Members Present: Dana Edwards, Karina Garbesi, Armando Gonzales, Dave Larson, Jose A Lopez (Chair), Saeid Motavalli, Don Sawyer, Bruce Trumbo, Don Wort

Members Absent: Kris Erway, Nancy Mangold

Visitors: Bob Brauer, Cal Caplan, Stanley Clark, Mark Karplus, Norma Rees, Hank Reichman, Alden Reimonenq, David Travis

1. Agenda approved.

2. Approval of the minutes of October 15, 2004 meeting

Approved as corrected M/S (Wort/Sawyer).

3. Report of the Chair

Lopez had no report as he wanted the Committee to spend the bulk of the meeting time on discussion of COBRA goals.

4. COBRA Goals for 2004-2005-Review and Approval

Lopez handed out a Draft 11-6-2004 list of COBRA Goals for 2004-2005 for discussion and approval.

Goal Area: Explore standard budget report system:
Wort clarified that the CRUMBS Committee does indeed have a “B” in its title, although it was reported at the last meeting that it does not. Motavalli asked for clarification purposes if this group would report directly to COBRA, and Lopez responded in the affirmative. Garbesi suggested substituting “Develop” for “Explore” in the goal area title, which will reflect in the future Goals document.

Goal Area: Faculty involvement in the budget development process:
Trumbo brought attention to the third paragraph in the statement of objective for this goal in the draft document. He stated concern about the language and was concerned that COBRA might try to allocate exact budget amounts to Departments, which would not provide flexibility in allowing for fluctuations at the College level. Garbesi felt that this Goal is better described in paragraph 2.
A discussion then took place about COBRA’s potential role in determining FTE targets at the Departmental level. Lopez stated that Departments do have defined targets. Wort liked the wording in paragraph 3, stating that there is nothing unusual about Departments being given exact FTE targets, but that several CSU campuses allow for flexibility in how those targets are achieved. Reimonenq also stated concern about paragraph 3 and COBRA’s potential role in determining targets at the Departmental level. He stated that it is the responsibility of each College Dean to meet FTE targets for their Colleges, and that having to depend on each Department to meet exact FTE targets would not allow the Deans enough flexibility to meet these College targets. Reichman felt that the manner in which these targets are determined, what happens if they are missed, and how and why annual targets might need to be changed are very important issues. Motavalli asked how the targets are defined, and if they are basically just based on the prior year’s targets. He felt that these targets need to be defined scientifically. Garbesi pointed out that there had been no prior objections in discussions about the language in paragraph 3 which speaks to COBRA’s objective regarding determination of Departmental targets, and that Departments should not be micromanaged on how they attempt to meet their targets. Wort stressed the importance of not losing sight of the overall goal area, which is how faculty are involved in the broader discussion on budget development. Trumbo said he would oppose having Departments tied to fixed targets with no allowance for flexibility. If there is reduced teaching loads to allow for greater research activities this has implications in relation to FTE targets, and the wording in paragraph 3 can be interpreted that COBRA is only endorsing one particular option among many. Caplan stated that he did not interpret the wording in this way. Larson said that Department Chairs need to be more involved in determining their targets, stating the difficulty of approving a master schedule to meet the FTE target considering all the different obligations a Chair is required to meet, such as CCC classes and sabbatical leaves.

Rees reminded the Committee that the University is given an annual University target through negotiation, but that after the target is decided upon it is the University’s responsibility to meet it, and that there are serious consequences for funding if this target is not met. It is important to keep the perspective of the University as a whole in working toward these targets, and that continued dialog between Chairs and Deans is desirable, as the Deans know where flexibility is possible. The Deans can afford flexibility in the assignment of targets, but not leniency to every Department that claims difficulty. This is not just an annual concern, but a long-range concern for the CSU. If the Governor’s Compact is approved, new targets for CSUH will be determined and must be met. Enrollment growth is the key to the healthy future of the University.

