Student Forum notes – TFAB 2018

**Ideas to address budget concerns without raising tuition:**

-***University allocate certain percentage from donations to the university to the E&G so that we don’t have to increase tuitions.***

Discussion notes: Donations are given for undertaking particular work specified by the donors, for example building a new building. In most cases such donations even do not allow for diverting any part of the donated funds for maintenance of the building, university has to maintain it from general funds. Allocating funds from donations to E&G may back fire and donors may not donate.

-***Diverting 5-10% of donor money***

Discussion notes: it’s risky to do so due to the risk of losing donations.

Many students would to see a mandatory percentage dedicated to scholarships for all gifts, e.g. 1%.

***-Be less focused on staying in the AAU***

Discussion notes: is there a way to maintain our status at the lowest possible cost? The point here was do we need to continue to invest in tenure track faculty and the associated costs or could we just accept that we cannot afford to be in the AAU, have more GE’s teaching classes, more adjunct instructors? We spent a lot of time discussing this issue—essentially the cost/benefit of AAU status. Students were unclear about the benefits of having more tenure track faculty. Some felt that GE’s were better instructors that TTF.

Some students questioned the investment in tenure-related faculty. They understand that this is a significant long-term institutional investment, but do not completely understand how this connects to the mission and strategic interests for the institution.

Students were concerned that the cost of growth would be less access to needed courses (e.g., a class is full throwing an entire matriculation plan out of whack), less access to services, less access to faculty. Students all felt that smaller classes were more responsive across multiple dimensions (greater access to instructor, faster turnaround in grades, better relationships with peers) so concerns were expressed about growth and its impact on access to education.

***-Use reserve funds***

-***Are students willing to pay for additional services***

Discussion notes: We also spent a decent amount of time discussing whether students would be willing to pay more for additional services. At our table, there was a spit with some students saying that more costs for more supports would be okay whereas others felt that additional services were unnecessary.

There was concern about the size of the I-fee and what programs and initiatives were prioritized, e.g., football tickets.

There was concern and skepticism about the university’s live-in requirement for first-year students. Despite evidence of improved outcomes, students were more concerned about the increased expense of requiring students to live on campus.

Live on requirement/exemptions/where does the money paid to housing go?

There were questions around the pool of non-resident students, and whether that was truly an option. We discussed decreasing college ready Oregon students, and university funding to support expanding recruitment activities in states where there is a market.

As a state public school, do we have concerns about growing non-resident students, knowing they subside resident students? There didn’t seem to be a concern with the students around the table due to the financial impact of resident students.

Athletics keeps wanting us to pay more (tickets as part of the Incidental Fee).

- ***The athletic department makes lots of money, ask them to help with deficit instead of raising tuitions. E&G supports Jaqua Tutoring Center.***

Discussion notes: True that they make good money, but they also have high expenditures which are equal to their revenue. We used to subsidize athletics, not anymore. To avoid conflict of interest, our faculties work at Jaqua and do not report to Athletic department.

There was widespread confusion about the financial line separating athletics and the rest of the university. Clearer communication around this issue would be helpful.

-***All universities work together (legislature and PERS concerns included)***

Discussion notes: Administrators sound the same at every universities (in reference to the HECC meeting for tuition increases), universities have to work together, something she hasn’t seen yet – listen to students then dismiss – not seen the increase to those programs administrators said they need increase to maintain – promises not met, same level of programming and budget

There was some discussion regarding the end of OUS and that impact on the larger state schools. The expansions in Portland for both UO and OSU were noted. One participant thought it was a good thing that there are more opportunities for Portland enrollment.

The students wanted a more detailed explanation for why state funding has decreased for higher education. We talked about the various pressures on the state budget, but also emphasized our lobbying efforts in Salem to keep tuition increases low.

We need a better coordination with University, also give us more opportunity and space to talk in Salem.

Any meaningful attempt to get state money and sustained support requires student groups to advocate; has to be a change in the way state manages universities

There was discussion about PSU and their free tuition program. We talked about Pathway Oregon and the struggles around getting the information out to potentially eligible high school students.

