Budget Accountability Committee, Final Report for 2013-2014 Academic Year

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Due to the uncertainties resulting from the hiring of a new president, coupled with the upcoming search for a new provost, very little of substance was accomplished by the BAC this year. Only one full meeting of the committee was held, although there were additional email discussions.

Based upon complaints issued by CES, the BAC investigated and identified a problem with CCIT’s assessment of a LAN services fee for graduate students and others supported by overhead on grants. This problem was due to many Fund 15 accounts being converted to Fund 14 accounts, including many that were used to pay Graduate RA’s. Prior to this, anyone payed on a Fund 14, was involved in non-base activities, and the LAN fee was necessary to provide them internet access, email, etc. The problem was resolved by the CFO’s office.

During the Faculty/Staff Joint EAC meeting in the fall of 2013, anecdotal information was provided that custodial staff provided by outsourcing were having to work overtime, due to travel time between buildings, were using their own cars, and were having to buy their own cleaning supplies. There was also a general discussion of faculty/staff time that it takes to use outsourced services, like car rental, etc., and concerns about outsourced staff not feeling like a part of the university. The CFO’s office promised to look into the allegations.

In addition to these activities/accomplishments, several interesting ideas were offered to the committee for exploration and these are briefly described below. These should definitely be pursued in the coming year, as the administrative structure begins to take shape and stabilize.

1) Past President Jeremy King suggested formation of a “student advisory group”, based on a model implemented at Northwestern University (see attached: Giving Students a Voice.PDF). A similar group was assembled several years ago by CFO Brett Dalton, and he found the students to be professional, enthusiastic and effective. However, there were problems with acceptance by some of the administrative and support groups affected by the suggestions of the students, and the group was disbanded. Any future group will need to be protected under the umbrella of the BAC or similar group, which can buffer them from criticism or obstruction from any entities on campus. It is equally important that the students be
allowed to act independently, and that their recommendations are heard. It was suggested that one or two members of this group be allowed to serve on the BAC, as well.

2) President-elect Antonis Katsiyannis suggested that the BAC consider conducting a study of the “true cost of educating a student” at Clemson, similar to what was recently completed at the University of Minnesota (http://www.startribune.com/local/157976625.html?page=all&prepage=2&c=y#continue). This activity seems ideal for involvement of the Student Advisory Group described above, and could be conducted in collaboration with the BAC.

3) Related to the two ideas above, a suggestion was made to ask the CFO to provide a “State of the Budget” address to the Faculty Senate. This should be conducted as early in the fall semester as is convenient. Clemson University came through the Great Recession of 2008 in much better shape than many universities, and with minimal impact on the academic endeavor, thanks to the hard work of CFO Dalton and his staff. Many faculty have no idea of how this was accomplished, and it is felt that we will all benefit from a more detailed understanding of the financial workings of the university.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Pennington, representing the Budget Accountability Committee.