President Benson’s Plan for Annual Planning Cycle

In January, President Benson met with various groups to explain the process he and the EVPs had gone through to review and prioritize the various tactics from the 2009 Strategic Plan. In addition to seeking feedback from various constituent groups (faculty, staff, administrators and students), President Benson also presented his plan for the implementation of a process for annually reviewing, revising and updating the Annual Action Plan for the College.

The Annual Action Plan will be designed to identify specific tactics from the Strategic Plan which will be the primary focus for the upcoming year. The Annual Action Plan will also include the budget requests in support of the specific tactics so when the Board of Trustees reviews the proposed budget for an upcoming year they have a clear understanding of why there is a need for increased revenue and exactly how increased revenue will be spent.

Because the planning cycle did not get developed until well into the fall semester this year, the cycle is somewhat truncated; for this year, the revisions to and prioritizing of tactics of the strategic plan were finalized in January 2012. By March 2012 the President will have drafted the Annual Action Plan for academic year 2012/2013 and will have the Annual Action Plan to present to the Board of Trustees at the April 2012 meeting. During May and June 2012 the President and the Business Affairs staff will draft the 2012-2013 budget and tuition request for the Board to consider at their June meeting.

Beginning in academic year 2012-2013 the Annual Action Plan cycle will extend throughout the academic year. Every year there will be a review and revisions to the strategic plan based on which tactics have been achieved, which need ongoing support in order to be achieved, and whether some tactics need to be reprioritized based on internal or external factors. The review and revisions will occur from July through October and will shape the development of the Annual Action Plan. President Benson, the EVPs and leaders from across the campus will use the months of November through January to develop the Annual Action Plan for the next academic year. The Annual Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the January Board meeting for their review. During the months of February through April the President and members of the Business Affairs Office will develop the budget for the next academic year. I am working with President Benson to ensure that there will be faculty representation from the Budget Committee involved throughout this process.

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Planning Cycle  
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In May and June the President and the Budget Affairs Office will finalize the budget and propose recommended tuition and fee adjustments in order to meet the College’s ongoing expenses as well as to fund the items in the Annual Action Plan which need funding. The proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee for review prior to the Board meeting in June when the Board will vote on the budget.

This annual planning cycle will then begin again in July and will continue in an ongoing, yearly process. According to President Benson, this planning cycle represents a new way of envisioning the budgeting and prioritization process for the College; we have not previously had a formal process for developing an Annual Action Plan and thus it has not always been clear to members of the Board, the campus community or the public why there was a need for increases in tuition and fees. The President’s hope is that this Annual Action Plan will allow everyone to understand what the goals for the upcoming year are and what the costs are in order to achieve those goals. The President has told me he is committed to faculty being involved in this process.

Dean Searches

The College is currently conducting searches for three Deans – Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of the Honors College and Dean of the North Campus. All three searches are well underway and the committees are hoping to have candidates on campus for interviews the end of February and early March.

The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences search had 89 applicants at the time the search closed. According to Mike Auerbach, chair of the search committee, the applicant pool was very diverse and included applicants with a variety of background and experiences. Nine candidates were selected for phone or video interviews. There were no internal candidates for this position. The search committee has completed the phone interviews and will be inviting four candidates to campus after spring break.

The Dean of the Honors College had 90 applicants including three internal applicants. The committee has narrowed the search to 12 candidates which Valerie Morris, chair of the search committee, says she and the committee hope to complete phone interviews with the candidates within the next couple of weeks so they can then invite candidates to campus by the end of the month.

The Dean of the North Campus had 92 applicants at the time the search closed with 11 applicants making the short list for phone interviews. The search committee has completed phone interviews and on-campus interviews began the week of February 27. There were no internal candidates for this position.

According to Lynne Ford, chair of the committee, the applicant pool for this position was very diverse with candidates who have a variety of different backgrounds and experiences including experience working with adult learners, entrepreneurial and fundraising backgrounds as well as academic experience.

