BUDGET PROCESS DTF REPORT AND PROPOSAL

HISTORY

The Budget Process DTF was constituted by the Library Management Team in December of 1978 in response to a number of questions about how budgets should be developed under the new management structure in the Library. Previous to implementation of the Management Team in the summer of that year, budgets had been reviewed and modified in meetings of all Library Budget Unit Heads. Since Budget Unit Heads no longer met as a group, there was some confusion among some Library staff as to how library budgets were going to be developed in the future. The charge to the Budget Process DTF was to "define the budget planning process in the Evergreen Library with specific attention to the role of the Budget Unit Heads in that process."

People appointed to the DTF included the Library Associate Dean, the Library Budget Coordinator, one Budget Unit Head and three Library staff members from various areas. Two of the staff conducted interviews of other members of the Library Group, and from these, drew up a list of key issues to begin discussions. This report is the written summary of approximately two months discussions.

ASSUMPTIONS

There are several assumptions contained in this report that need to be pointed out from the beginning. One of the biggest is that the process described herein is based upon the present economic situation of the college and the state. Meaning that these are austere times of no-growth budgets that leave little room for developing new projects or services. The base of each new budget built is the one presently being administered, with slight adjustments here and there.

Another assumption contained in this report is that the budget process described herein cannot be administered rigidly. What we recommend as a process are really a series of guidelines that need to be re-examined periodically. There are at least three major reasons why a budget process needs maximum flexibility. One is that the Library budget process is greatly at the mercy of external influences, such as directives from the President, schedules from the Business Office, orders from the Governor, etc. Two, is that much of the success of the process depends upon the persons involved, and therefore, must change as the people do. Third, that a process of building and administering a budget is inherently a fluid, on-going one. Accordingly, when a situtation arises that requires alterations to the proposed process, by all means, alter the structure to meet the situation in whatever way makes sense. In this report, we present a specific process based on present reality, but we also suggest that it is more important to follow the spirit of the report rather than the letter. To make that easier, we list below the important guidelines to be followed for an efficient humane process.

GUIDELINES

1. Choice of Involvement: Any budget process designed for the Library should include several levels of involvement for people to choose among. The DTF began with the belief that most people in the Library wanted more involvement in the budget process, but soon found out that this is not true. Some did, some didn't. Some even wanted less involvement than was expected of them -- this was the case among several Budget Unit Heads. In fact, a lot of the confusion about the role of the Budget Unit Heads was cleared up for us by the discovery that not all Budget Unit Heads were interested in working with the budget other than drawing up one for their own area. This made it possible for us to see that those Budget Unit Heads who were requesting greater involvement in the budget process should be welcomed along with other Library Group members

who wanted more involvement, rather than thinking that there was something unique to the job which mandated the involvement of all Budget Unit Heads in Library-wide policy. There must be room in any library budget process for people to choose to not be involved.

2. Quality rather than quantity involvement: Another important guideline to any budget process is to place more emphasis on structuring meetings so that they will be maximally productive rather than frequent. Scheduled Library Group hearings, presentations and discussions should be frequent enough to keep people informed but, even more important, meetings which are called need to be well planned and well prepared so that participants have a sense that their involvement is indeed important. Otherwise, people conclude by making uneducated contributions which are, in some cases, more frustrating than making none at all.

3. Open meetings: When possible, the Budget Process DTF endorses the concept that all budget meetings should be open to Library Group staff, regardless of classification. The rare exception would be meetings where RIFing questions need to be addressed to avoid rumor-spreading or panic. It is, however, up to the group holding the meeting to decide whether to treat other interested parties as observers or full participants. For example, if the people in User Services want to attend a meeting to review the Media Services draft budget, they could, but, the latter group should decide whether to let the former present arguments either in favor or against a certain item, or whether to ask them to just listen to the arguments presented by the people whose budget was under review. We endorse this because we feel information should be free and easy to obtain by anyone interested at any level at any time, but that groups also need uninterrupted times to get work done. The proposed budget process and any Library budget process guarantees that a Library Group member can air his or her opinion about all levels of the Library budget at one time or another. Therefore, it seems fair to make it impossible for any Library budget process to break down due to "fillibusters" by people seeking to further the interests of their area at the expense of the interests of the Library as a whole.

