

In completing the Performance Based Budgeting White Paper Template several issues became quite apparent to me. Some of these issues may appear to be mere griping or whining. This is not the case. We are all so inundated with things to do we rarely have the time to reflect, that odd thing that a liberal education is supposed to promote. These are merely observations that might be relevant to future exercises of this sort and provide some context of what community campuses must deal with to provide these necessary products. In no particular order these issues are:

- 1) Some of the analysis done for the PBAC presentations is directly applicable to the PBB paper. Much of the data for PBB was not either included or available for PBAC. Whether this makes any difference or not is one issue. The timing though is certainly an issue. Further reflection and data available for the PBB makes some of the assumptions for PBAC irrelevant. The question one might ask here is why in the short span of just 2 or 3 weeks are the answers to questions now basically incorrect? Have the assumptions changed? Are we measuring something different?
- 2) The data provided for PBB is not always consistent with what the campuses have available. We are usually provided the data from UAA and then we cut and paste it into a formatted document. If UAA already has the document and the data why are we cutting and pasting? This is much like the AUP materials that mean little to us and require a great deal of time and effort to complete. Providing community campuses with the formatted document already filled in would be extremely helpful. I found it very interesting that while working to get the data into some understandable form, I get an e-mail from a staff person in Anchorage who provided a wonderful attachment "in the hopes that I can be of some assistance to you as you develop your enrollment management plans." This work would have saved us a tremendous amount of time and is a very nice product, but we had already done it. The problem is we don't have staff to do these types of projects and in my case I have spent nearly all of my time working on PBAC and PBB tasks lately. These activities have great value, particularly when no one else is doing it, (less so when others are doing it) but in doing those tasks I am not out in the community working to raise funds (as in University Generated Revenue) or other worthy endeavors such as recruiting people for the college advisory council. If we're going to receive help please let us know so we aren't each doing the same work in parallel. I received a very gracious e-mail from Renee Carter-Chapman on June 16 regarding financial assistance to help cover over time or staff overloads. But, when there are no people available to work the data then there can't be overloads and the time frame does not allow for hiring a temporary staff person when the product is due by July 1.
- 3) While both the PBAC and PBB exercises have been very valuable learning experiences why are we doing this? Statewide sent a draft budget out via e-mail on June 16, 2005 at 1:22PM. This was done well before our PBAC meetings were concluded and not long after the delivery of the PBB whitepaper data. This is truly disheartening. We're trying to cope with year end, faculty being off contract, trying to fill staff vacancies (6 in all at Mat-Su), attend all the meetings we're supposed to attend and complete all the reports and projects requested of us to provide for budget input and then we see the budget from

statewide before we've completed these projects. Please remember that the community campuses are very thinly staffed. Take the following comparison for example from the fall of 2004 (*data is taken from the Trend Book material available on the UAA OPRA website*):

Unit	Grades Given	FT Fac	FT Staff	PT Fac	PT staff	All Fac	All Staff
Coll Eng	965	15	11	17	26	32	37
Coll Ed	2,820	39	15	24	6	63	21
Coll HSW	3,258	78	92	37	49	115	141
Kenai	3,556	31	40	97	12	128	52
<b>Mat-Su</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>39</b>
CBPP	4,349	51	68	22	35	73	103

“Grades given” is a surrogate measure for enrollments and consists of all grades including graduate and 500 level courses as well as “I”s and “W”s. Mat-Su’s staff number is misleading. Unlike the other units Mat-Su, except other community campuses like Kenai, must provide student services—8 staff members (includes financial aid, enrollment and admissions, grade recording); it must provide for maintenance—4 staff members; it must provide computer tech support—3 staff members; it must provide for the book store—3 staff members; it must provide the library with staff—4 staff members; this accounts for 22 of the 29 staff. Other units do not need to provide for those functions and there is a certain number of these staff positions that must be filled to maintain some level of service regardless of enrollment. The other full-time staff positions are either Business Office personnel (three vacancies at this time) or two administrative assistants. There are only 2 full-time administrative assistants at Mat-Su and 1 part-time administrative assistant—one full-time position is vacant and the part-time person is off contract. Compared to the number of grades given by, thereby the number of enrollments in, the Colleges of Health and Social Welfare and Business and Public Policy it would seem that we are extremely under-staffed, yet we have to deal with many of the same reports, all of the assessment requirements and all of the PBAC and PBB products. All this while faculty are gone (naturally, we should have faculty input for this), the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs is off contract, the Student Services Manager is on vacation (people do have to take vacation some time), and the Business Manager is trying to deal with the monthly report and end of fiscal year closing with three fiscal technician positions vacant. Think about the College of Engineering where they have 40% of the fulltime staff numbers that Mat-Su has to provide for 25% of the Mat-Su student population; the College of Health and Social Welfare has 80% of the enrollments but three times the fulltime staff and triple the total staff. We cannot work at this level of effort at reporting and continue to be expected to meet any type of metric in terms of enrollment or revenue generation. Keep in mind that if you want it bad, you’ll get it bad.

