Ad Hoc Committee for the Evaluation of the Planning Process

I. INTRODUCTION:

In the Spring of 1983, at its March 17th Faculty Senate Meeting, the School of Education Faculty Assembly placed on the agenda Faculty Document No. 1546 a resolution calling for an evaluation of the present University-wide planning process. The resolution, which was broadly supported by Faculty Senators, requested that a special committee be formed to evaluate the process and to report back to the Senate by the end of the Spring term. The University Committee, entrusted with the responsibility of selecting a working Ad Hoc Committee, appointed the following:

Prof. Fred Berman - University Committee
Prof. Frank Cassell - History
Prof. David Evan Glasser - Architecture
Prof. Robert Krueger - Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Prof. Howard Pincus - Geological Sciences & Civil Engineering
Prof. Mary Ellen Schaff - Chemistry
Prof. Rachel Skalitzky* - Comparative Literature
*Resigned 10/83 due to heavy University wide committee responsibilities.

A. COMMITTEE ACTIONS

The Committee was formed in May 1983 and met once to discuss basic strategy for obtaining required data and decided to adjourn for the Summer since it was determined that the most important information would have to come from Deans, Chairs, Unit Supervisors, and others who have had key roles in assembling documents forwarded to the Chancellor's Office for action. At the May meeting the Committee elected David Evan Glasser of Architecture, to serve as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Evaluation of the Planning Process.

The Committee met in Fall 1983 five times, September 6th and 20th, October 11th & 25th and November 22. It subsequently reviewed four draft copies during December and January and met for a final time of February 7, 1984 to review and approve the report in its present state. Over this period the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, the Director of the Controllers Office and the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs were interviewed. In addition the Committee sent out seventy-six letters to Dean's Chairs and Unit Supervisors requesting answers to six questions which are summarized below:
1. To what extent was there faculty and student participation at the departmental level?

2. What were the net effects of the planning process as far as you were concerned?

3. What problems did you experience or perceive with the process?

4. Were all the questions regarding departmental data relevant in your opinion?

5. Do you have suggestions for improving the process? Can you propose alternative methods for faculty participation in the planning process?

6. Were you aware of what criteria would be used in selecting proposed increments/decrements?

The Committee subsequently received 42 responses, 6 from Deans and 36 from Chairs and Unit Heads. The responses were, to say the least, remarkable. Although coming from persons who were at their busiest point in the academic year, most letters were extremely thorough and informative. Many contained deeply felt expressions of concern regarding the planning process and its impact on their respective units. The Committee was greatly impressed with and appreciative of the broad-based response we received and wish our colleagues to know that many of their observations were shared by AHCEPP and incorporated into this report.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PROCESS

It appears that the planning process varies from School to School and throughout the University community. In an effort to clarify the process for the interested reader, a summary is presented below which attempts to document the various options which appear to be used at the various levels of participation in the planning process.

1. Departmental Initiation

The present system is initiated at the Departmental level wherein a planning report is generated, according to information received by the Ad Hoc Committee, in one of the following several ways:

A. Prepared by Chair and received by Departmental Executive Committee and/or full Faculty.

B. Prepared by planning committee which is either appointed by Chair or elected by Executive Committee.

C. Prepared solely by Chair.
D. Discussed by full Exec. Committee and summarized.

E. Prepared by small ad hoc committee appointed by Chair.

Comment: There appears to be a broad range of settings in which Departmental planning is initiated.

2. Faculty Review

After Departmental plans are prepared it appears that one of several subsequent steps is taken, depending on the Department:

A. Full faculty review report prior to its being forwarded to School or College Dean.

B. Faculty reviews report as Dean prepares planning report.

C. Faculty does not review Department submission but reacts to Dean's report.

D. Faculty does not review or react to proposed plan after it is submitted to Dean.

Comment: Faculty review of Departmental planning documents varies across the University.