Reimonenq again spoke of the language in paragraph 3 as being troublesome. The targets are monitored every Quarter, and Deans need flexibility to set targets. Chairs are welcome to meet and discuss the targets and the related issue of release time for research activities. Lopez clarified that COBRA is merely
setting a goal to explore FTE targets, and is making no recommendations at this point in time. The aim is to get information about the process. He recommended that COBRA explore this issue and gather the appropriate information. Reichman echoed Reimonenq’s concern about allowing for flexibility on the part of the Deans. However, just giving the Deans a dollar amount and letting them manage it themselves is a bad idea, because this can lead to the Deans pursuing their own business at the expense of others and the University as a whole.

Lopez suggested to change the wording in paragraph 3 to read “Explore the development of FTE targets for academic Departments in ways that optimize pedagogical resources while maximizing their academic program goals and research priorities.” M/S Trumbo/Sawyer. This motion passed.

Garbesi expressed concern about getting feedback from the faculty as a whole regarding this goal. She suggested that the sentence “Develop methods to increase faculty feedback in COBRA’s decision making process” be added to the statement in the Activities/Responsibilities column. M/S Garbesi/Wort. This motion passed.

Rees expressed concern that this goal is narrowly focused on Colleges and Departments, and does not take into account the greater needs of the University as a whole as it is currently stated. COBRA could become heavily focused on this one particular area, and lose focus on the greater purpose of the Committee. Wort suggested restating the goal area statement to read “Promote faculty involvement in the Budget Development Process at the Department and Program levels.” Caplan stated that this Subcommittee should not duplicate the work of COBRA, but be focused on specific and sometimes narrow issues. Ad hoc committees often develop their focus as they go along. Lopez, due to time constraints, said he will revise paragraph 2 of this goal area for future discussion.

Goal Area: Develop recovery plan:
Lopez postponed major discussion on the Recovery Plan until the next COBRA meeting. Trumbo expressed dislike for the term “recovery”, as it implies that the University can fully recover from long periods of decreased funding, which is misleading and unrealistic.

Goal Area: Continue to develop knowledge of the budget development and allocation process:
Rees suggested that the simplest way to look at various functions would be to consult the organizational chart of the University. She listed some major areas which are of most concern, among them meeting enrollment, growing enrollment, retention, faculty strength, improving student life, growing external funding, IT squeezes, the cost of unfunded mandates, growing community connections, and continuing creativity. A list will be provided
to COBRA listing these major concerns, with the wish that COBRA will consider them carefully.

Goal Area: Coordinate and align the work of COBRA with CAPR & WASC: Lopez asked if a Subcommittee could effectively plan for the implementation of the ACR 73 levels this year, given budget constraints. Wort said that COBRA should not abandon this goal, even though the Committee’s hands are tied at the moment. Lopez suggested moving the section 5.a text to the Recovery Plan goal, and that 5.f comprise the new Goal Area. Lopez and Sawyer will craft a review for 5.f (ways to coordinate the work of COBRA with the WASC process, in establishing and refining University goals and priorities).

5. Development of Goal Implementation Plan and Creation of Sub-Committees

Lopez asked for input on how COBRA should go about creating and implementing the subcommittees for these goal areas. Sawyer suggested identifying faculty with particular expertise in specific areas related to the goals. A procedural question arose about membership outside the Committee and whether ratification by the Executive Committee of the Senate would be necessary for these subcommittees. Reichman stated that lots of subcommittees on campus request the help of non-committee members. Lopez said the Executive Committee approval would be unnecessary. Caplan agreed, given that these would be ad-hoc subcommittees. COBRA subcommittees will be fact-finding groups that report back to COBRA.

Lopez asked for potential Chairs for Subcommittee 2 (Exploring faculty involvement in the budget development process). None present volunteered to chair, and Lopez assumed temporary leadership. Motavalli volunteered for the recovery plan subcommittee. Garbesi will chair for subcommittee 1, and Wort for 3. Lopez will place reports of the subcommittees on future COBRA meeting agendas.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Edwards, Secretary