

6. Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

Building on Excellence, WCU's strategic plan, provides the basis for campus decision-making, new initiatives, assessment, institutional research, and ultimately the improvement of the University's ability to offer quality academic programming. Progress toward plan goals is monitored by SPAAC. The primary responsibilities of SPAAC are to keep the University community informed about implementation of the Plan, seek input from the University community and other constituents, make recommendations regarding the progress of the Plan, and assist the University with major changes to the Plan. SPAAC also prepares an annual report for Cabinet about plan progress as well as recommendations for revisions. Presidential initiative funding helps to align the budget process with *Building on Excellence*. Requests for funding focusing on strategic plan objectives are reviewed by both Cabinet and the BRC. In addition to the presidential initiative funding, all other new funding requests must be aligned with at least one strategic plan goal.

Building on Excellence and Strategic Budgeting

Building on Excellence is the overarching framework for both institutional goal-setting and budgetary decisions. Within this framework, the University uses a distributed leadership model and a large degree of decentralization in its budgeting. A salient feature of these approaches is that vice presidents, deans, and directors are responsible and accountable for managing the resources allocated to their areas. Complementing the distributed leadership and decentralization models are several committees that guide or assist in the planning and budgeting processes.

The University engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide planning and evaluation processes that incorporate the mission, vision, and goals to achieve improvement in institutional quality and demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. The University's effectiveness in this area is directly attributable to the intentionality with which the institution links budgeting and planning processes.

Capital Budget Planning and Capital Improvements

The Capital Budget is a five-year spending request submitted by the VP for Administration and Finance to the State System annually after consultation with the President, Cabinet, and Council of Trustees. The budget represents the University's priorities for state funding and capital projects over the next five years. In addition to the Capital Budget, the institution uses its own dollars to help finance building projects and deferred maintenance. The institution's Comprehensive Facilities Plan is used as a framework for these requests. This plan is directly linked to strategic plan objective 2.1 within the Sustainability theme: *develop and manage financial and physical resources sustainably*. An architectural firm with expertise in higher education facilities planning was hired by the University in 2010 to support the development of the Comprehensive Facilities Plan. While many of the plan's overarching themes remain the same, several changes in institutional needs and priorities have led WCU to develop a mid-decade update in fall 2015.³¹ The update demonstrates the institution's commitment to continuous improvement informed by refinements in budgeting, planning, and resource allocation.

During the last five years, several significant institutional planning projects were completed or begun as a result of this plan. The construction of the Business and Public Affairs Center (BPAC), with a planned occupancy of 2017 will have a positive impact on the academic space deficits identified in 2010 by adding 50,953 assignable square feet (ASF). Additional academic spaces were added with the completion of several smaller additions/renovations, including the E.O. Bull expansion and the Mitchell Hall renovations. The renovation and repurposing of five floors in Wayne Hall (a previous dormitory) for classrooms and faculty offices has been completed and plans are being developed for renovating the remainder of the building, including HVAC and other upgrades for currently occupied floors. The completion of Commonwealth Hall and the South Campus Village addressed residential needs on campus and the completion of the parking garage on West Nields Street has helped to ease parking limitations and traffic in the heart of campus by providing perimeter parking. Enrollment growth of 13.8% (3,273 students) within the last five years has spurred a significant need for space improvements and expansions for the next five years. To meet this need, the institution has plans to build a commons building (a facility with both academic space and a 1,000-seat residential dining facility) and a geographically proximate 600-vehicle parking garage. Each of these projects will contribute to addressing the space deficit space that currently exist in both academic and student services.