All three search committees plan to provide opportunities for interested faculty to meet with candidates and to provide feedback to the committees.

In addition to these three searches a fourth search will begin sometime in March for a new Dean of the Library. Provost George Hynd is working with the Library faculty to draft the position description and is also working to select a search committee. The hope is that candidates can be brought to campus before faculty leave for the summer so that faculty will have the opportunity to meet with candidates and provide feedback.
January Board of Trustees Meeting

The College of Charleston Board of Trustees met on campus January 19th and 20th and considered a number of proposals and actions. The Board was presented with three major items for consideration: the revised and prioritized tactics of the strategic plan, the proposed Diversity Plan and the proposed Facilities Master Plan.

The revised and prioritized tactics of the 2009 Strategic Plan were presented to the Board for information. The Executive Committee of the Board told President Benson that the Board may provide feedback regarding tactics but they will not vote on the actual tactics or the priority rankings of the tactics. Any changes to the mission, vision or goals of the College will be reviewed and voted on by the Board, but the actual tactics and methods of accomplishing tactics are not items on which the Board will take direct action or vote.

The Board decided to postpone their discussion and vote on the College’s Diversity Plan until the April meeting so that members will have more time to review and consider the plan before voting. As far as I know, the Board will consider the Diversity Plan and vote on it at the April meeting.

The Facilities Master Plan was the third major item presented to the Board in January. Members had been presented with preliminary drafts of the Facilities Master Plan over the past year and had been given the opportunity to provide feedback. The final Master Plan, which was approved by the Board at the January meeting, provides a conceptual framework for growth and development/ redevelopment of facilities over the next 20 years. The new Master Plan recommends a significant increase in assignable square footage for academic use (classrooms and laboratories), an increase in space for student housing and recreational services, a new facility for innovative technology and teaching opportunities as well as a new Alumni Center. The proposed Master Plan is consistent with national averages for classroom and academic space allocation. The national average for academic space is 15-17% of space on a campus; the new Master Plan calls for an increase for academic space at the College to just over 22% of allotted space. The national average for classroom space on campuses is 5%; the Master Plan calls for an increase in classroom space to a total of 6% of allotted space.

A bound copy of the Master Plan proposal is available in the Faculty Senate Office in Randolph Hall. An electronic version of the plan 2012 Facilities Master Plan is available at http://masterplan.cofc.edu/index.php.

Cost Effectiveness/Efficiency Review

In June 2011 when the Board of Trustees met and voted on tuition and fees for the 2011/12 academic year, a discussion began among Board members regarding the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the College. Board members were concerned that with the general economic problems of the state and the across the nation, any decisions to raise tuition and fees must be something they can justify not only as a need, but also based on the fact that the College is mindful of its financial responsibility and acting accordingly.

At the August and October Board meetings this discussion continued and in January the Board voted that the College hire consultants to review the costs, efficiency and effectiveness of the College.

An RFP (Request for Proposals) was issued by the College after the January Board meeting seeking bids for this project. The primary objectives of this project will focus on identifying revenue enhancements, cost reductions, operational improvements, structural alignment, and other opportunities relative to a specific group of benchmarked and peer institutions. The proposal is broken into three parts which include a review of non-academic units of the College, a review of the College’s Information Technology infrastructure and a review of academic programs and centers at the College. Each of these focal areas includes specific desired outcomes related to that area.

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Cost Effectiveness/ Efficiency Review (continued from page 3)

The final project report should include, but is not limited to:

- an assessment of the current level and sources of revenue;
- identification and evaluation of opportunities and action plan to improve revenue and the associated tactical plan to capture new sources of revenue;
- as assessment of the current level and cost of academic and central support services relative to benchmarks and peer institutions;
- as assessment of the underlying reasons for the cost or revenue deviations from the ideal;
- identification and evaluation of opportunities and action plan to reduce costs for these services;
- identification of opportunities and action plan to reduce, eliminate, or outsource certain functions or a component of these functions and the associated cost savings;
- identification of opportunities and development of an action plan to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of certain services, or recommend programmatic changes to existing services and provide implementation plan; and
- recommendations for organization structure.

