents’ lists.

e. Prioritize the requests in the ‘most important half.’

f. Combine the three lists into one comprehensive prioritized list.
R. Tillberg also proposed that we break into smaller groups to do the initial prioritizations, but the group decided instead to work together as a whole for every part of the process. After asking for further modifications to the proposed process, we agreed with the proposal.

3. **Resources available.** R. Tillberg described the contents of the resource folder each person received: the Prioritization Rubric, the Vice Presidents’ priority lists, reports, web sites, and other data that were available for use during the meeting. The reports included the following:

   - a. Prioritization Worksheet, Sort by Request Type
   - b. Prioritization Worksheet, Sort by Area and Program/Unit
   - c. Prioritization Worksheet, Sort by Estimated Annual Cost
   - d. Planning Summary and Linkages: Unit Goals, Planned Actions and Resource Requests
   - e. Resource Request Detail
   - f. Unit Goals: Measureable Outcomes and Need for Goal

We reviewed the priority lists from each of the Vice Presidents, and noted and discussed issues presented from each area. The list for Academic Affairs included 10 items, with two requests combined into one item in two cases. In addition, there was one item that had been described in a 'Validation Recommendation,' but that the division had not expressed.

The list for Student Services was adjusted to delete two items which were not ready to move forward: ASO Staffing, and change a counseling position from C to D Basis. A change in preferred priority order emerged based on the discussion about 'High Priority Principles' which moves to the top of the list items that are required to meet requirements for health, safety and essential services, or to meet local, state and federal regulations and other mandates. Another factor to consider is the capabilities of the new SIS system, which may impact some of the requests.

Administrative Services provided two lists, one for Personnel and one for Non-Personnel. Two of the items on the Non-Personnel list were described as fundable through the Bond program. A more detailed description of each request was also provided. The afternoon before the Prioritization Retreat, R. Tillberg was informed that eleven staffing requests had not been included in the Planning section of program review, and were not on the vice president priority list.

R. Tillberg described another resource request from PR/Advertising, which had not been included in the program review process. This unit will be included in the program review process next time, but was overlooked this time. Based on a projected funding, FTES and enrollment increase in 2013-14, PR/Advertising is proposing an enhanced multi-media, coordinated campaign, with the associated budgetary requirements. This request was also presented to the committee for their consideration.

Thus, there were three resource requests that did not come through the regular process, and that required special attention:

- Classified staff requested through the Validation Process in Academic Affairs
• 11 classified positions requested by Administrative Services
• Funding for enhanced marketing campaign

4. Use of giant sticky notes. R. Tillberg described the two ‘ground rules’ for the meeting. First, we would use the giant sticky notes as a ‘parking lot’ to record issues, questions and concerns that would arise in the course of the meeting, realizing that some issues could not be resolved during the meeting; some issues would lead to improvements in the next program review process, prioritization process, prioritization rubric, and related processes; and other issues would need to be referred to other bodies. Second, she reminded the group that we are here as representatives of constituencies, not as representatives of divisions or units; as such, we need to maintain a college-wide perspective where the request of another office might deserve higher priority than the request of one’s own office.

5. Verify Categories. The committee discussed the usefulness of the three proposed categories. There were 15 items in the category of items that would not require prioritizing. Four of these items were moved to a prioritization category since they were not eligible for grant or categorical funding. The classified personnel category had 21 requests. The Non-Personnel category had 25 requests. The Other category had 17 requests of various types, including part time faculty, student workers/tutors, and multiple category requests. Three of the part time faculty requests were for additional class sections. The committee decided that these requests should be considered through the class schedule preparation process. Two requests were combined into one because the two units, HLRC and Math division, would work together to set up a new math lab.

6. Identify ‘High Priority Principle’ items. The first pass through the list of requests was to identify ‘High Priority Principle’ items. This process generated much discussion as we applied the rubric and learned about the range of resource requests. Although initially, we identified a number of requests that might be considered to be High Priority, as we defined and applied the rubric more narrowly, only one request remained in the High Priority category. The committee felt that the other items that might have been considered High Priority would emerge high on the prioritization list through the rest of the prioritization process.

The need to clarify the meaning of the definition of High Priority Items emerged. We concluded that the request needs to be specifically required by the requirement/regulation/mandate, and that the impact of not meeting the requirement would be very severe on the college, beyond simply paying a small fine.

The one request that rose to this standard was the request by Athletics for a part time Sports Information Director. The priority is contingent on confirmation that the hire is a compliance requirement.

7. Identify High Importance Items by Category. Beginning with the Personnel Request Type, we identified the half of the group that was most important in terms of the rubric criteria and the vice president lists. We did the identification, using a version of ‘approval voting,’ as follows: each person identified the requests they thought were the most important. Then as a group we voted on each request. The requests that...
received the most votes were identified as being in the top half. After the voting was complete, we checked the group of requests to see if the items made sense and that we were satisfied with the approach.

8. Prioritize High Importance Items. After we selected the high importance group, we prioritized each item using the rubric. We agreed to trust the process, to apply the rubric, and to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric after we used it. We realized that since this is the first time the rubric has been applied, we may discover limitations or difficulties with the rubric. We decided to consider neither the cost of a request in the prioritization, nor the one-time/on-going status of a request.

