

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 6, 2009

TO: Academic Senate Executive Committee
Academic Affairs Leadership Council

FROM: Emily F. Cutrer
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Budget discussion from 8/5/09 joint meeting

I've heard from a number of people that there was confusion about what was said at yesterday's joint ASEC/AALC meeting. That is understandable—there was a great deal of information, much of it very difficult either to say or to hear because of the nature of the information. Thus, I thought it might be helpful to reiterate the main points associated with yesterday's conversation—and the conversation we will be having over the next few months regarding budget.

Key points about the budget are, first, that the 09/10 budget picture requires a reduction in AA expenditures of \$1.5 million. Second, our best information right now forecasts the need for a \$4 million reduction in 10/11, a reduction of more than 10% of our budget.

Given the gravity of the situation, AA administrators have been wrestling with how to meet budget over the next two years. After multiple conversations, a preliminary plan was developed for 09/10 that identified large cuts in a variety of AA areas including graduate programs, technology, travel, research, and student support. AA administrators have had two major reservations about this initial plan. One is a concern for long-term damage that such cuts would cause, a concern that was also expressed by faculty when the Academic Senate Executive Committee was consulted at the joint ASEC/AALC meeting on July 29. The other was a concern that it was only a short-term remedy that did not put AA in a position to meet the challenge of 10/11.

In the course of conversations among AA administrators, the cost of assigned time was broached and discussed. Currently, assigned time expenditure to support the 9:9 instructional WTU assignment in CoAS, CoBA, and SoN and the 9:12 instructional WTU assignment in CoE is approximately \$2 million. This is an expenditure that is not reported as a budget item and, therefore, is not transparent in our budget process. Given the gravity of the state budget picture, the potential long term damage that would be done to the areas identified in the first reduction plan, and the diminished ability to support faculty and instruction if these reductions were effectuated, AA administrators came to consensus

around two related ideas that we believe critical to responding to the current budget projections. We agreed that we should look at (1) making our assigned time expenditures an ongoing budgeted item, and (2) moving in Spring 2010 to a 12 WTU instructional assignment, with buyouts and “assigned time” taken from that baseline. In particular, we concluded that the latter would enable us to mitigate the debilitating effects of the cuts proposed in the original plan for 09/10 and help us prepare for an even worse year in 10/11.

In our meeting yesterday, I provided the rationale for these conclusions and invited the group’s responses. The reaction of Academic Senate Executive Committee members was understandably shocked and negative. As I stated yesterday, AA administrators did not intend that this be the end of the conversation. Rather, it was hoped to be an opportunity to “lay cards on the table” and to commence conversation about any additional viable options to the budget situation.

The perspective of everyone around the table is very important. Although I must make the final decision about the Academic Affairs budget, I need the insights of the faculty, which the Academic Senate Executive Committee represents, as well as Academic Affairs administrators. I hope that this reiteration of yesterday’s key points helps us continue our conversation.

EFC/mab