MESSAGE FROM SPBAC #3

FAQ #13  There are not many mentions of staff in the *Never Settle* plan – what role will staff play?

The relative lack of mention of staff was one of several oversights – students also received scant mention, as did “quality.” These oversights will be remedied as the plan evolves -- remember this plan is called *Never Settle*. Staff serve in many critical roles at the UA, affecting all areas of the plan. For example, staff help with course development, advise students, support admissions and recruitment processes, develop funding data bases, provide IT support, organize and promote public lectures, readings, and seminars; coordinate student internships, and much more.

The contributions of staff will, along with others, determine whether we thrive in the future or not. These are not just words -- they reflect reality, and they demand that staff, as well as everyone else in the UA community, be treated with respect and appreciation for their role in the bigger University picture.

FAQ #14  How is RCM being developed?

An overall RCM Steering Committee and nine subcommittees were established to consider all of the activities of the University, and how those activities can be funded, given our various revenue streams. Value statements to guide the process were established (these are available on the RCM website). Each subcommittee is critically examining how RCM is implemented at other institutions, seeking best practices where possible. The Chairs of these subcommittees serve on the Steering Committee, which has the task of making sure overlaps between the committees are recognized. These subcommittees are moving towards initial recommendations, which will form the basis for model design and testing through Spring 2014. This, in turn, will inform the decision on how and when to implement RCM -- as soon as Summer 2014 or perhaps phased in over the following year.

FAQ #15  Given the prominence of interdisciplinarity in the *Never Settle* plan, what is going to be done to provide sustainable funding for graduate interdisciplinary programs (GIDPs)?

This issue is under active discussion. It is agreed that something must be done to enhance and stabilize GIDP funding, and several possibilities are under discussion. One possible scenario is that such funding will be considered an institutional cost, much like the library, with direct allocations (subventions) from a central pool.
FAQ #16  Under RCM, will we have to pay rent for the space we use?

Everyone is already paying “rent” -- at present it is paid by the central administration, resulting in fewer resources to distribute to Colleges and VP areas. Under RCM, these ‘rent’ dollars will be given to RCUs (Responsibility Centered Units, i.e., Colleges) and they will use them to pay their space costs. In one pocket, and out the other – hence, no net change. Over time, however, efficient use of space could result in savings; and one imagines that decisions about new buildings will be influenced by who is actually responsible for space costs, and the sources of revenue to be used to cover them.

FAQ #17  Will RCM discourage entrepreneurial activity?

To the contrary, RCM should enhance such activity, but in ways that are informed by the actual associated revenues and costs.

FAQ #18  What are the next stages in implementing the Never Settle strategic plan?

At this point, strategies to implement the various strands of Never Settle are being worked out. Within each of the 4 ‘pillars’ of the plan (Engaging, Innovating, Partnering, Synergy) are approximately a half dozen actions. According to one possible scenario, ad hoc Task Forces will be assembled to implement a particular action – such as 100% engagement, or increased student retention, or increased diversity in faculty, staff and student ranks, each with a point person, or Steward. These Task Forces would be composed of individuals whose job description already includes some of the things involved in that strategic goal, along with members of SPBAC, and other relevant groups to assure as broad a perspective as possible. These entities (Stewards plus Task Forces) could take responsibility (and accountability) for implementation of the various strands of the plan.

FAQ #19  How will RCM be implemented in the units nested under an RCU (e.g., Departments within a College)?

All resources will flow to the RCU, hence, the Deans and VPs that are in charge of these RCUs are ultimately responsible for establishing a strategic plan for their RCU that fits within Never Settle, and then distributing their resources in accordance with this plan. It is assumed that transparent processes will be established within each RCU equivalent to the transparency RCM will bring to the University budget as a whole. Thus, each RCU will receive its revenues, cover its costs, and make strategic investments as determined by its plan. Within this model it is critical to understand that not every department and program at the UA will have the same role. Some
will excel at certain things (e.g., engaging, or partnering), while others will excel at others (e.g., innovating).

**FAQ #20 Will all funds be allocated through RCM-like formulae?**

No, some funds will reside in strategic investment pools (both centrally and in RCUs), to allow for subventions where necessary. For example, some academic departments are essential to our existence as a premier research university, but simply cannot cover their costs – actually this is true for many. In these cases, the revenues they generate must be supplemented from the subvention pool. The following figure, though overly simple, captures roughly how things will work.