



TO: University of Idaho Faculty and Staff
FROM: John Wiencek, Provost and Executive Vice President
DATE: Feb. 19, 2020
SUBJECT: Update on Provost-Area Budget Reductions

While each unit at the University of Idaho considers how to fulfill budget reductions, the Provost and Executive Vice President (EVP) areas seem to be of general interest to a broad audience.

We were tasked with implementing an \$11,457,000 budget reduction within the EVP areas. The adjustments are painful but we are attempting to accomplish this goal in a strategic and thoughtful manner.

Differential reduction targets were set based on revenue production and performance inputs, which we believe will be a focal point of any new budget model. The new approach contrasts with our current approach of sharing any increases or decreases in budget across the unit at equal percentage levels.

Units were each given a range of budget reductions to begin their planning. The ranges were developed with the understanding that uncertainties existed within the voluntary separation programs and potential for program closures. All units developed plans that met a substantial portion of the budget reduction and waited for final voluntary separation decisions and program prioritization assessments to finalize their plans.

Program Prioritization

In parallel and within the shared governance structure of our university, a task force of faculty and staff updated the 2017 program prioritization process to equitably compare all academic programs based on the Idaho State Board of Education policy criteria of cost effectiveness and qualitative measures. Data was compiled with the assistance of each college and is being reviewed in a multi-step, engaged process to achieve the best possible decisions.

The first step of the prioritization evaluated the relative cost effectiveness of programs, consistent with the State Board of Education's policy and considered the mission essentiality of programs. From there, the programs were placed into quintiles. Programs in the bottom two-fifths are being evaluated further. Position in the lower quintiles does not mean a program will automatically be closed. This sequential approach allows us to look closer at programs that may be considered for improvement, consolidation or discontinuance. Each program will be reviewed on its own merit with input from the program leadership. Any fourth- or fifth-quintile programs recommended for modification or discontinuance will be forwarded to the Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Committee (IPEC) and a final report will go to President Scott Green for consideration. The final step for program closure would require President Green's recommendation to the State Board of Education later this spring. The State Board would make the final decision on program closures. Students currently enrolled in any degree program approved for closure will have the opportunity to complete the degree.

Budget Reductions

While program prioritization is one tool to help leaders make budget decisions, it is not the only information being used. Several sources of information are being considered as part of this budget reset:

1. The Faculty Senate's "Tools and Ranking" document has been shared with and considered by Staff Council, Faculty Senate and the Provost's direct reports. Furthermore, the academic leadership (Deans and Provost) developed plans built from the President's guiding principles in the memo from December: Undergraduate student success and enrollment – protecting programs with large enrollment and/or large teaching mission.
2. Graduate student training and development – protecting programs with strong graduate degree production, consistent with our comprehensive research mission.
3. New strategic initiatives – preserve recent strategic investments, if warranted.
4. Scholarly excellence – protect high-quality research/scholarship/creative activity.
5. Centrality to mission – protect activity required as part of our land-grant mission.

Bringing it All Together

With a final list of employees accepting voluntary separation incentives, the unit leaders in the Provost and Executive Vice President areas (Deans, Vice Provosts, Department Chairs, Directors, etc.) are now positioned to move forward in finalizing their budgets.

Cuts and closures are not easy. However, taking a hard look at our offerings and how they are delivered will allow us to strategically reinvest in programs that maintain and advance our mission of education, research and outreach. This will carry the University of Idaho and our students well into the future.

I appreciate the thoughtful participation of faculty, Faculty Senate, staff, Staff Council and all the unit leadership in the Provost and Executive Vice President areas. Once the budgets for next fiscal year

have been finalized, we will communicate the final outcomes. If you have questions or concerns, please forward them to us via email to provost@uidaho.edu.

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