4. Budget making is not consensual: Any successful budget process must leave room for people to really be heard about their concerns and opinions. On the other hand, if budgets were left up to consensus, they wouldn't get done. Since we all want more of the resources than are available, the attached budget process allows for maximum participation while identifying certain individuals, mainly, the Area Coordinators and Management Team as responsible for making "hard decisions" in the face of conflicting interests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the preceeding in mind, we make the following recommendations:

1. That the proposed budget process, as defined under our sections on scheduling and structure (narrative), scheduling and structure (visual), roles and sample budget, be adopted as Library Policy and Procedure.

2. That the Management Team develop further policy on RIFing as it applies to the Library. This seems to be a separate, complex decision-making process apart from, but tied to the budget.

3. That the Management Team develop a list of priorities of Library functions and services for use in making budget decisions. (This has already started - Ed. Note)

4. That the Budget Coordinator be given support for developing meeting facilitation skills, including encouragement and further training, to maximize his/her talents.

5. That the Management Team examine and update the Budget Unit structure in the Library to ensure that the person responsible for the functioning of the unit is the Budget Unit Head.

BUDGET PROCESS -- SCHEDULING AND STRUCTURE (NARRATIVE)

The process of creating and administering a Library budget is an ongoing one and should be treated as such. During the entire year, the Budget Unit Head and the staff of each area should pay attention to the budget presently being administered, take notes when they identify changes in spending patterns and costs. In particular, they should notate trends in inflating or deflating prices of supplies and services, or any unusual expense incurred which would not be expected to repeat in the future. At the same time, each area should be thinking about what services they provide or work they do which they could eliminate, and which new services need to be provided.

This information should be assembled from February through M ay of each year. During February and March the staff from each area should sit down and update the established priorities of the area and make decisions about cutting or adding services in the area. In doing so, the staff need to consider the larger context within which they work by consulting the established priorities of the Library, academics and the college. After coming to an understanding of area priorities, and after compiling cost research from the past year, the staff should be able to pull together an accurate budget proposal for their area for the upcoming year -- including both a budget for day-by-day maintenance of the area and a prioritized list of one-time, large expenditures of funds. This information should be forwarded to the appropriate Area Coordinator

During the last half of March, each of the Area Coordinators and the Library administrators should work through all of the budgets in their area. They should be checked against established priorities and compiled into one, large , prioritized request. If this involves cutting back any of the area proposals, the Area Coordinator needs to meet with the affected persons to present his/her thinking and to provide an opportunity for dialogue about the change. The Management Team must review and update the Library priority list to correspond with changing College needs.

By the beginning of April, the Area Coordinators should present their budget requests to the Management Team to combine into a full Library budget. For the balance of the budget process, the Management Team should be joined by the Budget Coordinator and the Associate Dean. Beginning in May, this combined budget will be scrutinized and refined. Everyone's opinion shall be considered, be they from Library management, Library staff or people from outside the Library. All changes in priorities, requests, etc. should be communicated to affected members of the staff as soon as possible after the changes have been decided upon. In addition, the Management Team should arrange at least one all-Library budget hearing where the proposed budget is presented in total and in a way that does not intimidate people with little or no exposure to the budget process. This hearing should serve the dual purpose of informing all members of the staff about current developments and giving them the opportunity to review and comment on these developments.

When the Library budget request has been finalized internally, it should be presented to interested people outside the Library for their comments. During the preceeding part of the process, individual items may have been presented to certain external Library people for approval or comments, but now the final request as a whole should be discussed with key external people, as determined by the Associate Dean. The idea is to complete the groundwork to ensure smooth presentation at College-wide budget hearings.

A more refined schedule of dates should be drawn up each year by the Budget Coordinator, after the Library has received directions from college and state officials as to that year's requirements.

BUDGET PROCESS -- ROLES

Library Staff. The primary involvement of Library staff with the budget process
should occur within each person's budget unit. Each member of the Library staff,
whether Budget Unit Head or everyday working class, must continually be aware of the
cost of operating his or her budget unit. This doesn't mean that all staff should know
payroll details or how to fill out travel forms, etc., but that they should pay attention
to and report unnecessary expenses created by misuse of equipment, supplies, staff
talents, or whatever. Because of the intricate, detailed knowledge each staff member
carries about what it takes to do their job, they are also in the best position to
comment on what shifts in the priorities/workload of an area can be accommodated within
the present system, and which take different personnel, supplies, or equipment. The
part staff play in contributing important information to the budget process on the unit
level cannot be overemphasized.

