Day 8: Did you know how CMU plans for the future?

[HLC Criterion 5.C.4] Plans are based on understanding of current capacity and anticipate potential revenue fluctuations from all sources. AND
[5.C.5] Planning anticipates emerging external factors.

CMU develops its budget based on a sound understanding of its current capacity, and, when possible, anticipates possible fluctuations in funding and enrollment. This planning and budgeting approach ensures that resources can support existing and anticipated needs of the University's operations. Finance staff typically produce three-year budget projections as part of their higher-level budget summaries. Multiple budget scenarios, based on different possible State funding levels (best case, worse case, expected, etc.), are explored. Additionally, a contingency fund is budgeted each year to make up for short-term funding deficits.

As part of budget and enrollment planning, staff members in the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Decision Support release internal bi-weekly reports on student applications, admissions, and enrollments for the upcoming year, as well as applications for student housing and financial aid, which are used as a basis for projecting tuition and fee revenues. The reports compare current activity with data from previous years. Further, changes in high school enrollments and graduating class sizes are monitored, as are reports from agencies such as the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. As administrators develop budget projections, they apply a conservative approach to revenue estimates. Thus, the University is prepared financially should Fall and Spring enrollments not reach expected levels. If the enrollments meet or exceed projection, the additional tuition revenue becomes available for other institutional priorities.

Since the University's mission is reliant on its technological and physical infrastructure, the University actively engages in sustainability planning in these areas, reducing the possible impact of annual revenue fluctuations. The Technology Sustainability Plan is used to budget for initiatives to update technology, based on projected replacement costs and equipment life cycles. Funding for core system purchases is annualized, while a portion of non-capital equipment (e.g., computers and projectors) is replaced each year. Technology sustainability planning not only allows the University to replace systems in lean revenue years without negatively affecting student support or academic programs, but it also diminishes the need for emergency expenditures to replace mission-critical systems.

CMU has also prepared an extensive database that provides information on the age of building systems, at-grade and below-grade infrastructure, installation date, anticipated replacement date, and cost associated with system replacement so as to make informed decisions on where best to spend limited funds in the short term and identify the institution's long-term funding needed to keep facilities in excellent condition. In addition to the general contingency fund, the University has currently allocated $1.0 million for the maintenance of current

buildings. CMU also routinely invests significant one-time funds into building renewal and replacement annually.

CMU proactively anticipates the external trends with the potential to affect its future, ranging from factors affecting funding to emerging technological advances as it plans and budgets for the future. The institution continuously monitors economic, political, and demographic changes that potentially affect enrollments, particularly in the University's 14-county service region, which led to initiatives such as the Mesa County Housing Scholarship. These data also inform discussions on investments in activities such as institutional brand perception and awareness, recruitment of non-resident enrollments, and student financial aid opportunities.

The 2016 Technology Master Plan was recently updated. It identifies major technology initiatives, aligning them with the institution's strategic goals, and summarizes key technology advancements towards those goals. While not intending to provide a complete list of IT projects completed, planned, or in process, the Plan identifies six major technology initiatives that serve as the organizational structure for future planning. Information Technology also prioritizes technology projects based on state and federal requirements, information security, the impact of the proposed process improvement, and the University's goals and mission. Departments use a Project Scoping document to describe requirements prior to budget setting to identify all resources necessary to complete the project.

To learn more, log into MAVzone and click on the document link found in the CMU Assurance Argument for HLC channel (top left on the Home tab) for the full text of CMU's Assurance Argument. Links to supporting evidence are identified by underlined words but are not available through the PDF version.

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