

May 23, 2024

UBAC Meeting Minutes

Elisabeth Merkel began the meeting with the roll call.

Present

Elisabeth Merkel, Opinder Bawa, Michael Harrington, Lindsey McClenahan, Julie Orio, Jonathan Cromwell, Kurt Keilhacker, Tim Redmond, Sarah Blackburn, Brian Young, David Ferguson, Laura Hannemann, Angelica Martinez, Bhavesh Ram

Absent

Otgo Erhemjants, Shannon Burchard, Isabelle Sholes, Nathan Nkemere

As the April 2024 meeting was canceled due to a light agenda, there were no meeting minutes to approve. The March meeting minutes were approved via poll shared through a council email sent April 23, 2024.

Acknowledgement, Overview and Retention Discussion Introduction

Michael acknowledged the contributions of Joe Henson, the Assistant Vice President for University Operating Analytics, and highlighted the importance of new student enrollment and retention rates for the university's revenue and future budget building efforts. He also mentioned the challenge of retaining existing students. Furthermore, he announced pending updates regarding UBAC's membership for the coming fiscal year and the availability of the website's UBAC Community Update Spring 2024 Materials that Johnathan had been spearheading. Finally, he mentioned the availability of a Q4 forecast for the fiscal year 2024 as well as a report on division fiscal year 2025 savings overview and narratives. Michael introduced Shona Milazo, who was set to present on the topic of retention.

Retention Efforts Update

Focusing on Student Success and Challenges

Shona emphasized the importance of focusing on student success beyond just retention and persistence. She discussed the institution's goal to create an inclusive and mission-driven environment where all students are engaged and thriving. Shona also highlighted the challenges the institution continues to face after the pandemic, such as poor academic performance and financial difficulties. She mentioned the strategies being implemented to address these challenges, including an early alert program for struggling students, academic success coaches for every undergraduate student, and partnerships with alumni and donors for more scholarships.

Student Success Retention Equity Task Force Update

Shona provided an update on the university's Student Success Retention Equity Task Force. The task force is working to increase retention rates through initiatives like developing clear degree maps for each major, supporting undeclared students, updating withdrawal forms, gathering high-impact practices from departments, connecting peer mentoring programs, and enhancing academic support. The university faced housing challenges for continuing students but expanded residence halls have helped increase retention. While fall retention rates for first-year students improved, likely due to a smaller class size allowing more engagement, transfer student retention has declined. The task force is analyzing data, working closely with schools and colleges, and piloting degree planning tools to further improve retention.

Career Resource Center's Role in Retention

Elisabeth Merkel questioned the role of the career resource center in student retention and how it might be integrated into their programming. Shona confirmed that career services are a crucial part of the recruitment cycle and that they are working to gather and present data on student outcomes. Julie Orio added that career services is collaborating with the provost office to increase the number of internships for students. Shona also shared that they prioritize interventions based on retention trends and student success survey data. Tim Redmond suggested involving alumni, particularly those five years out, in recruitment efforts to demonstrate the return on investment and potential career paths for current students.

Leave of Absence and Withdrawals

Shona addressed a question from David Ferguson about leave of absence and withdrawals, stating that around 50% of students return after taking a leave of absence, with the number fluctuating each year. She also mentioned that her team continually reaches out to students on leave to understand why they are leaving and if they plan to return. Michael noted a current year increase in our fall to spring undergraduate retention and that this was also a positive indicator for our first-time following fall retention. He then introduced the next agenda item and speakers.

New Undergraduate Enrollment Update

Recruitment Volumes Down

Katherine Edwards and Sherie Gilmore-Cleveland from strategic enrollment management provided an update on new undergraduate enrollments. They shared that undergraduate recruitment volumes were down, with just over 1,000 first-year deposits and around 125 on the transfer side. Katherine also highlighted challenges with the FAFSA form and compared the university's situation with other institutions, noting that Catholic universities in general were down 20% in terms of volume. Responding to a qualifying question from Brian Young, Katherine confirmed we would generally be around 1,200 for first-year deposits at this time.

Student Profile, Program Launches, and FAFSA Concerns

Katherine highlighted the positive aspects of the current student profile, such as the diversity of the class and the strong Pell and first-generation percentages. She also introduced the new neuroscience launch and the successful programs in public health and nursing. Katherine discussed a pilot rollout of a

4+1 program for incoming students, which was well-received and led to an increase in interest. Responding to a question made by Kurt Keilhacker in FAFSAs completed by our continuing students, Katherine also noted a decrease in the number of FAFSA filings, a concern for future retention. Sherie then discussed the university's efforts in aiding students through the FAFSA process, including increased communication and support.

Student Support, Enrollment Targets, Collaboration Efforts and Enrollment Reporting Updates

Katherine and Sherie discussed their efforts to support students and families, especially those facing technical difficulties and financial aid concerns. Opinder Bawa shared an example of the confusing communication from the Federal Government regarding FAFSA student information. Brian asked about the current target for domestic first-time, first-year domestic enrollees, which Katherine confirmed was 1,100. Sherie emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to prevent student melting and shared how their signature programs helped increase registration numbers. Katherine added that while the Law School was on track to meet its targets, the situation for other schools was uncertain. Michael questioned when a realistic deposit number could be communicated to the Board, but Katherine and Sherie agreed that the situation was still too fluid to provide a definite answer. Katherine and Michael discussed the upcoming June Board meeting where April Crabtree would be providing an update and the importance of providing information to the President on an ongoing basis for Board executive committee communication needs and university planning efforts.

