At this meeting, we reviewed the BOT Budget Workshop documents proposing 3 different budget scenarios. (The BOT had also received a one-page summary detailing the cuts that were made in Round One and Round Two of mid-year cuts to the 2015-16 budget—this is in the same document entitled BOT Budget Documents May 2016.)

Under the scenario that the Board currently seems likely to support, Academic Affairs will be cutting about 2.5 M—about 2.2M that needs to be cut from next year’s budget, plus an additional 250K that Academic Affairs needed to cut from last year’s budget, but had received permission to delay until this year (giving the Provost more flexibility and planning time). This scenario is the least damaging to Academic Affairs of the 3 being proposed.

Still, the Provost said, these cuts to our recurring budgets will make for “a weaker Academic Affairs next year,” with diminishments in our teaching capacity and in our staff capacity & expertise, along with very lean operating budgets.

Committee members asked for more detail regarding school-based fees. The Provost confirmed that some BOT members are ready to vote on this proposal at the June meeting, while others would like to defer the vote until August. As discussed in the May BOT workshop, the possibilities under discussion are per-credit-hour fees for 300 and 400 level courses in SSM ($50/hr) and SOBE ($75/hr). There would be a lifetime cap on the total fees a student would pay. Fees might be phased in over a year’s time or could come all at once.

SSM and SOBE each have different proposals for how these fees would be spent, should the BOT implement them. The Provost and the President and the Board all expect that some significant percentage of the fees would go back to the general fund. Whatever the percentage, there will be oversight “that goes beyond the Dean’s office” regarding how each school spends the portion of the fees that it keeps. We reminded the Provost of our committee’s recommendations for an oversight committee including faculty that would receive a regular detailed account of where the fees got spent. (SOBE is also suggestions a “Student Fee Committee” as is done at Clemson.)

These fees are not part of this year’s current budget, although they could help us during the next year. For now, the Provost also has only a few options for places to cut in order to come up with the approximately 2.5 M needed.

--Throughout Academic Affairs (including all Schools), most of our personnel dollars are not available. When looking for positions to cut, the Provost only expects to select from vacant positions, temporary positions, and positions in which someone is retiring. Even with these parameters, the Provost hopes to be as strategic as possible in deciding what must be cut. Some cuts have already been anticipated, such as the former dept chair in music who is retiring.
He doesn’t plan any “reduction in force” (layoffs). On the other hand, it is possible to ask TERI’d staff to leave, as well as probationary permanent staff.

--Provost noted he could trim the adjunct budget, but this makes little sense considering we will be cutting some faculty positions. A small number of faculty will be teaching higher loads next year (the research productivity analysis by deans has resulted in a few differential teaching assignments) but overall, the adjunct budget will rise.

--Provost can also look for vacant/temporary staff positions to eliminate. However, he is reluctant to eliminate a position for which there is a clear need (e.g., a unit that only has one admin should not lose that position).

--He is unhappy that he expects to have to cut the recurring budgets for R & D & SURF, although he may be able to move some nonrecurring dollars there later. He also regrets the need to trim some of the Library’s budget. The staff and budget in Academic Affairs will go down, resulting in slower turnaround on tasks, but he sees no way around this.

--One place to capture some $ is in the revenue-sharing dollars that are generated by Summer School. All deans told him they would prefer that the Provost use some of this money that had been shared with Schools & departments, rather than cut other existing budgets in their Schools.

In response to questions from the committee, the Provost noted that we were not actually in a hiring freeze this year. Some vacant or vacating faculty positions have been filled—at the time of this meeting, 14 new TT faculty had been hired & 3 new visitors, with some searches still ongoing. About half the positions that would be open have been filled. Some staff positions, also, have been kept unfilled.

In June the Provost will need to provide a draft of the actual cuts to be made. In making his decisions about whether to cut a position, the Provost plans to keep in mind:

- The department’s capacity for 4-year graduation of its majors
- Enrollment trends
- The “available labor pool” (e.g., whether there are adjuncts available in a particular discipline)
- How many permanent vs visiting lines a department already has

Going forward, these are things our undergraduate programs need to be paying attention to as faculty plan their curricula and staffing. The Provost’s opinion is that C of C cannot sustain a budget in which we have c. 550 roster faculty. The low 500s is much more realistic—the number we had in the early 2000s. He also feels strongly that we need to rethink the ratio of TT to nonTT faculty overall. In departments with almost all TT faculty, we will need to have more visiting and instructor-level positions.