3. Dean's Planning Proposals

Once in hand, Deans review Departmental proposals with a view to balancing overall requests and projections to present a unified academic plan to the Vice Chancellor's Office. It appears that during this stage any of the following routes is followed in preparing a School or College Planning Document:

A. Deans confer with Departmental Chairs prior to preparing their reports.

B. Deans initiate the report and return it, usually in rough draft, to Departmental Executive or Planning Committee and/or Faculty depending on Departmental structure.

C. Deans confer with School Planning Committee, which is usually appointed by Dean, but is elected in some instances.

D. Deans have initial conferences with Vice Chancellor's Office prior to making documents final.

Comment: There appears to be quite a bit of latitude at the School and College level for Deans to obtain information from both Departments and the Vice Chancellor's Office.
4. Vice Chancellor's Review

The school/college planning document having been submitted, the Vice Chancellor and Assistants to the Vice Chancellor for Program, Budget, and Personnel review all documents. A pre-budget hearing is held with each Dean and Director at which time the planning document and related materials are reviewed and discussed. Analyses of each unit's planning goals and priorities are conducted by the Vice Chancellor's staff. The Vice Chancellor and the above-named Assistants to the Vice Chancellor together develop a planning document for the Division of Academic Affairs which includes a summary of goals and priorities.

In the process of developing the Division's planning document, the Vice Chancellor meets with individual Deans as needed for further review and clarification of the school/college planning documents. As an outcome of these meetings priorities may be reconsidered and reordered.

The goals and priorities of the Vice Chancellor's planning document for the Division of Academic Affairs are expressed in the form of prioritized lists of increments and decrements, each to a level of that portion of the budget specified by the Chancellor. These priorities reflect the goals statements that appear elsewhere in the Vice Chancellor's planning document.

When the Vice Chancellor's document is in draft form, a meeting is held with the Senate Budget Advisory Committee. As an outcome of this meeting priorities may be reconsidered and reordered.

The final version of the Vice Chancellor's planning document is submitted to the Chancellor.

Comment: Personal professional staff analysis is introduced into the process for the first time. Units will have received beforehand data and analyses from the Office of Institutional Studies and from the Controller to assist in the preparation of the Deans's documents.

System wide constraints and guidelines affect planning decisions at the level of the Vice-Chancellor's Review. Criteria for the determination of priorities are discussed with the Senate Budget Advisory Committee and explained in the Vice Chancellor's planning document; however, it is clear from comments received from most correspondents that the basis for these criteria are unclear at the School and Departmental level.
5. Senate Budget Advisory Committee

While the Vice Chancellor's staff is reviewing School and College proposals, the Senate Budget Advisory Committee, an elected body of Faculty representatives is performing an independent review of these documents as well. This committee may, or may not, prepare revised priorities for resource allocation based on its collective perceptions of the overall Academic Plan of the University. These recommendations are then reviewed by the Vice Chancellor's Office and may be:

A. Merged with Vice Chancellor's Planning Document.

B. Accepted in whole or in part and incorporated in Vice Chancellor's recommendations.

C. Rejected out of hand.

Comment: The intent of this Committee is to safeguard Faculty interests with respect to academic programs and supporting resources.

6. Chancellor's Recommendations

The planning documents from the Vice Chancellor and all other Divisions of the University are forwarded to the Chancellor for final review and implementation. The Chancellor confers with the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee which is made up of 13 members who, with the exception of the students, are on staggered three-year terms to assure some degree of continuity each year.

A. 5 faculty:
   1 from the University Committee, 1 from the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, 1 from the Physical Environment Committee, 1 from the Graduate Faculty Council, 1 from the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee

B. 2 academic deans

C. 1 academic staff member from the Academic Staff Committee

D. 1 classified staff member

E. 1 representative from the Division of Student Affairs

F. 1 representative from the Division of Administrative Affairs

G. 2 students:

   1 undergraduate student and 1 graduate student
All of the Divisional recommendations are provided to the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee. Each year the Chancellor provides a recommended percentage of increments and decrements to each Division. Each year the Chancellor recommends a specific portion of the recommended increments and decrements for reallocation at the Divisional level. For example, in the 1983-84 planning cycle, each unit was to recommend 4 1/2% of their base for increments and 3% of their base for decrements. Within that amount the Chancellor allowed the Division Heads to recommend up to 1% for internal reallocation. After the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee raises any questions regarding individual items, the Advisory Committee then has the opportunity to make recommendations to the Chancellor with regard to the reallocation of resources between Divisions. It may choose to reject decrements or increments on the lists as part of its final advice to the Chancellor. The Chancellor, after receiving the final recommendations of the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee, then confers with Division Heads regarding those recommendations and makes a final determination with regard to the allocation of any incremental funds and/or the reallocation of funds between and within Divisions.

