

## Questions Raised During Meetings with the President and College Faculties

The questions and answers below are believed to be accurate paraphrases, but please realize they are reconstructed from notes taken by Senators attending the various meetings.

- Q. Will we be able to replace the individuals who opted for the Voluntary Buy-out?  
A. None of the positions will be refilled in the coming year. It is hope to refill them within three years, but some reallocation of positions may occur.
- Q. Can profits generated from summer school be kept by the units generating the profits?  
A. Not at this time.
- Q. Can cuts be made to any of the libraries?  
A. No, the library is currently off-limits due to the administration's commitment to maintain its ASERL membership in good standing.
- Q. Can the University engage in debt financing to get us through the current crisis?  
A. Debt financing is already used in constructing facilities such as student housing, but there has to be a definite revenue stream to retire the debt.
- Q. Are employee benefits at risk because of cost-cutting?  
A. No, benefits are not at risk.
- Q. What is the status of the employee furloughs recently discussed?  
A. This proposed change in TBR policy was tabled at the December meeting of the Board of Regents , but will be considered again sometime between now and January 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Q. What is the possibility of a 4-day work week?  
A. The Governor is against it; he feels we need to have the universities open even more, not less.
- Q. If cuts occur, will administrative positions be affected also?  
A. Some administrative positions are now unfilled because of the Voluntary Buy-out. These will not be filled in the immediate future. Some other currently unfilled administrative positions will not be filled either, with details to follow.
- Q. What about ongoing faculty searches?  
A. No final decisions have been made.
- Q. Why are we replacing some department chairs while we are not able to replace much-needed faculty positions?  
A. Discussion followed, but no definite answer was provided.
- Q. Will there be a second round of Voluntary Buy-outs?  
A. Some preliminary discussion has taken place, but no decision has been reached.
- Q. Will projects currently under construction be continued?  
A. Yes, since the funds for those projects are already in hand. Also, the Governor is willing to

consider changing the current cash-to-bond ratio for new projects being considered.

- Q. How will the Centers of Excellence be affected?  
A. They will be required to deliver the same level of cuts most likely.
- Q. What about the Athletics Department?  
A. It will also have to cut back its expenditures along the same lines.
- Q. Any change in policy regarding summer pay?  
A. The number of summer sections may be cut back, but the number of students served and the rate of pay for instruction is not anticipated to be affected.
- Q. What about out-sourcing services such as custodial services?  
A. This has been looked at, but our current cost is less than it would be under out-sourcing.
- Q. How much money does the Voluntary buy-out reduce our expenses next year since we are not going to refill the positions immediately?  
A. About \$5 million in the base, not counting benefits. However, the University agreed to pay back the reserves (about \$4 million) that were used for the buy-out over a 3-year period.
- Q. How much do we spend on energy on the campus, and could we consider something like solar energy to generate electricity?  
A. We currently spend about \$5 Million per year on utilities. Solar, however, is not currently an attractive alternative because of the high front end costs.
- Q. Will the Athletic Department be required to be self-supporting as a result of the budget cuts?  
A. The Athletic Department will have to cut its budget like all other units. The University currently provides \$1.8 Million per year to the Athletic Department, but could provide as much as \$2.5 Million under TBR guidelines. No answer was given as to whether this practice will end because of the budget cuts.
- Q. What happens to a position if the person filling that position leaves the University?  
A. The position will not be filled immediately unless special talents are involved.
- Q. Do you foresee a consolidation of courses across TBR via the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) perhaps?  
A. We do expect RODP to continue its expansion along with our own online offerings.
- Q. What are student retention rates in online classes?  
A. Slightly less than in face-to-face classes.
- Q. Is there any problem in making public the report from the Library Allocations Committee?  
A. No problem
- Q. What will be the impact on Graduate Assistants for lifting the tuition cap?  
A. We will perhaps need to develop new policies to deal with this.
- Q. What is the impact of undergraduate attending community colleges in the summer?  
A. It hurts us financially.

- Q. For those called upon to teach more in the coming semesters, will the tenure clock be extended?  
A. The 6-year tenure clock cannot be extended, but we will need to be careful about asking tenure-track faculty to carry heavier teaching loads.
- Q. The Athletic Department expends huge amounts. Shouldn't we consider downsizing that effort during these times?  
A. The University provides the Athletic Department with \$1.8 million annually out of the department's total budget of \$31 million. They will be asked to reduce their expenditures along with every other department.
- Q. Do you anticipate a reduction in tenure-track faculty?  
A. Goal is no reduction in force for faculty or staff.
- Q. What about faculty searches currently underway?  
A. Some will be allowed to be filled, but many remain in a state of limbo presently.
- Q. Are we going to cut instructors who have taught for us for a long time?  
A. The plan is to keep as many as possible of the instructors who are included in a department's base budget.
- Q. What about the Chancellor's "new business model" presented last month?  
A. That report of November 22<sup>nd</sup> was more of a "think" paper that had not been considered by the Presidents or by the TBR Faculty Sub-council. Only the item of furloughs was on the agenda for the December meeting of the Board of Regents, and that idea was tabled until January.
- Q. Is the decision not to replace those who opted for the Voluntary Buy-out a knee-jerk reaction?  
A. Yes, it probably is, but right now we are trying to hang on to all of the employees who opted to stay on.
- Q. Is there any possibility that some current employees might move into slots vacated by the buy-out?  
A. Yes, that is a real possibility.
- Q. How much will the university earn by playing in the St. Petersburg Bowl and how will that income be used?  
A. Not certain as to the income, but after it is distributed to the other conference members and expenses are paid, there is usually very little left over