In addition, Library staff should add their thinking about Library priorities, and
budgeting both in the area-wide and the Library-wide meetings called for that purpose.
It is important, however, that staff avoid the temptation to lobby for their unit.

Budget Unit Head. The role of the Budget Unit Head in the budget process should be
coordination of the efforts of the staff in that area to 1) evaluate area services in
order to reaffirm or modify existing area priorities; 2) build a realistic, well
thought out budget for that area for the future; and, 3) to monitor the smooth adminis-
tration of the existing budget under which the area operates. The Budget Unit Head is
primarily an information gatherer and disseminator. This does not mean, however, that
the Budget Unit Head should play a passive role. Because that person has maintained
close contact with her or his Area Coordinator and other Library people and users, and
because she or he has developed a comprehensive view of the nitty-gritty financial
details of running the area, the Budget Unit Head can and should exert strong leader-
ship in coordinating the budget process. In most cases, this would mean that the
Budget Unit Head would take responsibility for putting forth various proposals, but
that the staff in the area would have the opportunity to review and modify those pro-
posals. The Budget Unit Head would also bear the major responsibility for representing
the area viewpoint with regard to the budget, to the Area Coordinator and others, as
needed, after the staff in the unit have come to a general concurrence about the budget.

Area Coordinators. In cooperation with the staff of units they supervise, the Area
Coordinators shall be responsible for assembly of their area's budget request. They
must become aware of the needs of each budget unit, and the justification for those
needs.

During the body-building phase of the budget process, the Area Coordinators must play
two somewhat contradicting roles because of their appointments on the Management Team.
On the one hand, Area Coordinators shall be responsible for representing the view of
their areas in providing information and argument to the Management Team in support of
their areas. On the other hand, as members of the Management Team, Areas Coordinators
are committed to thinking about the Library as a whole rather than being bogged down
by a narrow area perspective. Area Coordinators must be able to knowledgeably deal
with requests of other areas as they relate to Library-wide priorities.

Management Team. The Library Management Team shall be the last unit of review prior
to the budget request leaving the Library for presentation to the rest of the college
and state. It is their responsibility to see that the requests have been coordinated
to comply with existing lists of priorities. The Management Team and/or their sub-group,
the Operational Group, should be on a standby basis during the last phases of the
budget building phase of the budget process -- in order to make the snap decisions about
changes in priorities often required at this time.

Budget Coordinator. The Budget Coordinator is exactly that -- a key person in coordinating all the aspects of the budget process. The Budget Coordinator does this in two ways. First, this person shall be responsible for providing and compiling all kinds of numbers and, in doing so, working with and understanding terms. The person shall be available to attend any or all budget unit, area or Library Group meetings where and when the staff need budget information or need help translating the various forms, schedules, and cost estimates required in the process, into terms which are easily understandable for discussion. Second, the Budget Coordinator shall facilitate budget unit, area and Library-wide meetings where budget is discussed, as requested by the people responsible for those groups. The Budget Coordinator can use his or her position of neutrality towards Library areas, coupled with his or her extensive information about budgeting, to raise issues and questions for discussion. At no time should the Budget Coordinator assume an advocacy position for or against any Library area or service.

Associate Dean. The Associate Dean has the final responsibility for the preparation of the budget. The Associate Dean acts jointly with the Dean in representing the Library at college-wide meetings and in presenting the Library budget to the campus and the college administration and other points. The Dean and Associate Dean shall be assisted in this presentation by any Library staff that they deem necessary to help support this process.

Within the Library, the Associate Dean's role shall be to play a "devil's advocate" during the latter stages of budget building, asking the hard questions that may be asked of the Library by people from the outside, and forcing Library staff to sharpen their thinking and responses to questions in preparation for budget hearings. This will happen when the budget request is reviewed at the Management Team level.

In addition, the Associate Dean may wish to attend budget unit or area meetings where budget discussions are occurring in order to get a clear sense of what the arguments will support a particular request. In these cases, the staff involved and the Associate Dean will decide, prior to the meeting, whether the Associate Dean will play "Devil's Advocate" or simply observe.

