



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE
David Lovell, Chair

April 20, 2009

Phyllis M. Wise
Provost and Executive Vice President
University of Washington

Re: Differential Budget Reductions

Dear Provost Wise:

With input from faculty on the Committee (if not always unanimous), I am responding on behalf of the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting to your request for advice concerning differential budget reductions to the Schools and Colleges.

There is no shortage of raw data concerning the Schools and Colleges, particularly at the Web site for the Office of Planning and Budgeting. Unfortunately, we lack, and cannot develop within the time frame and with the resources available to us, more than the most rudimentary framework in which to analyze these data. The narratives submitted by the Deans/Chancellors do provide a sense of the immediate impact of budget reductions in each of these units. But since we lacked an understanding of the relative efficiencies with which the units are using their current allocations to advance institutional goals, we did not find the narratives to be particularly helpful in considering how to distribute differential budget reductions.

Thus our advice instead is limited to three broad principles.

Principle #1. Protect the instructional units. With the recent increases in tuition, tuition dollars now exceed state allocation dollars to pay for the education of students. Given an expected further sharp rise in tuition, protecting programs/classes that serve students who pay this tuition in each school/college should be of the highest priority.

Overall, assign individual units to one of three categories—that is, low-, medium-, and high-percentage-cut categories.

Low-percentage-cut category. Includes instructional academic units, particularly those with a high number of undergraduate credit hours, such as Arts & Sciences and Engineering.

Medium-percentage-cut category. Includes the professional school academic units. For those units in this category that fulfill critical needs for the state, such as the School of Medicine, we recommend cuts at the lower end of the range for this category.

High-percentage-cut category. Includes administrative units and non-instructional academic units.

Principle #2. Consider vertical cuts. For instructional academic units, horizontal-only cuts seem feasible only if such cuts do not exceed 10% if we are to maintain reasonably high instructional quality. For cuts in administrative units and non-instructional academic units (Graduate School, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and Health Sciences Administration) that exceed 10%, vertical cuts in addition to horizontal cuts should be considered.

Principle #3. Delay new investments in non-instructional activities. We endorse President Emmert's assertion that as the leading research university in our region, we must focus well into the future. But given the severity of the present fiscal crisis, we advise that in the short term our focus must be on meeting the immediate needs of today's students. Discretionary investments that do not translate into immediate instructional contributions should be deferred.

Sincerely,



Dan Luchtel, Professor
Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences
Chair, Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting

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