

WOODRING COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
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**To:** Western Washington University Colleagues  
**From:** Woodring College of Education  
**Date:** March 10, 2009  
**Subject:** Budget Reduction Proposals

Consistent with WWU Planning and Budgeting Office instructions for developing and communicating 2009-2011 budget proposals, Woodring College of Education submits this letter to introduce to the campus community the planning principles, assumptions, and processes we used to develop our budget reduction proposals. The University and College missions and core values provide the context for our budget reduction decision-making and our ongoing strategies for sustaining operational efficiency.

#### **College Mission and Core Values**

*Woodring College of Education is recognized throughout Washington and beyond as a leader in the development and implementation of programs for the preparation of outstanding educators, from early childhood to adult, education leaders and student affairs administrators, human services professionals, and rehabilitation counselors (Western Washington University SCOT Analysis, 2008).*

The strong reputation of our programs derives from our commitment to **engaged excellence** defined by the core values set forth in our College mission statement:

- Model best practices in teaching and learning which, in turn, leads graduates to use best practices in the profession.
- Cultivate student competence through extensive field experiences with exemplary practicing professionals.
- Construct, transform, and convey knowledge by integrating knowledge, theory, and practice.
- Enhance diversity and promote social justice.
- Develop collaborative partnerships that support the learning and well-being of children, families, and communities.
- Evaluate processes and outcomes to assure continual program improvement.

As cited in our College SCOT Analysis (see attached), the strength of our programs rests on our commitment to the preparation of professionals who possess a strong liberal arts foundation, deep content knowledge gained through a disciplinary or inter-disciplinary major, and a professional studies core that prepares graduates for careers and continued professional advancement. Our programs are guided by our shared conceptual framework of *preparing thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective professionals for a diverse society.*

The excellence of our programs is recognized through rigorous national accreditation and state program approval. Maintaining our national and state reputation requires continuous demonstration of accountability in terms of how and to what extent we meet federal and state mandates, accreditation standards, and program approval requirements. These efforts require the targeted resources of faculty time and expertise and the maintenance of accountability systems for continuously gathering, analyzing, and reporting outcomes data on the performance of our students and the quality of our programs.

As a professional school, Woodring College of Education delivers programs and course work primarily at the upper-division and graduate levels. Among the seven colleges of the University, Woodring College of Education is the fourth highest producer of 300-level student credit hours and the second highest producer of 400-level student credit hours. Our self-sustaining outreach programs produce an additional 4,500 student credit hours, making Woodring College of Education the third highest producer of upper division student credit hours (Office of Institutional Research SCH Report, Winter 2009). Of the total number of graduate degrees conferred by Western each year, 40% come from Woodring College of Education. The College is approved by the WWU Academic Coordinating Council to offer two lower-division general education courses, one of which serves as the College's freshmen experience for students interested in pursuing majors in education and human services.

### **College Budget Planning Principles and Assumptions**

Through our budget planning process, we developed and established practices that significantly save resources while sustaining our commitment to engaged excellence. The following principles guided our budget decision-making:

- Use a transparent and inclusive budget decision-making process.
- Weigh impacts on our primary missions of teaching and learning.
- Maintain our commitments to our students, constituents, and community.
- Base budget decisions on thoughtful analysis and consideration of data.
- Identify strategic savings.
- Consider nonemployee-related savings before personnel reductions.
- Promote operational efficiencies.
- Comply with law, statute, policies, and negotiated agreements.

### **College Budget Planning Process**

Consistent with the University process for budget decision-making, Woodring College of Education used a "bottom up" consultative process appropriate to our mission and culture. Our process provided opportunities for participation by all members of our community in exploring possibilities for budget savings, revenue increases, and different ways of meeting responsibilities.

Faculty and staff were asked to participate in a web-based forum to gather ideas and strategies for budget reductions. Accessed through the College Intranet at [www.wce.wvu.edu/Forum/Cost/Savings/](http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Forum/Cost/Savings/), faculty and staff contributed ideas and strategies as well as viewed and commented on the postings of others. Students were engaged in discussion through meetings of College-sponsored student groups and clubs. Information gathered from the web-based forum and student discussions were summarized by the Dean's Office and posted on the Woodring College of Education website.

Within the context of University and College missions and using information from the Woodring College of Education SCOT analysis and relevant data analyses and projections, the department chairs, director of the Office of Field Experiences, associate dean, and dean worked collaboratively to develop a set of proposed budget reductions. These proposed budget reductions were then submitted to the College Administrative Council for review and discussion. The budget reduction proposals were also posted on the Woodring College of Education Intranet for review and comment by faculty and staff. Following input from the College community, the Administrative Council reviewed the proposals and, consistent with College governance policies, voted on final approval of the College budget reduction proposals.