Dean of Library Services. The Dean of Library Services officially is vested with the authority to make all decisions about the Library budget, both the one proposed and the one presently administered, as well as all decisions about Library services and priorities. In reality, however, the Dean has chosen in the past to delegate some responsibility to the Area Coordinators, Budget Coordinator, Budget Unit Heads, Associate Dean and other Library staff. Acceptance of this DTF report means that the Dean shall continue to delegate budget authority, specifically to the people whose roles are defined above.

The responsibility of the Dean in the budget process is two-fold. First, the Dean shall provide leadership throughout the entire process, particularly, by raising issues for discussion and putting forth proposals for the benefit of the entire Library. Because of her or his unique position of authority, which makes her/him privy to information about the rest of the college, state and nation, he or she will be able to help Library staff see their work within the larger college and institutional Library structures. Second, the Dean shall monitor the entire process to make sure it is efficient, humane, and appropriate. In the event of a major breakdown in the budget process, the Dean shall take necessary steps to get the process going again, consistent with the spirit of this DTF report.

BUDGET PROCESS - SAMPLE

The following narrative traces the building of an acquisitions budget, in order to illustrate how a single budget unit request would progress under the proposed budget process.

Phase I - Drafting the Acquisitions Budget Request.
(Ongoing) The current year expenditures of the acquisitions budget shall be followed throughout the year, with Phoebe, Al, George, Acquisitions staff and the Library Resource Selection Committee making notes of any unusual expenditures. As Budget Unit Head, Phoebe would maintain this accumulation of notes for consultation in later phases. (February) Phoebe would call together the acquisitions staff and other interested people to talk about possible changes in services, workload, staff, or equipment resources that might have budget implications for the upcoming year. During these discussions, budget unit, area, Library and college priorities would be reviewed, as well as any current budget directives. If invited, Al should attend any or all of these meetings in order to provide information, and Dave should attend if something is being discussed for which he may need background information at future hearings outside the Library. After sufficient discussion, Phoebe should draw up a draft acquisitions budget to present to acquisitions staff for final review.

Phase II - Acquisitions Budget Merging with Technical Services
(By March 15) Phoebe presents the draft request to George as Head of Technical Services, with verbal explanation of new requested items, a review of what elements of the budget were repeated from previous budgets, and any other information George might need.

(By March 30) George considers the acquisitions draft budget along with the Technical Processing draft budget again consulting with statements of existing internal and external priorities to which the area is committed, and compiles both into one Technical Services draft request. By this date, he may have more information from college and state authorities via Al as to how the draft must be written which may modify the acquisitions draft budget additionally. When he is satisfied that he has put together the best possible Technical Services draft budget, he presents this to the staff of that area for review and modification.

(By April 1) The Technical Services draft budget is formalized and forwarded to the Management Team, Dave and Al.

Phase III - Technical Services Budget Merged with Library Budget
(By April 30) The Management Team reviews all the area draft requests, reviews the Library, college and state priorities and budget directives coming from external sources. As part of this, George would explain the acquisitions part of the draft budget, with Al, Phoebe and other acquisitions staff providing more detailed information, if necessary. Dave would ask tough questions about the acquisitions and other parts of the budget. The team would prioritize new or special requested items. Dave would present these to interested outside influences such as the Vice-President, President, etc., for their informal reaction, asking Phoebe, George or Al for verbal or written supportive arguments for the acquisitions part of the prioritized items if Dave deems it necessary.

(By May 15) The Management Team would listen to Dave's report of the reactions of interested outside influential people and modify the request of prioritized items, as necessary. The team would combine the draft budgets into a single Library draft budget. This would be presented to the Library Group, either through an all-Library or through area meetings. As part of this, Al and George would explain to acquisitions staff what changes were made in their draft budget, and why. Depending on the reaction of Library staff, the Management Team would redo the Library draft budget and present it again to the Library Group for another round of comments.

Phase IV - The Library Budget Merging with the College Budget

(By May 30) Jovana and Dave take the final Library draft budget to the Vice-President, President and college hearings. George, Phoebe and other acquisitions staff either accompany them or stay in a standby mode to provide more detailed information about acquisitions generated requests. At this point, college administration may decide to more specifically direct the amount of funds to be allocated and the purpose of the allocation. This information will then be transmitted back to the Management Team and the Library Group for further refinement of the budget request in order to meet these directions.

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