

First Monday Report

Focus on Accreditation:
 Why do we have two committees that deal with resource allocation?



Issue 10, November 5, 2012

Upcoming Events:

- Nov 6 Election Day
- Nov 7 LACCD Board of Trustees Meeting
2:00 PM
The Great Hall
- Nov 12 Recognition of Veteran's Day
LAPC Campus is closed
- Nov 22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday
LAPC Campus is closed

The Resource Advisory Committee and the Budget Committee: What's the difference?

At a recent meeting with the Pierce College Council (PCC) Executive Committee, there were a number of questions regarding the respective delineation of duties related to the Budget Committee and the Resource Advisory Committee. After reflecting on these questions, it occurred to me that the faculty and staff representatives on PCC Exec might not be the only employees with questions about what these two important committees. This article explains their different functions as they are currently defined.

A little history...

It is my understanding that the Budget Committee (BC) was initially created in 2007, when Ken Takeda arrived at the college. It largely functioned as a group where the annual operational budget was reviewed, current year expenditures were discussed by committee members, and emergency augmentations to annual budget lines were considered. According to Budget Committee policy, the BC has authority to allocate emergency resources for requests for \$4999 or less. If an emergency *continued on page 2*



Time Off to Vote

"Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. If you are scheduled to be at work during that time, California law allows you to take up to two hours off to vote, without losing any pay. You may take as much time as you need to vote, but only two hours of that time will be paid.

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The Difference Between the Resource Advisory Committee and the Budget Committee

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request is over \$5000, the BC forwards the request for action to its "parent" committee, the Pierce College Council. PCC then makes a recommendation to the college president who ultimately decides whether or not to fund the \$5000 or higher emergency requests. With these functions as its primary mission, the BC acts largely as an operational committee focusing on current year expenditures and emergency budget requests that are not addressed during the annual budget preparation cycle.

The original membership of the Budget Committee

reflected its specialized duties with respect to the operational budget, which is inextricably tied to and affected by both the State's and District's annual operational plans. As a result, the committee had a number of technical budget support personnel assigned to attend as members or as resources to this body. There were voting members from the Faculty and Staff Guilds, the Academic Senate, and the deans. The only member of Senior Staff on the committee was the Vice President of Administrative Services because of its focus on college operations rather than planning.

You may wonder why the BC did not develop the college

budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which takes place annually during the spring semester. Its focus on expenditures and the fact that it was not a broadly representative governance committee did not make it the ideal body for planning the operational budget for future fiscal years. Without a defined governance committee, and the vacancy in the Office of the Vice President of Administrative Services, in the spring of 2012, I convened a representative Budget Task Force to advise me on the preparation of the operational budget for fiscal year 2012-2013. As you may recall, it was this task force that presented the preliminary budget to the college

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Remember to Vote

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Your time off for voting can be only at the beginning or end of your regular work shift, unless you make another arrangement with your employer.

If you think you will need time off to vote, you must notify your employer at least two working days prior to the election" (California Elections Code Section 14000).

The purpose of this law is to accommodate employees who may not have sufficient time outside of their working hours to vote on Election Day. Time off for voting is to be requested for up to a maximum of two hours "casual absence" if required, either at the beginning or end of your regular work schedule.



Please make every effort to plan ahead and prevent a service impact to your department. The absence certification form must be completed and turned in to your supervisor at least two working days prior to the election if you are a classified employee.



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community in an open forum in March of this year. This task force was a one-time, short term work group created to advise me on budget preparation. Later in the spring 2012 semester, the Budget Committee revised its charter to make the group less technical and more representative, including the addition of the vice presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Services. Moving forward, the BC will now be the college governance committee that prepares the annual operational budget each spring.

More recent history...

To be prepared to meet the accreditation standards related to long-range decisions and linking our budget with our plans, we needed a committee that was a broadly representative body that could prioritize budget requests resulting from the program review and annual planning cycles. When this need surfaced in 2010, we looked first to the Budget Committee to determine if that was the appropriate existing committee to take on this task. Since neither

So what is the difference between the BC and the RAC?

Academic Affairs nor Student Services were represented on the committee at the senior administrative level at that time, and the BC was focused on its role as a technical operations committee, it was decided that we needed a different governance body to take on the job of linking planning with allocating our fiscal resources. These decisions gave birth to the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) in the spring of 2011. The charge of the RAC is to develop a process for taking the resource requests that come out of the annual plans and prioritize them in light of the Educational Master Plan and the Strategic Plan as they articulate the College's overall long-range planning goals. Twice since the spring of 2011, the RAC has gone through the exercise of developing and revising a process and criteria for prioritizing requests from the four functional areas of the College including Academic Affairs, Administrative Services, Student Services, and the President's Office. Currently, they are preparing to prioritize the annual resource requests for a third time based on the Annual Program Planning process that was completed for the 2013-2014 academic year.