UBAC FY25, AY 2025/2026 Membership Update

Faculty Changes

Johnathan Cromwell announced his departure from UBAC and his faculty and librarian tri-chair role, and that his replacement was being elected through a mini-election among the faculty and librarians. Johnathan also mentioned a potential new role for him as a faculty representative to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee, but this was still in the discussion phase. Michael expressed his appreciation for Johnathan's work and wished him well in his future endeavors.

Staff Changes

Staff updates were provided by Elisabeth, who reported that the Staff Council had appointed William Vitagliano, Associate University Registrar and Director Degree Audit and Graduation Center, as a staff representative at large and reappointed Elisabeth to the University Budget Advisory Council for the academic years 2024 and 2025. Further, after consulting the other staff representatives, the Staff Council shared in its announcement read by Elisabeth that she would be continuing in her tri-chair role. The statement then acknowledged Laura Hannemann's departure from the council and thanked her for her service. Laura then commented that UBAC has been one of the most generative and informative committees she has served on so far. Laura continued that it has been great to work across the university with everyone, and urged members to keep up the good work.

Administrative Representation Changes

Michael shared several changes in the Administrative Representation, including new appointments of: Sonia Caamano, Director of Student Life Administration, Budget, and Operations; Jeff Paris, Acting Dean,

College of Arts & Sciences; and Ellen Ryder, Vice President Marketing Communications. Administrators coming off the council included: Opinder Bawa, Julie Orio, and Lindsey McClenahan. Michael noted that the administrative representation now included two deans as well as a member of Cabinet.

Student Representation Changes

Bhavesh Ram shared that he had graduated and would be coming off the council. Michael added that the replacement graduate student representative would be named in September. Regarding undergraduate representation, Michael noted Isabelle Sholes had graduated and also would be coming off the council. After an application process managed by the Student Senate, the replacement undergraduate member will be Edgar Ryan Silva, a candidate for a BA in Politics, with a Legal Studies minor. Michael concluded the UBAC membership updates by thanking the departing student representatives for their service.

Office of Planning & Budget Reports & Updates

FY24 Operating Forecast

Michael shared that the final fiscal year 2024 operating forecast from the April fiscal period close would be available on the Office of Planning and Budget's website on June 12, 2024, immediately following the Board meeting of June 11, 2024.

Review of FY25 Division Savings Overview, Narratives and Q&A

Michael reminded the council that a total of \$58 million in additional revenues and expense savings was required to balance the fiscal year 2025 operating budget. A total of ten million was provided in base savings by the continuation of university-level fiscal year one-time additional revenues and expense savings previously identified to balance the fiscal year 2024 operating budget. The remaining \$48 million required to balance the fiscal year 2025 budget was allocated out to the divisions, the methodology for which was reviewed at UBAC's February meeting. He explained that a description of the allocation methodology as well as the returned division one-time and base budget additional revenues and expense savings were summarized in an overview document, and that divisions were asked to provide accompanying narratives. He then navigated to both the overview and division narratives which had been shared in the council's Google Drive folder along with a questions and answers form for council members to ask any questions regarding the division narratives which would then be sent to respective Cabinet members for their replies. He continued that the overview document was also available on OPB's website and that it included full-time equivalents (FTEs) for identified division position savings.

Michael then went through the overview report noting that base budget additional revenues and savings from the divisions accounted for 57 percent of the \$48 million total savings, and that these percentages varied by division. Looking by category, he highlighted that approximately half of the identified savings came from compensation, while the other half originated from additional revenues and non-compensation expenditure savings. Michael went on to present the FTE position savings summary tables in the overview, and highlighted to the council that they built upon the one-time position savings that had been identified for the current fiscal year. He then reviewed the last section of the overview which outlined savings by division, category of revenue and expense, and the one-time

and base budget amounts. Kurt sought clarification that the overview could be shared with colleagues which Michael confirmed. Using Information Technology Service's file as an example, Michael then reviewed the savings narrative document and its budget, FTE, and associated narrative components. In response to Johnathan's query, Michael explained that the overview's grand total of \$48 million focused on division savings of the required \$58 million to balance the fiscal year 2025 operating budget, attributing the additional \$10 million to moving to base the fiscal year 2024 one-time savings that had been made at the university level. He then navigated to the report posted on OPB's website which outlined the previously identified \$10 million in savings. Michael agreed to monitor and forward (as needed) any questions submitted.

Community Update Final Steps and UBAC Website

Johnathan Cromwell reviewed the updated UBAC website and its UBAC Community Update Spring 2024 Materials. These included a slide deck and video, along with an anonymous Q&A section where six questions had been received and their responses provided. He introduced a new process to categorize and manage questions, aiming to streamline the answering process and build a public collective information repository.

Review of Preliminary FY26 Operating Budget Creation Timeline (Sep, 2024 - May, 2025)

Michael shared a draft calendar for next year's meetings and milestones in the creation of the fiscal year 2026 budget, with finalization of the timeline planned for next September.

Concluding Remarks

Ending the meeting, Sarah Blackburn expressed her gratitude towards all the council members and acknowledged their contributions, particularly the tri-chairs.