-***New revenue streams***

Discussion notes: Online education was discussed. Some participants noted the flexibility that it allowed and the opportunities there. Others didn’t like online education and didn’t support its expansion, saying they didn’t use it. Mixed answers: Some online courses (general education) are good, provide us time to work outside and earn money, but not all courses should go online. Face to face courses are essential for our learning.

Others mentioned the ASU / Starbucks partnership and the opportunities it provided.

We discussed international student tuition. They do not pay more tuition than domestic ‘non-residents, but they do pay an international fee. Should we consider charging international students higher tuition?

There were several comments that prospective out-of-state students are concerned about tuition increases. Several students argued that remissions should be increased to help domestic and international students deal with these increases.

Not all International students are rich; some being priced out

Why do international students who went to US community college or earned a US degree have to take the TOEFL? UO is only school in Oregon to do this for grad/PhD programs. TOEFL classes increase cost.

There was a discussion of grants, and explanation of why they are restricted funds. Andy talked about his grant and how it worked.

Raised concerns about privatizing public institutions. He felt that public institutions serve a public good that must be continued, and that conversations about privatization shouldn’t be considered.

COSEA, OEA as potential resources to help with recruitment efforts.

Increase less for resident vis-à-vis non-resident.

***-Not do too much too quickly***

Discussion notes: With regard to the discussion on how to keep tuition down, the question was raised as to whether we were trying to do too much too quickly. Should we be reducing the strategic initiatives, and moving more slowly.

Some students react negatively to the sheer number of construction projects and increases in tuition. There is a perception that the increases are used to cover these construction projects.

Where does the money come from for new construction, maintenance? Answered by Jamie

***-Pay staff and faculty less***

Discussion notes: There was strong opinions that top administrators make too much money and this has had an adverse effect on tuition increases.

Some voiced the sentiment that we need to negotiate harder with faculty to reduce salary increases.

Seeing very little by administrators to help students with tuition, feed them, etc. There is no trust of administration

Faculty and staff salary, how much is faculty, administrative and classified salary. (2000 faculty, 1700 classified, 1200 unclassified)

Don’t feel heard by administration, deep dissatisfaction – receive zero clarification

President’s salary – over a million in benefits/salary

***-TFAB process comments***

Discussion notes: Create a central information center with links to students such that students are informed about TFAB decisions, and meetings continuously.

Students don’t really know TFAB exists or how they can provide feedback to the members

The value of education is lower than the benefit. There needs to be a clearer articulation and messaging regarding the long-term benefits of a college education.

Intentionally alienated students from the process, no communication

***Other issues raised:***

Food security is a huge issue on this campus - April/May 2016 – stopping student workers from eating leftover food (buffet style).

The shift meals for student dining workers ($3), met with Mike and Roger – what part of the budget is saving the university, what actual money? Been really frustrating, platitudes, communication has been foggy at best.

Food Security; housing shift meals; having to choose between books and meals

There was discussion around the opportunities for high school students to take UO classes, even non-residents that would meet some of their college degree requirements. Could there be a wider expansion of available opportunities?

Class scheduling and availability was not considered to be an issue. There was discussion around Friday classes and the low interest in this opportunity. Could this be a way to grow the student population without increasing faculty, and infrastructure? Would this be a better utilization of class time?

It was asked whether there was any information provided that explained the value of the UO education.

There was no interest in a tuition guarantee program.

Corporatization of University of Oregon

Restriction of student free speech

***Questions asked by students:***

Why has state funding gone down?

Why do we need tenured faculty?

How do we balance constraints in infrastructure (new buildings) vs. rising tuition?

What percent of Foundation funds goes to scholarships?

UO wastes money- where do tuition dollars go?

What can students do – lobby day (Libby fielded this and passed out business cards)

How is the President advocating for lower tuition?

Are enrollments decided nationally? Is it even possible to grow?

Does the UO currently have reserve finds that could be used to support some of these costs?

What are strategic investments?

Have Universities ever tried to divert donor money?

Why the sudden impact of the PERS program?