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Office of Academic Affairs

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September 15, 2009

TO: The Academic Affairs Community
FROM: Joseph F. Sheley, Provost 
RE: Budget Adjustments, 2009-10

As everyone likely knows, Academic Affairs must address a 6.31% (\$6.5 million) cut in baseline funding for 2009-10.

I have been working since late last spring with the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Committee (AABAC) in preparation for the reduction. AABAC members have taken their charge exceptionally seriously. Our discussions produced a set of AABAC recommendations that I have accepted (www.csus.edu/AABAC). They rest upon an austerity approach to budgeting this year (and, likely, much beyond) that assumes prioritization of functions and needs in every Academic Affairs unit and college. The major elements of this year's budget reductions are:

- The baseline budget of Academic Affairs and its various non-College/Library service and program units (representing 12% of the total division budget) will be reduced by 18% (\$2.2 million or 34% of the \$6.5 million reduction). Included in this reduction is an indefinite suspension of baseline funding for our RCA program (\$235,000 per annum; this effectively closes the program for 2010-11, in line with recent notification that the CSU will not be providing supplemental funding for the RCA program for 2010-11). Sacramento State's fall 09 semester commitment to RCA recipients will still be honored; its spring 10 commitment likely will be, but this remains contingent upon potential system-level mid-year reductions.
- The baseline budgets of the various Colleges and the Library (representing 88% of the total Academic Affairs budget) will be reduced by 4.2% (\$3.8 million or 58% of the \$6.5 million reduction). This includes an across-the-board component (about 2.5%) and a differential allocation linked primarily to types and degrees of use of assigned time within the colleges. In an austerity environment, reductions in this area were deemed appropriate. Total reductions (across-the-board + differential) for the Colleges and the Library ranged between 3.7% and 4.8%.
- Academic Affairs and its many service units, the Colleges, and the Library also will reduce baseline spending by \$500,000 (8% of the \$6.5 million reduction) via an equitable "freeze" (with justified and emergency exceptions) on filling vacant MPP and staff positions.

I am now working with AABAC to develop an approach to stewardship of potential mitigation funds (primarily carried forward monies): how conservative vs. how liberal shall we be in expending those non-renewable dollars.

As painful as these reductions are, I hope that we can address them quickly and begin to focus on 2010-11 which will bring *significant* budget challenges, including a mandated downsizing of our enrollment. To this end, I will now begin working with AABAC to structure an approach to funding decisions for next year.

We are way past “cuts” to balance the next budget. Those grappling with planning and budget issues (the deans, SPC, AABAC, for example) increasingly believe that we must approach curriculum and its delivery as a *University* matter, i.e., as more than the sum of individual departments’ foci and interests. We must actively and positively rethink general education, graduation requirements, our majors, and graduate and credential programming -- not to produce budget outcomes but to avoid making these matters solely about budget outcomes. We must include in this rethinking how we are going to provide for instructional facilities, materials, and equipment. We need to underwrite faculty and staff development, academically related advising and other important services, and opportunities for scholarly work and internships for our students. We want to preserve meaningful curricular breadth.

None of this can happen unless we have serious, non-defensive conversations about priorities and the curriculum. I invite the Faculty Senate to begin such discussions. I ask the deans and chairs to launch the same discussions within the various college councils and departments. We must act quickly if by semester’s end we are to have a realistic 2010-11 budget plan driven by something other than “cuts.”

In this same vein, I have been offering a power point budget presentation (attached to the email conveying this memo) to various campus audiences. **I’ve scheduled three 90-minute periods this month during which we can review it and discuss the budget. I invite you to attend one of these discussions in Library 11:**

Thursday, September 24, 3:00 – 4:30

Monday, September 28, 1:00 – 3:30

Tuesday, September 29, 11:00 – 12:30

To say the least, these are difficult times. I’d prefer to address them head-on rather than to be tossed about by them. I hope you feel the same way.

Thanks for your hard work and your patience.