Once the project has been awarded we will know the estimated cost and length of time for the study.

Bachelor of Professional Studies Proposal

The proposal for the College to develop a Bachelor of Professional Studies program has been approved by CHE and the program proposal is now in the hands of the College Curriculum Committee, the Budget Committee and the Academic Planning Committee. These three committees are reviewing the full proposal which will be presented at the March Faculty Senate meeting.

The BPS program is designed to allow adults who have accumulated credits toward a degree but have never completed an undergraduate degree to have the opportunity to complete their degree. The BPS will be a fourth degree offered by the College, it is not a new major. The BPS program will be offered through the North Campus and courses will be taught on a schedule to accommodate working adults; courses will be taught in unique time sequences and many will include online components.

Several focus groups were held last fall to get a sense of interest in a program like this. Preliminary indications are that there is a great deal of interest in this program and there are a number of adults ready to begin the program as soon as it is available. The proposal is designed to be self-sustaining within a short period of time.

Shadowing Program/ Opportunity

One of the challenges faced by almost every college or university is that the institution is governed by a board of trustees or regents who may not have much/any direct experience or insight into the day-to-day functioning of the institutions. Trustees and regents often are not familiar with the realities of teaching, research, service, etc. that faculty engage in and the work that is done by staff in academic and student service offices. Based on my conversations with members of our Board of Trustees, I believe many of them are genuinely interested in learning and understanding more about the work we do to provide the quality education and experience to our undergraduate and graduate students.

In an effort to facilitate a better understanding of the work we do, I introduced a proposal to the Academic Affairs Committee at the January BoT meeting to develop a program for interested Board members to shadow a faculty member for a day and see what goes on in the classroom, the lab, working with students, faculty meetings, etc. Any interested Board member can elect to participate, but new Board members will be targeted and encouraged to participate.

I have talked with Provost Hynd, President Benson and members of the Board about this and all agree that we will need faculty from across all disciplines, faculty from all ranks and faculty who are working on interesting projects either of their own or with students to participate in this.

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Shadowing Program/Opportunity
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I will be working with Greg Padgett, chair of the Board, and L. Cherry Daniels, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, as well as Elizabeth Kassebaum in the President’s Office to put all of this together. My hope is that after spending time with faculty, seeing what we do on a day-to-day basis and talking with faculty about challenges and opportunities we have to work with, and sometimes work around, that members of the Board will have a better understanding of the work we do. When I presented this idea to the Board in January there was enthusiastic response from Board members; they are excited about this opportunity to learn from us. If you are interested in learning more about this idea and/or interested in participating in this, please let me know.

Classroom Notification Program

The pilot Classroom Notification Program is up and running. Thanks to the work of several people in the Registrar’s Office and in IT, classroom list serves were created so that faculty can be notified if there are problems in a particular classroom. The Physical Plant office and IT will send an email when a problem in a classroom is reported to let faculty know:

- a problem has been reported,
- they are working to fix the problem as quickly as they are able to,
- when they hope to have the problem resolved, and
- if necessary, updates regarding when the problem will be resolved

Initially we had hoped that department chairs and/or administrative assistants of departments whose faculty teach in the classrooms could also be notified, but when the list serves were built it was not possible to add those contacts.

If you notice a problem in your classroom with the technology or with things related to Physical Plant, please notify the appropriate office or let your departmental administrative assistant know so they can notify the appropriate office. The folks from Physical Plant and from IT are excited about this program because they believe this will help them be able to better help faculty when classroom problems arise. At the end of the semester the team working on this program will reconvene to assess the effectiveness of the program and ways we may be able to improve it based on feedback from faculty.

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