Overview:

In accordance with its charge to provide ongoing feedback regarding the budget process, The Senate Budget Committee had formulated recommendations related to financial planning and resource distribution that it hopes will inform and be incorporated into the next University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Strategic Plan. These recommendations were developed based on feedback from two sources: the university community as a whole and the deans of the four colleges.

To get the perspective of the campus community, all UWEC employees were invited via email to take an electronic survey to provide input related to perceived needs for financial planning and resource distribution on campus. An email invitation to participate was sent twice in the month of December 2015. Four hundred forty-one employees completed the entire survey. This represents 36% of the employees on campus. The data analysis from this survey is available in Appendix A.

To get the perspective of the academic leadership on campus, the deans of the four colleges were invited to participate in a face-to-face discussion with members of the committee. Deans Hoadley, Lehman, Manning, and Young engaged in this discussion in early February 2016.

Members of the Senate Budget Committee include Julie Aminpour, Ryan Banaszak, Holly Hassemer (chair), Diane Hoadley, Stephanie Jamelske, Deb Pattee, Peter Rejto, Mary-Laura Samples (student), Sherrie Serros, Lois Slattery, and Keith Stearns. Budget Director Kristen Hendrickson also contributed.
Executive Summary:

Four major findings came out of the campus-wide survey and the discussion with the deans.

Compensation, staffing, and other personnel issues are the primary financial concern on campus.

- The campus community overwhelmingly identified personnel limitations as the most significant financial barrier facing the institution.
- A clear top priority for faculty and staff is for the institution to develop reserves to fund a compensation plan.
- Open-ended responses from survey participants highlighted the importance of personnel issues such as compensation levels, faculty/staff retention, faculty/staff recruitment, workload, pay equity, and staffing shortfalls.
- The deans identified these same personnel issues as their primary concerns.

Evaluating how we use our resources and improving the budgeting process are important areas for improvement.

- The campus community highly prioritized evaluating how we use our resources as an important part of an institutional long-range financial plan.
- Open-ended responses from survey participants highlighted interest in identifying inefficiencies, ensuring transparency, linking campus priorities to fund allocation, and evaluating and consolidating programs.
- The deans suggested that the budget process needs to be reimagined and possible other models for budgeting should be explored.

UW-Eau Claire should grow programs and initiatives that will attract and retain students.

- Open-ended responses from survey participants highlighted interest in increasing revenue-generating programs such as online and graduate programs. Survey participants also identified increasing enrollment and retention as strategies for increasing revenue.
- The deans talked about the importance of growing programs that will increase the number of students we serve and of aligning our investments with areas of expected growth.

Continuous facilities improvement is important to individual areas and academic departments and to the entire campus community.

- The campus-wide survey didn’t ask specifically about facilities, so little was learned about the campus’s perception of this issue.
- The deans, on the other hand, had strong feelings about the state of many academic buildings in particular and their ability to attract both students and faculty/staff.
Recommendations:

- The strategic plan should chart a concrete, measurable course for addressing the significant personnel concerns that exist, such as compensation, workload, and staffing levels. This must address competitive compensation for both faculty and staff and align our human capital (positions) with the mission and goals of the university. This plan should be transparent, equitable, and grounded in sound long-term financial planning.

- The strategic plan should include a collaborative, transparent mechanism for process improvement that fosters a campus climate in which continuous improvement becomes sustainable and routine. This process improvement focus should encourage cooperation and collaboration, not competition, among various parts of campus and be driven by the university’s mission and goals.

- The strategic plan should include movement toward a transparent budget process. This budget process should provide clarity regarding decision-making processes, ensure some level of autonomy for individual areas/units/departments, and allow for long-term planning at the unit/department and college level. The budget process should be capable of providing mechanisms to deal with both budget cuts and increases in revenue.

- The strategic plan should encourage investment in growing programs and areas that will positively impact student recruitment and retention. This will involve connecting academic decisions with their budgetary implications, particularly as they relate to number of students served.

- The strategic plan should place a high priority on updating the facilities on our campus. While the addition of new buildings in recent years has been an important step in keeping our campus competitive, the inadequacy of other facilities remains a significant concern. Continuous improvement or replacement of campus buildings needs to remain a top priority.
Appendix A

Question 1:

What financial barriers, if any, are preventing your department/unit/area from meeting its goals?