Comment: Discussions held at the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee is the first point where many of the constituents in the university community have direct advisory role in the process. The Vice Chancellor's Office reviews only those recommendations emanating from the Division of Academic Affairs. At this final stage, all Divisional planning recommendations are merged and prioritized by the Chancellor with advice from the Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee.

The foregoing is an attempt to present an encapsulated description of a process which in fact contains more overlaps and feedback circuits, both formal and informal, than is here portrayed. The presentation is made in order to clarify how, where and who can intervene in the planning process and with what consequences.

C. FORMAT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

The task of presenting a concise and useful evaluation of our planning process was perceived as a difficult one. The Committee determined, at the outset, that a massive, highly documented, report would not be received well by a Faculty already awash in a torrent of unread paperwork. To this end, it was decided to keep the Committee report as direct and terse as possible and to eschew incorporation of financial and statistical data, preferring to focus on the purpose, operation and impact of the process on members of the Academic Community.
In this latter regard, in order to establish a basis for evaluation the Committee identified six planning criteria which it determined were essential to any meaningful process. These, in no particular order are:

1. The planning process ought to be directed primarily at implementing academic policies.

2. The planning process should deal separately with academic policy and budgetary matters. Budget planning considerations should be contingent upon academic policy decisions.

3. Decisions about control of resources should be made as close as possible to those with the interest and competency to make informed planning decisions regarding operations at their level of participation.

4. There should be a generally understood overall campus academic plan to which School and Departmental Planning Committees can refer in making decisions at the unit level. This would establish a set of criteria at the University level whereby individual units might better understand the rationales for resource reallocation within the campus.

5. There should be a mechanism for Faculty to have meaningful input at the University level on campus-wide academic policy matters directly and indirectly affecting Departmental operations.

6. There should be a time schedule which permits productive discussion and review of planning proposals at each level.

After selecting the above points, the Committee made observations regarding the nature and extent of the present planning process and the degree to which it did or did not meet these criteria.

Finally, relying heavily on the responses from unit heads, Chairs and Deans, the Committee generated recommendations for the improvement of the present planning process.
II. EVALUATION OF PLANNING PROCESS

Using the broad criteria selected by the Committee, described earlier in the format section of the report, a summary of comments and observations was prepared in relation to each objective.

A. THE PLANNING PROCESS OUGHT TO BE DIRECTED PRIMARILY TO IMPLEMENTING ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES.

RESPONSES:

1. Some Chairs and most Deans believe the process is useful in requiring Departments to clarify objectives, something which might not otherwise take place without this external stimulus. However, most Chairs and the entire Ad Hoc Committee have concluded that the process fails to separate academic policy from budget matters, i.e. it appears that many, if not most, decisions are budget-driven.

2. The Committee has concluded that for the most part, the process breeds cynicism and distrust on the part of Faculty. Many Faculty appear to feel that the process is too abstract and that their participation serves little purpose except to authenticate actions taken by the Administration.

3. Interdepartmental and intercollege rivalry appears to be stimulated and coordination efforts for joint appointments, by way of example, are discouraged. The Committee found that many Faculty deplored having to develop Departmental loyalties to the exclusion of other, more interdepartmental potential ties. A strong sense of frustration appears evident with a process which discourages collaboration between campus units.

4. Several Chairs feel that their Department size makes broad scale planning irrelevant. In many cases aggregate budgets at the College level appear to be more appropriate.

5. The faculty cannot make objective determinations regarding excellence of programs; which are to be expanded and nourished, which to be discontinued.