The committee decided that the requests that emerged outside the regular process could not be accommodated in the current process. Instead, we recommend that those requests be considered by College Council for possible inclusion in the priority list that is forwarded to the president as a recommendation.

We conducted the prioritization as a group using the prioritization rubric. The rubric was translated into a worksheet designed by Agyeman Boateng, which facilitated recording committee votes and scores. Using the rubric together enabled us to refine our understanding of the rubric and how to apply it, and to standardize the way we applied the rubric to each request. We scored each request according to the six criteria related to Quality of Program Review and Resource Request, the other six criteria in Principles II, and the two criteria in Principles III. The total possible points available was 28 points. We used reports created from program review data to score the criteria related to Quality of Program Review; we used the combined knowledge of committee members, as well as research on the web, to score the other criteria. We evaluated each criterion for meaning and usefulness. We found that if there was little variation in the scoring on a criterion, that its usefulness was diminished. We did not use one of the criteria because we had no data to address it: “Program Review has an adequate implementation plan that describes the steps needed to accomplish the Planned Action.” In applying the rubric, we also noticed the need for a comprehensive facilities master plan with goals so that there is something for program review goals and resource requests to link with.

We noticed several patterns among several resource requests that deserve special consideration. One type of request was for a resource that is necessary to a program, but has been funded by special funds, and the unit wants to have the funding institutionalized as part of its base budget. Another type of request is for a program that was started under a grant and now seeks to become institutionalized with Program 100 funding.

By going through this review, we found areas of difficulty and confusion in completing the program reviews that will need to be addressed through changes to the program review process, software and/or training. Some of the difficulties included:

- Importance of having the rubric available before the program reviews are completed
- Some units did not complete the Planning section of IES


dedicated to helping students succeed.
Some units did not create links between goals, action plans, and resource requests in IES
- Lack of understanding of what is a goal, as distinct from an action plan or a resource request
- Need to add a question to program review to enable identification of High Priority Items
- Need to have similar wording between program review questions and rubric criteria
- Certain types of requests do not meet many of the criteria of the rubric and so receive lower scores, including infrastructure related items.
- Many requests had incomplete information about the need for the resource.

The painstaking care we took with this phase in the beginning enabled us to speed up the scoring as we moved to other groups of requests.

We identified several possible prioritization process changes:

- Classified personnel requests might be better evaluated using a more extensive process modeled on the FPIP process where units have the opportunity to appear before the committee and provide further detail about their needs.
- Because some of the personnel requests were so extensive, the need for a formal Personnel Plan might be indicated to provide more structure for the evaluation of these requests.
- The distinction between and impact of one-time vs. ongoing costs was not clear, and was not part of the rubric. Some requests appeared to be for basic program supplies that might be considered as part of the base budget, rather than as items subject to special request each year.
- The funds available for prioritization were not clear; for example, equipment requests might have been eligible for VTEA funding, but the committee could not see how VTEA funds are prioritized.
- There is a need to coordinate the prioritization processes of FPIP and PIE.
- There may need to be a separate process to prioritize specially-funded items.
- There is a need for an emergency resource request process.
- There may be a need for a process to handle resource needs that emerge after program review is complete, but before prioritization is done.
- Program review should elicit information about cost-effectiveness since this is part of the rubric.
- One criterion on the rubric was re-worded from "Resource requested is appropriate to accomplish the Planned Action" to “Resource requested is aligned with the Planned Action.”

The original schedule called for the Prioritization Retreat to conclude at 3:00. However, we had not finished our work by that time. A poll was taken to determine whether or not people would be able to stay longer. When it was clear that a large number of people could stay, we checked with those who had to leave to see if they would be comfortable with relying on the prioritizations being completed by the remaining group. Because we had engaged in an extensive standardization process to ensure uniform application of the rubric, everyone approved the proposal.
We decided that the action of the PIE Committee at the Prioritization Retreat was sufficient approval of the resource request list, and that another approval at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the PIE Committee was not necessary. As such, the Prioritized List of Resource Requests is ready to be presented to the College Council for review and approval.

Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rebecca Tillberg.

Thanks to everyone for contributing so effectively and collegially to the prioritization process. And special thanks to Alice Taylor for being our time-keeper, to Bonnie Blustein for helping us navigate some very difficulty areas of discussion, to Carmen Dones for researching answers to our questions on the web, and to Agyeman Boateng for beautifully managing our data.

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES

It was brought to the attention of the chair of the PIE Committee after the Prioritization Retreat that a resource request was missing from the list of requests to prioritize, a College augmentation for the Director of the Child Development Center of $159,000. This item was inadvertently grouped with the regular faculty position requests for prioritization by FPIP. However, this position was not submitted to FPIP. Therefore, this request should be included with the other three requests that PIEC did not prioritize for consideration by College Council and by the President. The additional requests which need separate prioritization by the College Council and by the President include:

- Director of the Child Development Center
- Enhanced multi-media, coordinated campaign by PR/Advertising
- Several classified positions in Plant Facilities
- Classified position for the Business Division