TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Budget and Resource Allocation (COBRA)

SUBJECT: Recommendations to the President for 2007-08

PURPOSE: Information Item to the Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: Acceptance of the report below, which was finalized and given to the President after the final Senate meeting last year

MEMORANDUM

To: President Mo Qayoumi
From: Committee on Budget and Resource Assessment
Date: June 4, 2007
Subject: Recommendations for AY 07/08

The Senate’s Committee on Budget and Resource Assessment (COBRA) acknowledges with great appreciation your leadership this year in laying the foundation for much improved fiscal management at CSUEB. We thank you for the high standard you have set for active collaboration with faculty in budgeting, planning, and assessment. While we recognize the challenges that still lie ahead, we are encouraged by your development of...

- a clearer vision of East Bay’s budgetary challenge (through quantifying the budget deficit),
- a cohesive and skilled management team capable of correcting prior problems, and
- a plan to close the deficit in three years, while at the same time creating a more vibrant institution that better reflects our shared visions and goals

Seeing the progress that has been made toward faculty participation in budgetary decision-making at the highest level, we ask that you continue to exercise your leadership, making clear your expectation that the Principles of Faculty Participation in University Budget Decisions be upheld at all levels, down to and including within the colleges and departments. We believe that institutionalizing a culture of collaborative decision-making at all levels will catalyze the greatest cooperative potential of the faculty in the great challenges that lie ahead. In this way, your collaborative management style, which has so galvanized our enthusiastic response, may be felt by the faculty as a whole.
Now that we have a reasonable preliminary grasp on the budget deficit and a stabilized management team, we look forward next year to making progress on assessment through institutionalizing (greatly expanding) the use of budget benchmarks and performance indicators in reporting and assessment—the enhanced vision from which should both refine our understanding of the deficit and improve our confidence in resource allocation decisions. We note that some divisions are much better than others at using these tools, while others simply have not yet had time to conduct the necessarily detailed assessment and background research to develop the tools. We note that developing an appropriate suite of benchmarks and indicators for the key functions of units is a non-trivial task—one that may require assistance to some divisions. Moreover, for these to be useful, there must be broad agreement that they appropriately reflect key functions and goals. While the individual units clearly must take the central role in identifying appropriate indicators, COBRA would very much like to participate in their review, for two reasons. First, the process will be educational, especially to new COBRA members, in developing a better understanding of the breakdown of key functions among units. Second, we want to ensure, to the degree possible, that the proposed indicators provide the understanding we need to make informed recommendations.

Finally we would like to comment on the 3-year plan to eliminate the budget deficit. We support this ambitious plan and recognize it as a challenging stretch to a far more desirable future. At the same time, we believe that the degree to which the plan is 'fleshed out' with concrete strategies will be the degree to which it will get the essential enthusiastic buy-in of the faculty. We are committed to working with you in this process.

With respect and appreciation,

COBRA members