Responses in the “Other” category that garnered fewer than 10 responses each include:

- Campus Leadership (7)
- Process Problems (5)
- State Rules (3)
- State Leadership (2)
- Professional Development Dollars (3)
- Curricular Reform (2)
- Speaker/Special Event Dollars (2)
- Campus Atmosphere (2)
- Parking (1)
- Communication/Image (1)
- Time/Workload (1)
- Website (1)
Question 2:
From the perspective of your department/unit/area, what activities would you like to see addressed in an institutional long-range financial plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank of Importance (1 Most Important)</th>
<th>Rank Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank 1-2</th>
<th>Rank 1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing reserves to fund a compensation plan</td>
<td>130 79 46 41 35 30 25 15 11 412</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>209 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating how efficiently we use our resources</td>
<td>87 51 51 35 34 41 46 48 19 412</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>130 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuilding our reserve fund (aka the &quot;rainy day&quot; fund)</td>
<td>48 57 51 64 60 36 30 38 28 412</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>105 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising/developing a protocol for distribution of new state funds</td>
<td>30 43 75 67 60 66 31 27 13 412</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>73 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying additional ways to diversify our revenue streams</td>
<td>38 48 55 55 63 55 50 38 10 412</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>85 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing tuition increases</td>
<td>32 49 42 50 63 59 71 34 12 412</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>81 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining college affordability (through need-based funding, prior learning assessment, availability of distance/online learning, etc.)</td>
<td>38 47 44 47 35 39 50 73 39 412</td>
<td>2146</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>85 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing corporate partnerships</td>
<td>0 23 31 41 44 68 69 58 77 412</td>
<td>2547</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>28 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving communication/messaging regarding funding for large building projects</td>
<td>3 15 17 12 18 23 40 81 203 412</td>
<td>3115</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>18 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>412 412 412 412 412 412 412 412 412</td>
<td>18540</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The budget actions are listed in order of importance as designated by mean ranking. To determine if there were unusual combinations of rankings that might necessitate further analysis, cumulative ranks of 1 and 2, and of ranks 1, 2 and 3 were determined. The first two actions: developing reserves to fund a compensation plan, and evaluating how efficiently we use our resources and rebuilding our reserves, rated 1-2 using all measures. The least important actions, increasing corporate partnerships and improving communication/messaging regarding funding for large building projects were rated 8-9 in all measures.

Rebuilding our reserves and revising/developing a protocol for distribution of new state funds have nearly identical means, however rebuilding reserves had considerably more 1-2-3 votes.

While a Friedman test was performed and showed there are significantly different rankings, the post-hoc analysis has not been completed. For the purpose of reporting the average rankings, developing reserves to fund compensation is the only action to have a ranking less than 4, and the improving communications had the only ranking exceeding 6. These are fairly clear distinctions among the data.
Question 3:

Are there any other activities not listed above that you would like to see addressed in an institutional long range financial plan?

Participants provided 96 substantive responses. A thematic analysis revealed the following trends in responses:

- **Address internal problems** (25% of responses)
  - Improve/streamline processes
  - Change how the Foundation distributes funds
  - Match allocations to mission statement
  - Remove ineffective employees
  - Evaluate and consolidate programs on campus
  - Look at spending on buildings and facilities
  - Invest in the library
  - Strengthen shared governance
  - Ensure transparent and fair processes

- **Address state or System barriers** (5% of responses)
  - Reduce state control
  - Address barriers to efficiency at the system level

- **Improve communication** (8% of responses)
  - Improve internal communication between administration and faculty/staff
  - Improve external communication with community

- **Develop alternative revenue streams** (11% of responses)
  - Increase state funding
  - Grow enrollment and retention
  - Increase revenue-generating programs
  - Develop other revenue sources
  - Look at student fees

- **Address problems with compensation/staffing** (51% of responses)
  - Increase pay
  - Focus on faculty/staff retention
  - Focus on faculty/staff recruiting
  - Address workload issues
  - Address pay equity issues
  - Increase course staffing
Question 4:

Based on the activities you ranked as most important, do you have any specific thoughts or recommendations on how this activity can be accomplished?

Participants provided 81 substantive responses. A thematic analysis revealed the following trends:

- **Address problems with compensation for faculty/staff** (11% of responses)
- **Implement internal solutions** (36% of responses)
  - Remove positions and/or ineffective employees
  - Find efficiencies/eliminate waste
  - Link campus priorities with fund allocation
  - Increase transparency in financial decision making
  - Elicit faculty/staff input
- **Improve public relations and outreach to state government, the business community, and local citizens** (36% of responses)
  - Political lobbying
  - Improve external messaging
  - Increase corporate partnerships
  - Solicit outside funds through the Foundation
  - “Fight back” against the anti-education climate
- **Generate revenue from students** (17% of responses)
  - Increase tuition
  - Increase online programs
  - Increase graduate programs
  - Increase enrollment
Question 5:

In which division do you work?

The committee thanks Sherrie Serros for completing the statistical analysis and Deb Pattee, Keith Stearns, and Holly Hassemer for the qualitative analysis used in this report.