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## [WOU President] Budget Update

1 message

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**Jesse Peters** <djpeters@wou.edu>  
To: wou-president@wou.edu

Mon, Feb 27, 2023 at 7:47 PM

Dear WOU Community:

I am writing to update you on the budget reduction process for next academic year (23-24). As explained in the January 31st open forum and in campus communications, the proposed maps of budget reductions were due to me on February 17th. I have been meeting with my direct reports individually, and we also met as a group, to discuss the proposals and the ramifications of the suggested budget reductions. As we all know, this is not an easy process, but it is something that we must engage with, for both the short- and long-term sustainability of the institution. We all want to continue to serve our students in the best ways possible.

I will hold a Town Hall via Zoom this Thursday at 4:00 to discuss the reduction plan and answer questions. We will send out information with the link for access sometime tomorrow. But I wanted to go ahead and provide some general comments, as I know people are eager for information. The leadership team worked with the employees in their units to develop budget reduction plans through open communication and feedback. Though reductions will put a real strain on some areas, every effort was made to minimize reductions to filled positions.

Here are the key takeaways:

- \* No reductions in permanent, filled positions are in the budget plan for the next academic year. We have eliminated some *vacant* positions for unclassified and classified employees, and a few employees voluntarily reduced FTE.
- \* However, we have reduced NTT instructional dollars, and that will affect some teaching faculty through reduced assignments or non-renewal. As I noted in the town hall, this has negative and painful effects on colleagues.
- \* We have also eliminated some *vacant* TT faculty positions. I realize that some programs are now as lean as they can be, and I appreciate the work of academic leadership and faculty governance to identify efficiencies. As we grow, we will closely consider program needs when allocating resources.
- \* We must continue to operate in ways that reduce spending and thus increase our fund balance for the next few years. The goal is to provide us with time to improve student recruitment, enrollment, and retention.
- \* We must work together and focus on student recruitment, enrollment, and retention. We can't ignore the fact that if enrollment continues to fall and/or if state support does not increase, we may have to examine our budget again in the future. We can all have a positive influence on the retention of our students, regardless of our role.
- \* Moving forward, any positions that become open will not automatically be filled. Supervisors will bring those forward for discussion and approval by the president. Until we start to grow, we must continue to realize savings and efficiencies while also looking through the lens of student success.
- \* I will continue my efforts to lobby for an increase in state funding and for more support for the regional universities, especially WOU. I know many of you are also engaged in these efforts. Thank you.
- \* I continue to welcome ideas for revenue generation, efficiencies, retention strategies, etc. We need to be active, focused, and deliberate as we compete for, and retain, students in the current higher education landscape.

Though budget reductions are never good news, I am heartened by the collaborative and innovative spirit I see on this campus. The leadership team, along with their own teams, worked to identify cuts in ways that would result in elimination of the fewest possible positions. Maintaining a focus on people as the lifeblood of the institution is one of my guiding principles throughout this process. And I appreciate that people are talking about strategies for efficiencies, new ways of operating, and innovative moves that strengthen the university.

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And most importantly, we are doing this with a clear focus on the students. How can we make them successful? How can we support their needs? How can we provide them the strongest academic and student life experiences?

We have some hard work ahead of us, especially with fewer resources. But it's positive work, and it's for the right reasons.

JP

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