

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Office of Information Technology

Dept 3945 • Laramie, WY 82071-3945

(307) 766-4860 • fax (307) 766-2626

www.uwyo.edu/infotech

To: Myron Allen, Provost

From: Robert Aylward, Vice President, Information Technology

Subject: Budget Reduction Planning for the 2013-2014 Biennium

Date: December 7, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into budget planning for possible reductions. We have few new perspectives to offer on a budget reduction process. The basic process and the whitepapers used for budget reductions in FY 2010 are still relevant. However because of those reductions there are now fewer options for further reductions. The key principles outlined in your May, 1, 2009 memo to President Buchanan also still hold. We would add additional emphasis regarding the critical importance of maintaining, continuing the advancement of, and fostering excellence in academics, UW's areas of distinction, research, diversity and internationalization through the services the university is able to continue offering in the face of budget reductions.

As we stated in the IT March 13, 2009 budget planning white paper, "*The value of technology to higher education lies in its innumerable benefits and possibilities for providing colleges and students with the information, technological tools and support to thrive in the 21st century. The university's strategic use of technology has increased productivity, efficiency, learning and research.*" Technology is integral to the operation and advancement of the institution. IT is a customer service and support organization. We pride ourselves in our customer service focus and commitment. As a result of information technology consolidations, departments depend on us now more than ever. We are a vital, committed partner with them, helping them meet their goals, objectives and needs.

One of the key principles listed in your May 1, 2009 memo was infrastructure, "*Infrastructure. Excellence in academics requires sophisticated infrastructure. ... It includes modern classroom technology, high-performance data networks and computing equipment, distance-learning facilities, and state-of-the-art offices, laboratories, studios, and collections. Effective budget planning must preserve and, if possible, enhance the institution's capacity to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure required for learning throughout Wyoming, at all levels, from the entry-level curriculum to the frontiers of knowledge and creativity.*"

The 2009 infrastructure key principle is even more important to UW today. There continues to be an upward demand for information technology services from IT, e.g., growth in classroom technology, heightened focus on HPC and other research technologies, increased networking

needs, increased reliability needs, new mobile device support needs, and ever increasing faculty, student, staff and department expectations for technology services.

The reductions of 2009 were particularly demanding for IT. In addition to the support budget being reduced, four positions in IT and another four information technology positions in other departments were eliminated. In the last two years the information technology functions of administrative divisions and a few academic departments were reviewed and, where appropriate, have been, or are being, consolidated under IT. Numerous duplications are being eliminated and efficiencies are being gained as a result of the consolidation. However, in the majority of the consolidation areas the equipment and services need substantial investment of time and resources to bring them to best practice and enterprise service level standards.

As a result of FY 2010 budget reduction, consolidation, and increasing demand for technology across the institution, IT currently has a long and growing list of projects for normal operations, consolidation projects and projects arising from new initiatives. Requests for new services and applications occur with a high and growing level of frequency. The applications supported by the IT DIS group have grown from 33 in early 2009 to 80 currently. Help Desk calls have increased from 13,185 in 2008 to 17,038 so far this year. The servers IT operates and maintains have grown from 527 in April, 2010 to 688 today.

The lists of possible reductions in IT's 2009 whitepaper and the other whitepapers are still valid and do not need restatement. Particular comments regarding this possible budget reduction:

Personnel and Support:

- 1) We would recommend against any randomness in vacant position sweeps. Any position elimination should be done with the same strategic rationale as non-personnel budget reductions. Position eliminations should be selectively in line with the university's mission, the university's goals and UP3.
- 2) We would further like to see the vice presidents and deans be given as much discretion as possible regarding where to make cuts in their operations. Allow us to make the tradeoff between reductions in staff personnel and reductions in support.
- 3) Recognizing salaries are a university priority we would again emphasize the importance of being able to be as competitive as possible in our salary structure.

Even a 2% reduction will be challenging. A reduction of 5% or 8% will necessitate a major realignment of services with the elimination of some services, positions and a considerably reduced capability to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff and departments.

If budget reductions become necessary then they should be thoughtful, surgically selective and use UP3 as the foundation, until the next university plan is in place. Continued focus on increasing efficiency and effectiveness should be an objective of the budget reduction process. A formal review of institutional opportunities for revenue enhancement and revenue replacement is warranted to help offset possible budget reductions and could be conducted in the coming months.