6. Some faculty view the exercise as solely a "turf protection" exercise. This process appears to be separate from any system-wide planning exercise. It is unclear how planning decisions made at UWM are merged with system, if at all.
B. THE PLANNING PROCESS SHOULD DEAL SEPARATELY WITH ACADEMIC POLICY AND BUDGETARY MATTERS. BUDGET PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD FOLLOW UPON ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS.

RESPONSES:

1. Almost all respondents and the full Ad Hoc Committee believe that this is primarily a Budget Planning Exercise in which the bottom line in the budget carries the greatest impact. Having to identify resource allocations together with academic policy decisions has undoubtedly served to limit the focus in many Departments to those proposals which are perceived to be politically viable, rather than those which might best serve long range Department interests.

2. The requirement for a listing of increments and decrements at the Departmental level forces units to reallocate resources and, perhaps, jeopardize programs which are proceeding well while transferring funds to other program areas which may not be essential. In effect, under present requirements it appears Departments have no option to remain at a status quo level, if it were determined that this was most beneficial.

C. CONTROL OF RESOURCES SHOULD BE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THOSE WITH THE INTEREST AND COMPETENCY TO MAKE INFORMED PLANNING DECISIONS REGARDING OPERATIONS AT THEIR LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION.

RESPONSES:

1. Broad concern was expressed about the question of appropriate levels for meaningful planning review. Some of these are summarized below:

a. Departments cannot objectively determine their own or other Departments' viability. This is best done at School or College level, although there is some feeling that independence of judgment may be lacking at even this level to make the hard decisions regarding program continuation.

b. The Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee is too remote from departmental and school concerns to make informed decisions about planning at those levels. There is also widespread feeling that the absence of a Faculty majority renders this committee unrepresentative since final critical academic planning decisions are undertaken at this level of review.

c. Budget advisory review committees often are unaware of external contractual obligations i.e. mandated allocation of resources.

d. Some faculty believe that some Deans may not always accurately reflect departmental goals and objectives.
e. Several respondents call for most planning decisions to be made at School/College level with review by Departments and University administration.

2. Feedback from subsequent review committees is minimal. Many respondents report that Departments were never informed as to the nature and rationale for modifications to their plans. Most reported that criteria for prioritization were unknown and never transmitted to Chairs. There appears to be a great deal of frustration surrounding this issue, particularly in relation to communications between School and the various University review committees.

D. THERE SHOULD BE A GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD OVERALL CAMPUS ACADEMIC PLAN TO WHICH SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES CAN REFER IN MAKING DECISIONS AT THE UNIT LEVEL. THIS WOULD ESTABLISH A SET OF CRITERIA AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL WHEREBY INDIVIDUAL UNITS MIGHT BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RATIONALE FOR RESOURCE REALLOCATION WITHIN THE CAMPUS.

RESPONSES:

1. Most respondents and the full Ad Hoc Committee observe that there appears to be no University Academic Plan. Departmental and School planning takes place without regard to any perceived campus-wide academic objectives.

2. The absence of a recognized University Academic Plan coupled with clear criteria for resource allocation, at the Vice Chancellor's and Chancellor's level, has generated considerable frustration with a process which is, in fact, intended to maximize faculty review and participation.

3. Departments presently are not provided with information regarding prior external obligations incurred at the University level which would affect internal planning considerations. Also unclear to most planning committees and Department Chairs, when the planning process is initiated, is the fact that the formation of new programs will inevitably internal reallocation within the School, Division or University.

E. THERE SHOULD BE A MECHANISM FOR FACULTY TO HAVE MEANINGFUL INPUT AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL ON CAMPUS-WIDE ACADEMIC POLICY MATTERS DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY AFFECTING DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS.

RESPONSES:

1. The Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee purports to be the agency whereby appropriate intervention can take place. However, Committee members feel that there are certain decisions, such as those affecting supporting services, which indirectly affect Academic Affairs, through resource allocation, in which Faculty are not involved.
2. Faculty involvement in matters at the campus-wide level involves several considerations according to a number of respondents:

   a. Informed and knowledgeable committee members.
   b. Sufficient time in which to review fully and analyze the vast amount of information generated by units.