### **Response to Community Suggestions for Cost Savings Measures**

Review of the online forum, *Brainstorming for Cost Saving Opportunities at WWU*, yielded no suggestions for cost savings measures specifically targeting Woodring College of Education. However, a number of postings suggested strategies related to operational efficiency and more sustainable and economic use of resources that we have already implemented over the past 18 months. These strategies include greater use of Blackboard, expansion of eLearning and other delivery modes, reduction in printing, restrictions on color printing, use of energy saving options for desktop workstations, cancellation of professional memberships, and use of the K-20 Network and PolyCom for meetings away from the Bellingham campus. We have also shifted to electronic, rather than paper-based, systems for doing College business such as meeting agendas and minutes, course scheduling, student advising, curriculum alignment and student outcomes assessment, and documentation of faculty workload and activity. In addition, we are testing alternative methods for the supervision of students during field experiences and internships including connecting to sites via web-based technologies and the clustering of multiple interns at a single field site.

### **College Budget Management Approach and Budget Reduction Proposals**

Our budget management approach includes ongoing attention to increasing productivity and operational efficiency, using principles of “lean organizations,” finding new ways of doing business, and accessing alternative sources of revenue.

1. **Woodring Productivity Plan.** Now in the second year of implementation, the Woodring Productivity Plan systematically targets more efficient use of instructional resources with the goal of increasing productivity. Strategies within the Productivity Plan include curriculum changes to eliminate redundant low-enrollment courses, combining course sections, rotational scheduling of course offerings, and putting a very low-enrollment graduate program on admission hiatus while we study the future role of the program. All of these strategies have resulted in more efficient use of instructional resources while maintaining our traditional high-quality programming and student support services.
2. **Reduction in Temporary Faculty Funding.** With more efficient delivery of programs and courses, our dependence on temporary faculty funding has decreased dramatically. Over the past four years, we have decreased our temporary faculty funding from \$339,215 in FY 2006 to a temporary faculty funding request of only \$60,527 for FY 2010. We have achieved this 82% reduction in temporary faculty funding while sustaining our commitment to engaged excellence.

3. **Elimination of College Support Staff.** We used our College budget planning process to identify areas in the College where we could implement “lean organizational” practices. As a result of thoughtful analysis and inclusive budget decision-making guided by our College mission, core values, and commitments, we identified one half-time and three full-time college-level staff positions for elimination. With the elimination of these positions, we will achieve greater operational efficiency while sustaining program quality and service to students.
4. **Vacancy in One Tenure-Track Faculty Line.** The WWU Early Childhood Education legislative decision package provided funding for one new full-time faculty position and one new half-time faculty position. During AY 2007-2008, we filled the full-time faculty position, leaving the half-time position vacant. In addition, an elementary education/early childhood education faculty member requested a reduction in appointment to .50 FTE beginning in fall of 2009. Our budget reduction proposal includes the elimination of the half-time early childhood faculty position and a half-time elementary education/early childhood education position. These reductions will not impact student access to programs or courses or the quality of teaching and learning.
5. **Self-Sustaining Program Revenue.** We have applied principles of “lean organizations” to the management of our self-sustaining programs resulting in reduction in administrative redundancy and more effective use of resources. We have clustered all program offerings at three sites – Everett, North Seattle, and Bremerton – where we have the opportunity to share resources with community colleges and create strong pipelines for students between our community college partners and Western. Moreover, with the shift of our self-sustaining programs in Everett to a state-funded model through the University Center of North Puget Sound, we have achieved fiscal stability and operational efficiency, and created a stable source of additional revenue. Fully integrated into the operations of the College and the University, our Everett-based programs bring some self-sustaining funds to Woodring department operations budgets and contribute approximately \$240,000 annually to the University General Fund.

In addition to our ongoing cost-savings and budget reduction measures, we are taking opportunities to capture additional revenue through state and federal grants, contracts, and education stimulus monies. Because of the stellar reputation of our professional programs and our robust, long-standing partnerships with P-12 schools, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations, we are in a strong position to participate in grant programs included in the reauthorized *No Child Left Behind Act*, the reauthorized *Higher Education Opportunity Act*, and the new *American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.

Woodring College of Education budget planning materials, including our SWOT Analysis, college process for making budget reductions, summary of postings from our recommendations for cost savings forum, and budget reduction proposals, are available at [www.wce.wvu.edu/About/Planning.shtml](http://www.wce.wvu.edu/About/Planning.shtml)