- 4) The timing of all of the Operating review and PBB requirements couldn’t be much worse. PBB is done after faculty go off contract. It’s year-end and we are supposed to receive fiscal information for FY 05 and only received all of the information on June 23 with the product due on July 1 as if the fiscal people at the MAU and on the campuses don’t have enough to do. Enough said about that. The Operating Review is discussed in June/July,

the format and content is changed several times including about two weeks before the presentations are due in early fall when faculty are busy with classes at the beginning of a semester. Too many moving targets on too short a fuse. The very things that require some faculty input are requested and completed when they are either off contract or the worst time of year for them. You want it bad, you'll get it bad.

- 5) Now that I've vented all these things I would like to make a some recommendations:
  - a) Must each unit complete an operating review, PBAC and PBB products each year? Maybe completing these tasks on a rotating basis would be a better use of time and effort.
  - b) Is growth always good? Our metrics need to show increases each year. Isn't quality important? Do the outcomes of our students mean anything? We are investing huge amounts of time into outcomes assessment, but none of this is a metric in any way. In working to bring about higher quality we have not invited many part-time instructors back and cannot offer the same number of sections that were did earlier. The quality of our instruction is now much higher, but our metric suffers because we cannot offer the same number of sections. We need to make all of our efforts come together into some coherent whole. If a unit is making strides in outcomes at the expense of the metrics what does this tell us about outcomes assessment? It appears to state that outcomes and assessment are not as important as the assigned metrics. This sounds frighteningly like what was said on the PBS special "Declining by Degrees" which aired on PBS June 23, 2005. Give high grades, increase retention, rigor isn't all that important.
  - c) Is retention a real measure? Many of the students at community campuses are not here for anything other than a course or two. When they pass those courses they have been successful as has the college. But, because they don't return, we are penalized because we are being measured as a four-year college would be. Some of the metrics need to be revised because community campuses are very different than the MAU campuses.
  - d) Are some of these metrics relevant to community campuses? Or, in working with the MAU are the community campuses actually hurting themselves by being team players? For instance, at Mat-Su we have curtailed upper division courses at the request of UAA (various departments and Academic Affairs). In doing so we have hurt our metrics by not offering classes that could fill (fewer SCH), provide greater tuition revenue (upper divisions classes), and provide greater service to our service area (Art 101-104 have been discontinued at the request of the UAA Art Department and these were very popular with the local community). I know that there is talk of metrics for the community campuses, but we will still be measured by inappropriate metrics that are more applicable to four-year campuses.
  - e) Attention is invited that these metrics and the Performance Based Budgeting concept is something quite new to community campuses if not to the various MAUs as entities. This means that we are undergoing a massive culture change. In the past budgets were delivered as numbers. It will take time for people to deal with this very new concept and actually "buy into" providing target material. Patience is not a virtue in this case it is a necessity. Moreover, those providing

the budgets must show that they are living up to the letter and spirit of the PBAC and PBB process.

- f) I think the most important unintended consequence of this exercise is that it should provide even more evidence that the community campuses are very different from the MAU campuses.
- g) This letter took approximately 2 hours to produce. The PBB documents consumed approximately 50 hours of my time since June 13. Since April 1 PBAC has consumed 30 hours in meetings alone, 12 hours in travel (just for PBAC meetings) and 20 hours in preparing Mat-Su's presentation; a total of 62 hours. So for PBAC and PBB I have invested 112 hours during April, May and the first 3 weeks of June. In those 13 weeks there were 520 working hours, 112 of my hours, or 21.5%, were spent on these two projects. This leaves less than 80% of my time to work to produce the metrics we are required to report on and are evaluated on.