   Many faculty suggested that the process was burdensome and not cost-effective at the Departmental level. Meaningful involvement at higher levels of review would seem to require either professional planning expertise, as suggested by some, or ample released time for concerned faculty willing to take on what many view as essentially an administrative task.

F. THERE SHOULD BE A TIME SCHEDULE WHICH PERMITS PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF PLANNING PROPOSALS AT EACH LEVEL.

RESPONSES:

1. There is universal unhappiness with the timing of the planning exercise. Every Chair is overwhelmed in the Fall with class schedules and assignments and deeply resents the requirement for lengthy and detailed reports.

2. Most respondents feel that the planning exercise is too frequent and unrealistic with respect to the pace of actual change. Most prefer a longer period with intermediate updating.

3. Time for meaningful debate and review within the Departments is perceived as much too short. Everyone requests more lead time.
RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED AND APPROVED
BY THE FACULTY SENATE, 5/15/84

III. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ad Hoc Committee agrees with most Faculty respondents on the basis of its evaluation, that a planning process can be useful insofar as it requires Departments and Schools to make forecasts with respect to their academic goals and objectives. At the same time, there appears to be overwhelming objection to a process which is perceived as cumbersome, costly, and unreasonably time-consuming. Furthermore, evidence suggests that uninformed decisions are being made within the process by reviewers who feel obliged to act often in the absence of complete information. Perhaps the most serious indictment of the present system is that its primary objective of setting academic policy goals is undermined by being coupled with budgetary planning. Indeed, the names of the Senate and Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committees suggest that financial considerations will play the most significant role in any planning. The committee is not so naive as to believe that serious planning can take place outside of a fiscal environment. At the same time, it notes that the present system encourages departmental protectionism and strategies for maintaining resources at any cost, discourages interprogram cooperation and creates a depressing mood for most of the participants.

The Committee was not given the charge of reorganizing or refining the planning process. It has, however, developed recommendations for consideration by the University Committee, Faculty Senate, Vice Chancellor and Chancellor. These, together with rationale, where appropriate, are listed below:

A. SPRING SCHEDULE FOR INITIATING PROCESS.

Rationale:

Departmental debate and review is the most important facet of this elaborate process. It ought to be initiated in February or March with as much as a year's lead time prior to being made final at the University level.

B. FOUR YEAR CYCLE WITH BI-ANNUAL REVIEW.

Rationale:

Changes do not, and probably should not, take place so quickly as to warrant an elaborate planning exercise more often than every four years. Every other year the process would be limited only to adjustments to prior plans, halving paperwork.
C. STREAMLINING NEEDED.

Rationale:

All respondents find the present document ponderous and not altogether useful in making informed decisions. Self-congratulatory accomplishment portions should be eliminated. Perhaps a page limit ought to be instituted. A number of respondents suggest that concise planning document models exist and could be promulgated.

D. ZERO OPTION ALLOWED.

Rationale:

Departments may feel that in a scarce resource setting they are satisfied with current programs and do not contemplate any changes in a given time period. The present process presumes change whether desired or not.

E. EMERGENCY FISCAL MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE THE BASIS FOR ACADEMIC PLANNING.

Rationale:

Worst-case scenario projections stifle creative academic planning. To plan, for example, for a 10% cut in University resources would stultify all participants in the process. It is suggested that crisis situations should be dealt with administratively as they arise with appropriate communication with the faculty. Typical planning should proceed on the assumption of uninterrupted funding support.

F. A DECREMENT LID SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS.

Rationale:

Long and medium range planning cannot take place in an environment where internal reallocations might shift dramatically in a given year. Furthermore, across-the-board cuts at the Department level are inherently unfair and lack responsiveness to individual quality.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor is the best point in the process to derive funding reductions, if needed, in the Division of Academic Affairs. The difficult political decisions as to interdepartmental support can most equitably be worked out here. The Committee suggests, for the purposes of discussion, that in any given year the Division of Academic Affairs be subject to no more than a .5% reduction in its resources, that the maximum be 1% at the college level, and possibly a higher maximum reduction for supporting units. Implicit in this recommendation is the notion of home rule wherein Schools and Colleges would make internal decisions about their constituent units.
G. FACULTY PLANNING COMMITTEE TO BE ESTABLISHED.