Institutional Budget Review Model

In 2014 the University initiated a new model to create more transparency and ownership in how and where the institution allocates dollars for all operations. A financial consultant was brought to campus to provide expertise in reviewing budget models as well as insight into the possibilities for future budget operations to ensure transparency. Following the consultant's visit and recommendations, the President formed and charged the Budget Review Committee (BRC). The BRC now serves as the main recommending body for allocation, reallocation, or reduction of financial resources. The Chief of Staff and Executive Deputy to the President convenes this committee. Membership includes representatives from a wide variety of constituencies on campus³² and the committee is charged with the following:

- Establishment of a process for prioritizing recommendations for new funding/reductions or reallocations of funds.
- Participate in activities to build a working knowledge of the University and State System budget and budgeting processes, including awareness of University fiscal conditions, constraints, and opportunities.
- Review all new block grant funding/reductions submitted to the Committee by the President and Cabinet.
- Present recommendations to the President regarding new block grant funding/reductions (the charge of the Committee is to make recommendations regarding the allocation of University funds)
- Share information with their constituencies regarding the Committee's process and outcomes, and solicit input that will inform their recommendations.

In this first year of review, the committee developed bylaws and engaged in significant professional development to ensure a base level of understanding of University budget processes and the current

fiscal state of the institution. Additionally, they reviewed, for the first time, the divisional budget requests of the six University Vice Presidents. The committee made recommendations to the President regarding these budgets and their work will continue as the University enters the next fiscal year.

Educational and General (E&G) Funds

E&G funds include state appropriations, tuition, certain fees and other revenues, which support the institution's ongoing operations. In April of 2015 a timeline of tasks for the new budgeting process was approved.³³ The process begins with the President and Cabinet crafting budget projections using enrollment, tuition increases, past allocations, and needs identified by the divisions. Following the projections, the President identifies a dollar amount of unrestricted and unassigned funds (i.e. block grants) for each division to add to their base budgets. Block grants are consistent with the distributed leadership model and provide each division with the flexibility to determine how to address one-time initiatives and base funding requests. The new model enhances distributed leadership by providing a greater level of divisional discretion. This has provided each division head with the flexibility of being able to reallocate resources within the unit or using new base funding to achieve division and strategic plan goals.

Once the VPs have reconciled the difference between their initial base request and the amount authorized by the President, they are then responsible for crafting a revised plan for the expenditure of any new funds. Depending on projections from fiscal affairs, divisions could be asked to prepare reduction recommendations. The President then reviews the revised divisional budget submissions and forwards them to the BRC who in turn provides an additional layer of review and recommendations to be sent back to the President and Cabinet recommending spending or reduction of priorities.

WCU's budgeting process has historically had strong linkages with strategic planning and institutional priorities. This rich tradition continues, but with a greater emphasis on distributed leadership at the divisional level and shared governance by involving the BRC in the budgeting process. Additionally, where funds are allocated for strategic plan initiatives, these distributions are monitored via *TracDat*, which allows the institution to evaluate the effectiveness of these investments. Again, the University's approach to stewardship is one characterized as a strong commitment to linking planning and budgeting processes to the institution's mission and strategic plan.

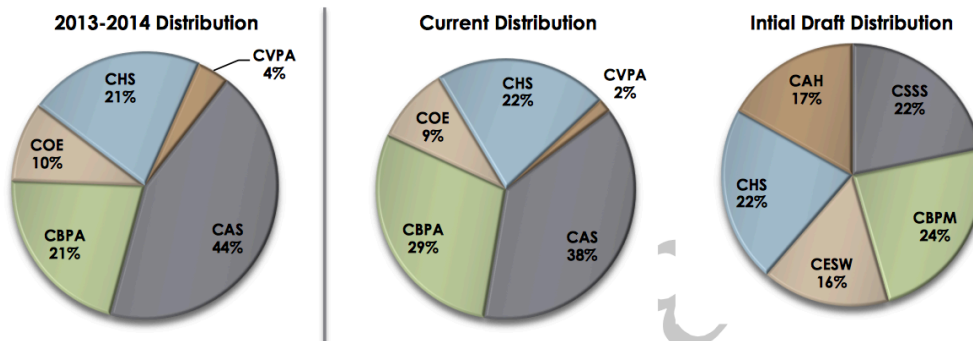
Institutional Planning and Budgeting in Academic Affairs

