Welcome from the Chair of SPBAC

The Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC), whose members come from all parts of the UA community, focuses on the Strategic Plan and the forthcoming Responsibility Centered Management II (RCM2) initiative. SPBAC helped develop the Plan – referred to as “Never Settle” – and will be involved in monitoring its implementation over the next years.

Accurate and helpful communication about this Plan and the RCM2 process is essential to their successful implementation. This ‘Message from SPBAC”, and others to follow, will try to provide straightforward, non-technical, explications of what this planning is about. It will be distributed widely, in the hope that it can inform, energize and hopefully provoke engagement in the process by as many of us as possible.

We will ask, and then answer, what seem to be the central questions on the minds of many at the UA. This first Message will both ask and answer. In the future, it is hoped that questions will come from others.

FAQ #1: What is all the fuss about a Plan anyway – why do we need yet another Plan?
The cynic in all of us (and I’ve been here 28+ years so cynicism comes easy) wants to know.

**ANSWER:** the only way the UA is going to not just survive the upheaval in higher education in the USA, but actually thrive, is to **get our act together.** We work hard, we teach well, we innovate, we reach out to the world, but we don’t do all these things whilst pulling in the same direction. The Plan (and this is OUR plan, we designed it) if followed makes sure we are pulling in the same direction. It can help us stay focused on a long-term strategy for success as a 21st century university.

FAQ #2: What is the “Never Settle” plan and what does this phrase mean?

**ANSWER:** The Plan (soon to have its own website) is a framework for the future. It was developed through a highly interactive process over the past 12 months, involving literally thousands of people at the UA, and expresses both our core values and aspirations for the future that build on these values to accomplish our goals. This Plan is a living document, not a tome to be bound and left on a shelf. In this sense we will ‘never settle’ on a final plan because our actions must constantly adapt to the ever-changing world. We will also never settle for less than our very best, in engaging our students and the community, in innovating new ideas and solutions, and in partnering broadly with all those whose lives stand to be enriched by our efforts.

FAQ #3: What is RCM2 and why do we need it?

**ANSWER:** RCM2 will bring a substantial portion of the UA’s budget under the umbrella of a transparent financial model that takes into account both sides of the ledger – revenues and expenses.
There are nine RCM2 subcommittees grappling with various aspects of the budget, meeting regularly, moving towards recommendations, and reporting progress to SPBAC. Their recommendations will be modeled in the Spring, and while we don’t know the implementation schedule yet, early planning is targeted at some kind of initial implementation in late summer of 2014. Actual implementation will depend on modeling results and the budget environment at the time.

FAQ #4: What happens to units who responded to RCM1, in ways that could lead to their being ‘penalized’ by RCM2?

FAQ #5: How can units already teaching many students generate even more SCH, so as to garner more resources?

ANSWER: These critical questions are very much under discussion, and some way of not punishing (indeed rewarding) those who responded to RCM1 must be found. Will it make everyone happy – unlikely, but those engaged in the process understand that something must be done about these issues. It is important to keep in mind that RCM2 will not, by itself, generate new resources – it is intended to make transparent where both revenues and costs come from, and hence make it easier for units to act in ways consistent with their needs and goals, while contributing to the broader aspirations of the entire institution.

FAQ #6: How will it work with RCM2 resources flowing to the Deans/VPs, but revenue generation at the unit level?

ANSWER: Revenues will indeed flow to the Deans/VPs – as will costs. Resources and costs will generally reflect where activity occurs, providing appropriate incentives. Each Dean should work with their units to insure that the distribution of resources and costs reflect the strategic plans developed at all levels – departments and programs, Colleges and VP areas, and the UA as a whole. SPBAC has a role in monitoring the application of RCM2, and in making sure there is rough equivalence in process across the campus.

FAQ #7: What can members of the UA community do to contribute to these processes?

ANSWER: Get involved, to the extent possible given all the other things we are called to do. Participate in planning in your unit, and in bridging your plans to those of your College/VP area. Finally, send me your questions and thoughts (nadel@u.arizona.edu), so I might address them in future messages.