

Appendix: Provost Moeser's comments on the University Future Committee

The University Future Committee, as I reported at the past meeting, has been appointed and charged and is now at work. The committee currently is in the process of determining its evaluative criteria. We will make this process as open as we possibly can. We are going to be open with regard to the process and the criteria--which will be distributed to everyone in advance--and for that purpose there will be an open hearing before Thanksgiving. The Future Committee invites all faculty/staff to come to discuss the process and the criteria before we proceed to the next stage of the process. Meanwhile the president and I are meeting individually with the deans of the several colleges to discuss in sessions with them their preliminary ideas for dealing with the budgetary scenarios which are in effect a 12% reduction over a 3-year period with the possibility of half of that coming back to the college or school for enhancement.

In addition to those private meetings with deans, the committee will also informally meet with the deans and vice-presidents. We are talking about roughly 30 budgetary units across the university--all colleges, schools and vice presidential lines with major budgetary authority--so that all budget officers can make a preliminary projection of how they would address the budgetary scenario that we have outlined. As soon as the committee's evaluative criteria are established, we will put those criteria in the hands of the deans and the other principal budget officers. We will then have formal budget document submissions to the committee by around February 1, with individual hearings with each one of those budget officers following.

In addition to that process the committee will subdivide into group hearing panels. We shall send them around to the several colleges in order to give faculty and staff an opportunity to speak directly to the committee on issues that may be inter-disciplinary in nature, may cross normal school or department or college lines, or are of concern to any members of the faculty or staff. In addition you will all be given an opportunity to communicate directly with the committee in writing if you wish. The intent of this is to make as available as possible the ideas and insights of the faculty and staff in addition to the administrative views that are coming up through department chairs and deans.

We expect that each of the budgetary units, colleges, and schools will engage seriously and collegially in a discussion of these issues. As I have said before, this is a process that is not being done from the top down but in an interactive fashion up and down with a great deal of the responsibility for decision-making at the college level or the school level. I can't really stress that enough. So all through the process we will make it as open as possible, as interactive as possible, and as responsive as possible. We shall give feedback at every stage to the deans and budget officers and the people who come with them so that there will be some sense of the committee's response to the proposals as they come in from each one of the budget officers. That roughly is where we are and how we are operating.

Finally, I should tell you of our intent to communicate with the entire university community on a regular basis. We plan to place in each issue of the USC Times a box that will update you every 2 weeks on the status of the University Future Committee, describing exactly what we are doing and where we are in the process. I realize - I think all of us realize - that this is a process whose implications are enormous. We are talking about nothing less than the future of the university, the opportunity for the university to build on its strengths, to focus its resources around those strengths and the core areas of what this university is all about. It does cause us to ask really tough questions. I realize that this process will cause a degree of anxiety among faculty, staff, and students and I simply ask you, as I have asked others to whom I have spoken, to trust the integrity of this process that will be open, honest, rational and fair and--I believe--ultimately will serve the best interest of this university in the decade to come.