So what is the difference between these two committees?

In short, the BC considers

Considers requests for funds for the current academic year arising largely from unforeseen emergencies and will begin preparing the annual operational budget with fiscal year 2013-2014. It is focused on the here and now. In contrast, the RAC prioritizes requests that develop review and annual planning processes. It looks forward to the future and the achievement of the College's mission and long-range planning goals. Originally, the RAC reported directly to me. Last week I approved a recommendation made by the PCC at its October 25, 2012 meeting to have the RAC reporting restructured so that it is now a sub-committee of PCC, as is the case with the BC. Is it possible in the future that one governance committee will develop to combine the responsibilities of these two separate committees – a budget and planning committee? Certainly that is a possibility and such a decision should come out of the annual committee self-evaluation processes. In the meantime, each committee serves a very important function related to the allocation of College resources. With the newness of the RAC process, which is being evaluated annually for its efficiency by the committee, and the new role that will be assumed by the BC for annual budget preparation, there is

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Planning at Pierce: an overview

By: Dr. Mia Wood

Last month, I wrote a rather general essay on planning at the individual level. The goal of that piece was to begin a conversation about planning, starting with *you*. Since you are a member of an academic institution, the discussion has to expand outward, integrating the college as a whole.

Starting this month, the focus of the remaining four Pierce College planning essays will be on planning and accreditation. As you all know, Pierce College is pursuing reaffirmation of accreditation from the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), which is part of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC visiting team, comprised of peers from other two-year institutions, will be on the Pierce campus March 11-14, 2013. What they want to see colleges do is, in most cases, what most colleges should do, provide quality education at a well-run institution. Part of what makes for a quality education at a well-run institution is integrated layers of planning. We can approach these layers in terms of the four standards Pierce College works to meet:

- **Standard I: Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**
- **Standard II: Instructional Programs, Student Support Services, and Library and Learning Support Services**
- **Standard III: Human, Physical, Technology, and Financial Resources**
- **Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**

A cursory look at the standards topics provides entrees into how we can think about planning. For example, we can think about how the college's planning ties into its mission, or how planning results in institutional effectiveness. Standard I.A.4 declares, "The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making." The mission of the college is complex, in that it focuses not on one activity or one type of student, but on several. The college seeks to help students become transfer ready, prepare for careers, and improve basic skills. All of the college's decision-making bodies serve those ends, and they evolve in order to meet the changing contexts in which those ends are realized.

On the academic side, planning occurs at the section, course, department, and program level. Mirror processes occur at the Student Services and Administrative Services sides of the college, while all planning culminates at the committee or college levels. The college president reviews both short and long term planning recommendations as part of her final decision-making process.

Beginning with the annual plan, each unit or department sets forth a review of its previous year's implemented plans, and develops plans for the following year. Such plans include alterations to courses or programs based on learning outcomes evaluations, perhaps in the form of resource requests or schedule adjustments. Resource requests are prioritized at the school or area level, and then at the division level before heading to the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC's prioritized list then goes to the college president for final approval or adjustment.

Resource allocation is one significant result of annual planning at the unit or department level. The Educational Master Plan (EMP) is also the result of annual planning. It is essentially where *all* annual plans converge. In fact, the EMP informs the direction of the college. From this plan, and in light of current opportunities and challenges, emerges the Strategic Plan, which is constituted by mission-driven goals and objectives derived from the EMP that guide college committees, organizations, and services. Thus, in turn, the Strategic Plan becomes the basis for the Annual Program Plan (APP). What is most important to understand about planning is that it is a *continuous cycle*.

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An Overview of Planning at Pierce...

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Institutional effectiveness is determined by how well plans succeed in contributing to the Pierce College Mission. Hence, the Educational Master Plan is reviewed and updated every six years, while the Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated every three years.

The Pierce College Council and the Academic Senate are the college's two organizational bodies that formally develop, implement, and monitor college planning, all of which is aimed at realizing the college's mission of supporting student academic achievement. Both the PCC and Senate offer venues for campus-wide dialogue about improving student achievement, which is the apex of the college's mission.



Difference between the BC and the RAC

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still a level of development for the committee that make the decision to have two separate decision-making bodies a wise one at this point in time. We can and should, through self-reflection and evaluation, examine our processes and committees annually to ensure that they are providing a valuable service in the operation of the College, the attainment of our goals, and the improvement of services to our students.