

On February 11, 2009, Provost Allen charged the University of Wyoming Staff Senate to develop a white paper to offer input regarding UW budget distributions in response to the current worldwide economic downturn and Governor Dave Freudenthal's call for proposals from all Wyoming state agencies to address 5 and 10 percent reductions in state-funded budgets for FY 2010 and beyond.

In response to this charge, the UW Staff Senate established the Staff Senate Budget Planning Committee, comprising the Staff Senate Executive Committee. Staff Senators collected unit-level input with the goal to identify common themes and concerns.

As a land-grant institution and Wyoming's only four-year university, the broad mission of UW is to educate students and serve the state through outreach. The greatest constituency of UW is the undergraduate students. In addition, UW is called to conduct applied and pure research, offer graduate-level education, and continue to share learning opportunities and research with the citizens of Wyoming. Nearly 95 percent of each academic unit's Section 1 funds are committed to staff and faculty salaries. Any chief cuts in these funds may lead to eliminating positions, which would adversely influence the core elements of this university.

Section I: Definition of core elements of UW's mission, high-priority activities that support the core, and enhancements.

As Staff Senators, we see the following factors as core elements to UW's mission:

- Teaching and research
- Service
- Outreach to the state
- Support of the six Areas of Distinction:
 - Critical areas of science and technology
 - Cultural assets, arts, and humanities
 - Environmental and natural resources
 - History and Culture of the Rocky Mountain region
 - Life sciences
 - Professions critical to the state and region

High-priority activities are those that support core elements:

Essential to the core elements are all operations related to recruitment and retention of students, which provide a major source of university income through tuition, fees, room and board charges, and support of the local economy. While it may be tempting to look at cuts in financial support to some of these activities and services, the lost income due to the accompanying loss of students would be far more devastating to the university budget.

Enhancements are defined as items that could be eliminated, minimized, or delayed without jeopardizing the core mission of the university.

Section II: Elements of UW's overall operations that belong to the three tiers of 1) core elements, 2) high priority activities and 3) enhancements.

The discussion in Section I lists what UW Staff Senate views as core elements, as well as high priority activities and enhancements currently at the university. Beneath these headings are essential functions that Staff Senate agrees is key to the university's function and mission to the extended community:

The six areas of distinction are essential items:

- Science and Technology
- Cultural assets, arts and humanities
- Environment and natural resources
- History and culture of the Rocky Mountain Region
- Life sciences
- Professions critical to the state and the region.

Staff Senate believes that to compromise these areas would jeopardize the mission of UW.

Similarly, high-priority activities for each of these six areas of distinction should be preserved and protected to support UW's mission:

- Keep and maintain a safe campus
- Continue to offer student support
- Sustain research
- Continue service – to community and students
- Preserve staff support of faculty research, teaching, prep, grading
- Maintain staff support of accounting, budget
- Build depth
- Promote access to higher education
- Foster excellence
- Cultivate leadership

Finally, functions that exist as enhancements to core elements and high-priority activities include but are not limited to:

- Extended accessibility of resources on campus
- Reimbursements for mobile communication devices, travel, and conference attendance
- Reduced prices of admission to sporting and cultural events

Section III: Elements of UW staff's bailiwick that belong to the three tiers of 1) core elements, 2) high-priority activities and 3) enhancements.

Obviously, UW Staff are a backbone for the smooth operation of the University of Wyoming, and the maintenance and support of this group are essential to furthering the university's core elements and high-priority activities.

Regarding the support of the core elements and the six areas of distinction, essential areas in which staff members are directly involved that are essential to maintain are:

- Science and technology. It is vital that UW maintain its drive to improve in this area, and these improvements include but certainly are not limited to all academic programs related to science and technology and the School of Energy Resources, as well as Information Technology (IT), which permits access to the Internet, and other services that are essential in today's global society.
- Cultural assets. UW must maintain and strengthen collections at the American Heritage Center, the Art Museum, and UW Libraries. Also, guest speakers and cultural events need to continue to be part of the university's activities.
- Environmental impact. UW must continue to reduce its environmental impact. Realistically, many of these efforts may coincide with reduced budgetary requirements (please see Section IV, below).
- History and culture. UW must continue to be a beacon for the preservation of history and culture of the Rocky Mountain Region and continue to provide education in this area to student and community members.
- Life sciences. UW must continue to be a critical component of the education of future community leaders. Research and education in this area must be preserved.