The Division of Academic Affairs completed a review of organizational structures during the fall of 2015 to ensure they were strategically aligned to facilitate excellence in all areas of University operations and support of the University mission. This decision was initiated by conversations that began in the College of Arts and Sciences as well as consideration of the Academics Theme strategic plan objective 2.1: *The institution will transform itself into a University whose organizational structures are strategically arranged to facilitate excellence in teaching and learning.*

The senior administration of Academic Affairs recognized that the current structure of the division was not sustainable in terms of the allocation of both administrative support and administrative complexity. In addition, it was not clear that the previous structure was facilitating pedagogical synergy as well as it could. The goal was to more evenly distribute administrative support,

administrative complexity, production of student credit hours, and potentially build on pedagogical and/or disciplinary commonalities in ways that improve the current organizational structure. The motivation for this was not from a cost-savings point of view and no current faculty or staff lost their jobs due to reorganization. As a November 18, 2015 the academic reorganization was finalized and resulted in a more even distribution of administrative complexity, student credit hour production and enhanced pedagogical synergies across disciplines. The resulting structure is represented in Figure 6.1.

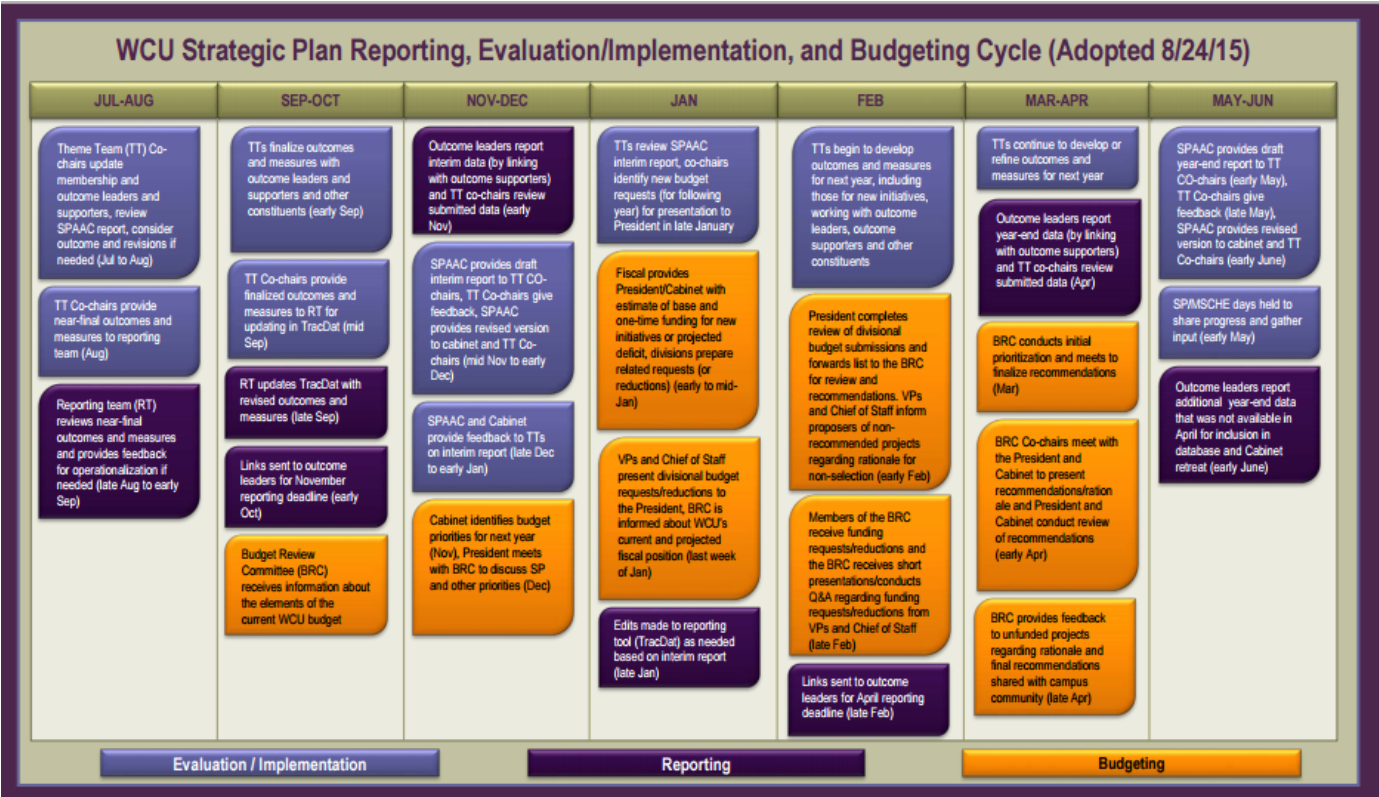
Figure 6.1: Academic Affairs Re-Organization Distributions



