The Faculty Manual of the University of South Carolina-Columbia includes the following information about the Faculty Budget Committee:

The committee shall consist of ten members: three elected members, the current and immediate past chairs of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Welfare Committee, the chair of the Faculty Senate, and the past chair or the chair-elect of the Faculty Senate; the provost shall serve ex officio. This committee serves as a liaison between the University Administration and the University Faculty (through the Faculty Senate) on matters pertaining to the University budget, advocates the faculty perspective on matters of budget and budgetary policy, and provides a venue for discussing faculty questions and concerns about the University budget and budgeting process. To accomplish its purpose, the Faculty Budget Committee shall have formal representation on, and input to University budget policy. The Chair of the Faculty Budget Committee and the Chair of the Faculty Senate shall serve as voting members on the University-level budget policy committee.

The Faculty Budget Committee has endeavored in recent years to become better informed about how the present University budget model works. Toward that end, Mr. Ed Walton, Vice Provost for Academic Resources, met with the committee on several occasions to discuss and explain aspects of the University Budget. (An excellent explanatory document, “A Guide to the Budget of the University of South Carolina,” was prepared in 2006, and interested faculty may find this document posted on the Faculty Senate website.) The Committee also received periodic reports, most often from Mr. Walton, Chair Gowan, and Faculty Senate Chair Best, regarding the strategies used by the University to meet budget cuts mandated by the State of South Carolina. In addition, the membership engaged in discussions of the impact of the budget cuts on the units represented by the members in an effort to better understand the real impact of the budget cuts at the unit level. Finally, the committee began crafting items for a survey that will be administered to the faculty in Fall 2009 regarding budget and financial issues.

Clearly the succession of budget cuts handed down to the University over the course of the 2008-2009 academic year was a major item of consideration for the Faculty Budget Committee. While the first budget cut (August) was absorbed through actions of the University administration, the second budget cut (October) was significant in size and had to be passed on to the various academic and service units. It should be noted that a sizeable recalibration of unit strategic plans was necessary in order to achieve the necessary budget reductions. A series of meetings between unit administrators and personnel from the Office of the Provost and Division of Business and Finance were scheduled in November and December so that the units could present their plans for meeting budget reduction goals. Professor Robert Best, Faculty Senate Chair, and Professor Andrew Gowan, Faculty Budget Committee Chair, were invited to all of these presentations, and at least one of these faculty representatives attended most of the meetings. Following this series of meetings, Professors Best and Gowan made positive reports to the Faculty Senate regarding the
efficacy of the plans presented and the fiscal competence of the unit administrators, University administrators, and Budget Office personnel involved in these meetings.

In March and April, the academic units and service units made their “Blueprint” presentations to the President, Provost, and Budget Office personnel. Although elements of strategic planning were included in the various Blueprints, budget issues dominated the presentations of most units. Once again, Professor Best and Professor Gowan were invited to all of these presentations, and at least one of these faculty representatives was in attendance at most of the meetings. Professors Best and Gowan were favorably impressed by the quality of the strategic planning and the high level of understanding displayed by all in attendance, and they reported these observations to the Faculty Senate. Truly, the University community should be commended for its successful efforts in meeting the significant fiscal challenges of this academic year.

The “University-level budget policy committee” referenced in the The Faculty Manual has not been active since the present budget model was put in place a half-dozen years ago. Since this committee includes the Chair of the Faculty Budget Committee and the Chair of the Faculty Senate as voting members, the lack of activity by this committee may have diminished the voice of the faculty in the financial affairs of the University. In Spring 2009 President Pastides convened the Focus Carolina: Operating Resources Committee, and this committee had an initial meeting on April 22, 2009. Another meeting of this committee was scheduled for July 2009, but has now been moved into September 2009. It is anticipated that there will be a comprehensive review of the current budget model and tax structure at this meeting. The Focus Carolina: Operating Resources Committee includes the Chair of the Faculty Budget Committee and the Chair of the Faculty Senate. In fact, the membership is essentially identical to the membership of the University Finance Committee, which is the “University-level budget policy committee” referenced in the The Faculty Manual. The current activity of the Focus Carolina: Operating Resources Committee, and the anticipated activation of the University Finance Committee can be viewed as positive steps toward insuring the continued voice of the faculty in the budgetary decisions of the University.

The membership of the 2008-09 Faculty Budget Committee included:

Ted Moore, ex-officio Interim Provost (represented by Ed Walton, Vice Provost for Academic Resources
McKinley Blackburn Economics (elected, term expires in 2009)
Andrew Gowan, Chair Music (elected, term expires in 2010)
Duncan Alford Law Library (elected, term expires in 2011)
Robert Best Medicine (Faculty Senate Chair)
Patrick Nolan Sociology (Faculty Senate Chair Elect)
Harold Friedman Medicine (Faculty Advisory Chair)
Mathieu Deflem (Faculty Advisory Past Chair)
Charley Adams Public Health (Faculty Welfare Chair)
Beth Bilderback Libraries (Faculty Welfare Past Chair)

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Gowan, Chair
Faculty Budget Committee