Some basic needs required to maintain valuable UW staff members:

- Staff must continue to be compensated competitively. The university cannot function without staff and cannot function well if staff are not well-trained, secure in their jobs, and personally invested in promoting the mission of the university.
- Staff benefits, such as retirement contributions and health and wellness benefits, must be maintained. Promoting wellness helps reduce absenteeism and may lead to lower health premiums. Retirement benefits form an incentive that helps retain current staff and attracts new employees.
- Safe, clean, and well-maintained work environments must be preserved. This will increase productivity and improve the image of the university to potential students and donors.
- Staff must continue to be trained efficiently and effectively. Training that allows staff to keep current with technology promotes cost-saving over the

long term due to increased efficiency while tuition waivers communicate that UW values the furthered education and personal development of staff members.

- Activities related to recruitment and retention of students provide a major source of university income through tuition, fees, room and board charges, and support of the local economy.

In light of these basic needs, some enhancements can be prioritized or re-imagined to potentially reduce budgetary requirements of the university:

- Reduce extended hours of operation for the library and other on-campus resources. Additions to current collections could also be forgone or delayed.
- Reduce travel and conference attendance. Certainly, it is possible in today's technology savvy society that some training can be done via audio or Web conferencing, reducing the need for travel reimbursement; however, travel necessary for training in areas where up-to-date information is critical, such as operations supporting recruitment, retention, and enrollment management is essential to core objectives.
- Reduced rates for faculty and staff at cultural and sporting events could be eliminated.
- Mobile Communication Device reimbursement should be reevaluated often to be sure that all reimbursements are truly accurate and needed.

Section IV: Other ideas generated by Staff Senate and Staff Senate constituents to create budget flexibility and relieve persistent budget pressures.

What follow are several ideas garnered from senators and their constituents.

Conservation and sustainability options:

- Use less electricity on campus
 - Use motion detectors for rooms that are not always in use
 - Replace florescent with LED lighting where feasible
 - Evaluate areas where solar energy could replace electricity
 - Require unplugging computers and other office equipment over weekends and holidays
 - Replace old equipment that uses large amounts of energy
 - E-mail students, rather than send them hard-copy letters
 - Use more electronic documentation similar to imaging system used for student transcripts
 - Consolidate use of fax machines and copiers within buildings
- Go paperless
 - Use on-line paystubs, timesheets, and HR forms
 - Reduce number of flyers, posters, and other mailers sent to employees

- Choose more economical alternatives for colored paper and glossy posters
- Use on-line promotion of campus events
- Rely on on-line files rather than mailing out CDs
- Make campus greener
 - Ensure all buildings on campus are weatherized
 - Standardize building hours across campus, which would allow computer control programs to ramp up/down air handling heating and air conditioning
 - Use more xeriscaping of university grounds
 - Go to four-day work weeks to reduce energy use
 - Make better use of sprinkler system
 - Consolidate usage of classrooms, labs and lecture halls by tearing down territorial boundaries across campus
 - Evaluate use of fleet vehicles and purchase those that are less expensive and get better gas mileage
 - Extend the life of UW vehicles

Internal processes and procedures

- Overhaul Stores
 - Ensure availability of needed equipment and supplies to avoid last-minute, expensive shopping trips
 - Charge departments for actual supplies used
 - Reevaluate FPO process to lessen paperwork costs and improve efficiency. Any item purchased repeatedly throughout the year should not have to go through the FPO process. It should instead be stocked in Stores on a regular basis.
- Evaluate internal processes and procedures within departments
 - Examine staffing levels of officers
 - Streamline processes to avoid overtime or comp time
 - Promote flexible schedules of working from home
 - Identify Physical Plant efficiencies – for example, remove snow before it becomes ice
 - Eliminate redundancies in staff duties
- Consider voluntary reductions in staff hours
 - Encourage departments to offer half or three-quarter time positions to those who would like to reduce their hours
 - Evaluate offering early retirement to those who qualify
- Consider a salary freeze for administrators and highly compensated employees
- Evaluate number, use and fees charged for departmental credit cards

Conclusion

It is our sincere hope that President Buchanan, VP Myron Allen and any other interested parties find the information in this paper to be useful and conducive to furthering the discussion of the priorities of the University and how these priorities should guide future budgetary decisions. It is most certain that UW Staff are a diverse group of intelligent, well-meaning individuals that enhance the UW community and work diligently to further the goals and core values of our cherished institution.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and, most importantly, for including the Staff Senate and our constituents in this very important dialog.