Communication Regarding Institutional Planning and Budgeting

During the course of the year, the President communicates his strategic initiatives in support of the strategic plan, *Building on Excellence*. These priorities are communicated to the campus community during the president's annual fall welcome address. Additional communication is provided in subsequent newsletters and postings on the President's website. As described earlier, the University takes seriously its stewardship of resources and has crafted an integrated approach to institutional planning and budgeting. As part of that approach, the strategic plan and budgeting cycles are aligned to create synergies. Figure 6.2 provides a visual representation of those linkages and demonstrates the coherence of institutional planning and budgeting efforts.

1848 Figure 6.2: Strategic Plan Reporting, Evaluation/Implementation, and Budgeting Cycle



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1851 *Conclusion*
1852 *Building on Excellence* has been integrated into all divisions of the University with annual monitoring by
1853 SPAAC and the President's Cabinet. As this report has shown, the strategic plan, in combination with
1854 the president's distributed leadership philosophy, has guided the University well in an era of
1855 diminishing state support and increased demands for accountability. In the past five years, the
1856 University has become more agile, responsive, efficient, and entrepreneurial, while increasing
1857 academic access and excellence, service to the community, and student success. West Chester
1858 University is well positioned to continue to thrive in the future and to achieve recognition as a
1859 national model for public regional comprehensive institutions.
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1861 Supporting Documents

- 1862 1- Budget Review Committee overview of responsibilities
- 1863 2- Strategic Plan with MSCHE Standards Report
- 1864 3- Strategic Plan Budget, Resources and Planning Report
- 1865 4- Strategic Plan website
- 1866 5- Email regarding Big Plan Days
- 1867 6- Academic Advising website
- 1868 7- Faculty scholarship report
- 1869 8- Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Center website
- 1870 9- Assurance of student learning rubric
- 1871 10- Exemplary Practices in Student Learning Assessment document
- 1872 11- Equity Scorecard
- 1873 12- 2012 Governor Advisory Commission on Post-Secondary Education Report
- 1874 13- New ESL provider contract
- 1875 14- PA TRAC website
- 1876 15- Audited Financial Statements for last three years
- 1877 16- Audit management letters evidence
- 1878 17- Budget summary information
- 1879 18- Comprehensive Facilities Plan
- 1880 19- Strategic Plan membership list
- 1881 20- SPAAC Reports
- 1882 21- Theme Team Reports for one year
- 1883 22- State System Performance Funding Program
- 1884 23- State System Performance Funding Tables
- 1885 24- Board of Governors policy for program review
- 1886 25- Evidence of We Heard You Campaign
- 1887 26- Office of the President website
- 1888 27- President Newsletters
- 1889 28- Evidence of heat maps
- 1890 29- Sample Program Assessment Plans
- 1891 30- Institution wide communication general education assessment findings
- 1892 31- Mid-Decade update to Comprehensive Facilities Plan
- 1893 32- Membership Listing of BRC
- 1894 33- Timeline for BRC work

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