

Council Notes

March 22, 2017

Prepared by: Jackie Hogan

Attendees: President Meghan Hughes, Tony Parziale, Rosemary Costigan, Hilary Jansson, John Cole, Ron Schertz, Izabel DeAraujo Rivera, Dave Patten, Tom Sabbagh, Bill LeBlanc, Bev Wiley, Sara Enright, Alix Ogden.

President's Remarks:

- President Hughes welcomed the group and thanked them for their involvement during this budget design process.
- President Hughes encouraged engagement from the college during the legislation session by reaching out to elected officials that they know. Involvement from the team will help her make our case and help our students. She expressed support for the Governor's RI Promise program.
- Recently President Hughes met with Senate President Paiva-Weed, who was very supportive of the college. The Senate President is stepping down, and we hope to develop a strong working relationship with the next Senate President.
- President Hughes is now meeting with key House and Senate members, including House Finance Chairman Marvin Abney, Chair of the House Finance Subcommittee on Education, Gregg Amore, and Health, Education and Welfare Chair Joseph McNamara.
- There may be alternative 'free college' plans offered by the House.
- Sara testified at the March 15 House Finance hearing on RI Promise. There was a large turnout for this hearing, especially among students. Most of the questions from the Committee were directed at Commissioners Purcell and Wagner and Deputy Chief of Staff Kevin Gallagher. The hearing lasted until midnight.

FY 18 Budget:

- Capital Improvements are investment in our campuses, which comprise part of our budget request.
- Unrestricted funds pay salaries and for the operation of the college, which is 82% of the budget.
- WE have not been asked to freeze our spending by DOA.
- A question was asked about federal programs. Sara mentioned that we have multiple programs at the college that could be effected. Tracy is currently in DC and will have details later this week about what kind of changes are potentially on the horizon.
- President Hughes reiterated that communication is a priority of this team and asked that this group bring information back to their areas of the college.

- President Hughes said that the federal government has taken several steps that negatively affect how our students feel about our country and make them fearful of the future. She asked that the Council and the college as a whole continue to communicate to our students that they are valued.
- Question was raised for Dave about the budget timeline. The House hearing has not been set yet. Most likely that will be at the end of March. Final budget should be expected late May or June.
- President Hughes mentioned that she attended Senator Reed's President's Roundtable in early March. Her takeaways were the following:
 - 1) in the face of questions and concerns from our students about the administration's action, Sen. Reed said that our students should trust in our judicial system.
 - 2) look back 50 years when there is a choice of cuts between higher education and health and human services, health services will win every time.
- President Hughes asked the team if they would like to share anything with the group. Ron Schertz commented on our great faculty and said they do not hesitate to intervene when they find a student that needs help. Today, the faculty members prevented two students from leaving the college and got them help from Student Services.
- Finally, President Hughes said that commencement is in 8½ weeks. And that the Strategic Planning group, Paulien Associates, will be here tomorrow, 3/23, and Friday, 3/24, at Lincoln, Providence, and Newport campuses . She encouraged the team to make every effort to attend and to encourage others in their respective areas of the college to attend.