Rationale:

While there are several budget advisory committees, there is at present no continuing representative faculty committee which systematically reviews and evaluates overall academic policy and its implications. This committee could, among other things, attempt to coordinate academic policy considerations with physical space projects. The Ad Hoc Committee believes that substantive academic planning concerns can be addressed in committee, such as the relationship of undergraduate and graduate programs and their respective claims on resources, allocations for remedial teaching, extension activities and similar issues which affect the academic program. To accomplish this either a newly constituted committee might be formed or the existing Faculty Senate Budget Committee expanded. Academic staff should also continue to be represented. Possibly this committee might include representatives of the Academic Policy Committee, Graduate Faculty Council and other University committees involved in policy. As part of this recommendation, it is suggested that the Planning Committee would be greatly supported by the assignment of a skilled academic planner to serve as professional staff.

H. INCLUDE CAPITAL REPLACEMENT AND MAINTENANCE IN LONG RANGE PLANS.

Rationale:

There does not now appear to be an orderly process for systematic replacement of equipment and building components whose service record is predictable.

I. MODIFY CHANCELLOR'S BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Rationale:

The Chancellor's Budget Advisory Committee lacks credibility with some of the Faculty. The Ad Hoc Committee disagrees that, for the purpose of membership, Deans constitute faculty. Deans traditionally take an administration point of view, as they ought, and should have an increased voice in the Dean's Council, in the Ad Hoc Committee's view. The Chancellor's Advisory Committee must have a majority of faculty members if it is to carry the responsibility of implementing Faculty planning decisions.
J. INCREASE FEEDBACK OF INFORMATION

Rationale

Deans, Chairs, and particularly Faculty members will place substantially larger faith in a planning process which provides them with information and rationale for decisions, even unfavorable ones. The current lack of downflow information is seen as a major factor in faculty unhappiness with the present process.

SUMMARY

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Evaluation of the Planning Process is pleased to submit this somewhat abbreviated report in hopes that our recommendations may serve to stimulate constructive discussion in the Faculty Senate, leading to specific actions to improve the planning exercise. We have appreciated the opportunity to review the process from many standpoints and look forward to the reactions of our colleagues in considering our recommendations.

David Evan Glasser, Chair

Fred Berman

Frank Cassell

Robert Krueger

Howard Pincus

Mary Ellen Schaff
SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS ON PLANNING PROCESS

APPENDIX I

Because of the extraordinary response received in relation to its questionnaire the Committee felt obliged to list a number of additional observations made by respondents although many of the points do not directly impinge on the planning criteria. The following are in no particular order.

1. Academic and budgetary planning appears to be unrelated to physical planning.

2. Interdepartmental cooperation is discouraged by the process.

3. The impact of the process not altogether clear.

4. The work involved is out of proportion to results.

5. Department overlap should be explored.

6. There appears to be no accepted common model for planning.

7. No reference is made to planning precedents and/or planning literature.

8. Faculty are overloaded. Professional planning staff should be used.

9. The process appears to be equitable and fair at the School level.

10. No "zero option" is provided.

11. Serious work at the Department level is often ignored at campus level.

12. The administration should initiate planning proposals.

13. There should be a uniform basis for comparing data.

14. Planning should anticipate, not be reactive.

15. Downflow communication is poor.

16. Planning process divorced from short and middle-term program development.

17. More decentralization is needed i.e. home rule.

18. Less self-congratulatory documentation should be required.

19. The use of standard format for reporting does not suit special programs.

20. Planning between different Universities is an unknown factor.

21. Institutional Services produces data which are inaccurate and not useful in the process.

22. Change seems to be stimulated as the sole means of survival.