COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Budget and Resource Allocation (COBRA)

SUBJECT: 17-18 COBRA 7: Statement of Budget Priorities

PURPOSE: Request Academic Senate accept and forward to Academic Affairs for consideration

Background:
The Academic Senate Committee on Budget and Resource Allocation (COBRA) has developed a statement articulating the budget priorities advocated by the committee based on input provided over the course of the year. The committee requests that this statement be presented to the Academic Senate to accept and forward to Academic Affairs for consideration.

Action Requested:
For acceptance by the Academic Senate.

Preamble:
The goal of the Committee on Budget and Resource Allocation is to enable and ensure active faculty participation in the fiscal planning and budget development processes. According to the responsibilities of COBRA, the committee is to make recommendations to the Academic Senate on budgetary matters. The intent of this statement is to provide broad priorities the committee believes, based on the information it has received, need to be considered as the budget process unfolds.

The committee acknowledges and thanks the various Unit and Division Heads who have reported to COBRA over the course of the year for the detailed information they have provided on budget and resource allocation. These reports (17-18 COBRA 1 – 6) have been submitted to Senate as information items. The committee appreciates the openness, transparency and the willingness to provide requested data. With the prospect of financial uncertainty and the changing fiscal landscape of higher education, COBRA believes it is paramount that openness and transparency will continue to future years. Moreover, COBRA believes it is important that it be actively involved in the budget process and that changes in the allocation and reallocation of funds be guided by careful consideration of the consequences of such changes on academic quality.
Statement of Budget Priorities:
In its advisory role, COBRA has prepared the following statement of budget priorities.

- Fund allocation needs to be prioritized to safeguard the teaching mission of the university, including those programs and services directly related to student learning and welfare.
- Faculty and staff are central to the operation and success of the university. Therefore, maintaining positions and recruiting and retaining employees must receive the highest priority.
- As the budget is driven by tuition and fee revenue, priority needs to be given to developing an enrollment strategy that focuses on capacity and that also addresses retention and graduation.
- The committee is concerned about the long-term consequences of the need to defer maintenance due to budgetary constraints as it is undermining the university’s core education, research, and community service missions. It should be a priority to develop a plan to address the backlog of deferred maintenance.
- Faculty concerns regarding workload and reassigned time need to be given careful consideration. Priority should be given to developing a fiscally sustainable and equitable workload model that supports engagement in scholarship.
- To ensure the university stays at the forefront of higher education initiatives, faculty and staff professional development needs to be appropriately supported.
- Colleges and departments should be incentivized to develop innovative revenue generating programs. To do so priority needs to be given to reviewing the current cost recovery formulas for self-support programs and the transfer of revenue generated through self-support programs back to entities that developed the programs.

In closing, we commend the administration on its fiscal leadership, and we urge it to consider the priorities outlined in this statement when making budgetary decisions in the future.