

Date: April 13, 2005

To: Dr. Preston Pulliams and  
Members of the Budget Advisory Committee

From: Karen Jolly, Len Anderson, Kendra Cawley, Vicky Charlston, Susanne Christopher,  
Jane Holman, Porter Raper, and Mary Severson

Subject: Budget Proposals

In the email message of April 7, Dr. Pulliams asked the PCC community to send comments to members of the Budget Advisory Committee. The EAC chair also asked for comments be sent to the faculty and student development members of the BAC. We have received an impressive number of responses reflecting frustration with the process.

Several of the faculty members from the BAC met to discuss the best way to express the concerns and comments we have heard. We agreed to put general themes, comments, and recommendations in this written form. Other comments will definitely be voiced at the Budget Advisory Meeting. Those named above are in full agreement with these statements.

### **Preamble**

Among those whose program and/or disciplines were affected by the budget cuts, there is confusion and anger about what criteria were used to make the decision. While the criteria were stated and published, they were broad enough to be uninformative and therefore capable of being employed inconsistently. There is no clear understanding of the rationale used to make instructional cuts. From a faculty perspective, the decisions were reached in an administrative vacuum with little or no faculty input. Faculty and other staff are feeling discounted, undervalued, and dismissed.

The trouble with our current process is that these matters can't be easily addressed directly. It is rather unclear where these decisions were actually made; that is, where the "buck" stops for a specific decision. This is partly due to the fluid nature of our administrative staff right now, with many interim positions, new hires, Guy's combination retirement/presence, Nan's role. It is also partly due to the manner in which faculty have been informed of the process. We have been given some information, but not the information or process needed to productively help inform the reasons for the decisions.

In addition, faculty and other college leaders can and should be integrally involved throughout the planning and allocation process. All college personnel should have a clear understanding that a process is being created that will undoubtedly be used in a bad budget year to make cuts. A broader perspective is really necessary in this area.

**It is apparent that**

- The process used this year has the potential for causing a rift between LDC and PTE, each believing one is being discounted for the other. The beginning of this rift is already apparent to many faculty.
- Morale is low. Employees are trying to make sense of these cuts and are beginning to place “blame” on each other.
- Many programs and/or disciplines affected by the budget cuts are expressing their concerns to the college community while many others have not. It is important to ensure that all impacted areas are heard.
- The current process we have for planning and budget reductions and reallocations needs improvement.
- We need to have a clear, next-step process in place, where faculty and the administrators making the final recommendations to the president about instructional reductions to discuss the specifics of their situation. Reductions in other areas should also have input from the staff involved.
- Not all people agree on all decisions in the college; it is impossible for all to agree. The recommendations in this report reflect the majority consensus from comments we have heard from the college community.

**As we go forward in our discussion, it is crucial that**

- The College community is reminded we are a community college, not a junior college. Professional-Technical, LDC, pre-college, community education, and workforce training are all part of our mission.
- The College community is reminded that we are in the fourth year of budget cuts, not the first. Other financial reductions have been made over the past four years.
- A clear internal process is identified for further discussion on proposed instructional and academic cuts.

**Themes the Faculty Members have heard****Budget Cuts Boxes**

- Rumors flourish.
- Is there an already existing priority list for bringing back programs or isn't there?
- Who is making the decisions?
- What criteria are being used?
- How can “I” give input into the decision?
- Is this the college's attempt to get rid of PTE?
- Is this the college's attempt to reduce LDC and become a college that is predominately a “trade” school?

**Revenue Possibilities Boxes**

- Perhaps the cost of tuition has affected enrollment. Consider keeping increases minimal.

### **The Budget Hole**

- Revisit and possibly reduce New Initiatives.

### **Results**

Today many in the college, including many faculty, are feeling angry, confused, discounted, undervalued, and ignored. Some feel they know so little about the budget and the process for developing it that they cannot make concrete, rational suggestions. Budget information sessions are often poorly attended as faculty and others consider it a “done deal,” so input is really not wanted.

### **Immediate Recommendations**

In the likely event additional funds will be forthcoming from the state, the faculty and student development members of the Budget Advisory Committee make the following recommendations to alleviate further damage to the morale at PCC:

- 1. Immediately reinstate the Category 2 cuts (in the box titled Instruction due to budget hole) which include filling the cut block hires with full-time one-year temporary faculty and permanent hires next year.**
2. Maintain a modest tuition increase. In the future, consider planning tuition increases on a regular basis rather than a reaction to a bad budget year.
3. Invite the affected faculty and programs with cuts in Category 1 (**Instruction due to academic planning**) the opportunity to meet with the Division Dean(s), Deans of Instructions, and Vice President of Academic and Student services to discuss the decision. Faculty may have additional information that should be presented. The faculty leaders strongly recommend that a member of the EAC leadership team also be present as an advocate in what may appear a “top-heavy” management meeting.
4. Review the New Initiatives. We suggest they be reviewed with the following considerations:
  - a. Do they enhance the revenue picture? (e.g. Center for Business and Industry)
  - b. Do they respond to accreditation standards? (e.g. additional librarian at Rock Creek)
  - c. Do they support student access and success? (e.g. child care at Cascade)

### **Long Term Recommendations**

1. Prior to the next budget discussion, prepare and announce the process for budgetary decisions that is inclusive and deliberative. Include at least one faculty member of past Budget Advisory Committee(s) to assist with this budget plan, preferable the EAC chair or a member of the EAC Leadership Team. Include in this plan the following:
  - a. A process where instructional planning and a financial allocation plan is developed and used to make resource decisions.
  - b. A clear internal process where programs and/or disciplines affected by any proposed instructional cut meet with the DOIs and VP to discuss the specifics of their area and provide additional data. Include a member of the EAC Leadership team in these meetings.
  - c. A priority list of instructional cuts, including block hire positions, will be recommended by the DOIs and VP to the District President.
  - d. Review and recommend possible tuition increases.

2. Standardize a method for management to meet regularly (yearly) with departments to discuss budget concerns. This should **not** be done just in a crisis. If problems with the department exist, develop a long-range solution to approaching problems. For example, if there was a retirement or hire on the horizon, we could talk about that in regards to the budget. It seems ridiculous that we would hire Instructor X one year, and then lay him off nine months later.
3. Encourage faculty and administration discussion regarding enrollments, advertising, and PR issues. Currently it is often difficult for programs to obtain assistance in promoting individual programs or classes.
4. Provide clear and definite roles for the college committees (Education Master Planning, Core Outcomes) regarding the budget planning process.

### **Conclusion**

The faculty and student development members of the Budget Advisory Committee appreciate participating in this budgeting process. We appreciate your asking our opinions and that of our colleagues. However, we are concerned that the lack of information has caused a drastic and unnecessary decline in morale. Reinstating the Category 2 cuts and the block hires would be a significant step toward restoring morale and trust. In addition, we recommend including faculty and staff in improving this process for the future.