



THE
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News

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FSU TO RECOMMEND PROGRAM CHANGES, LAYOFFS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida State University's budget has been cut \$82 million since 2007. Of that total, \$56.6 million in cuts have yet to be made.

At its June 17 meeting, the Florida State Board of Trustees will be asked to consider a three-year plan to cut that \$56.6 million, beginning in fiscal year 2009-10.

Administrators first began preparing for the budget crisis almost three years ago. On June 11, the university's Budget Crisis Committee, which has been meeting since December and includes faculty and student representatives, reviewed the plan to be submitted to the Board of Trustees. The proposal calls for as many as 200 faculty and staff layoffs, including about 25 tenured professors; the merging, restructuring or suspension of academic programs; a requirement that branch campuses support themselves within three years; and a 15-percent tuition increase each year of the three-year plan. It does not call for across-the-board salary cuts or furloughs for employees.

The university will do everything possible to assist affected individuals in finding other positions either on or off campus. Human Resources has established the Office of Budget Crisis Support Services to meet with them individually. Those who need assistance should call or e-mail Francesca Ciaccio-Freeman at (850) 644-7701, fciaccio@admin.fsu.edu.

"For more than two years, we have worked diligently to manage these cuts, but we are now at the point where we will have to restructure or suspend some programs to preserve the core educational mission of the university," said President T.K. Wetherell.

"We wish we were not forced to take these actions, but the campus will be better served by targeted solutions rather than by diluting the educational experience for all," said Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Lawrence G. Abele.

“We want to put Florida State in the strongest position we can until the economy begins to recover.”

“These cuts have been a painful but necessary exercise,” said English professor and Faculty Senate President Eric Walker. “Faced with \$56 million in cuts, faculty support the goal of a sustainable budget over three years. Although the university has not been able to avoid some faculty layoffs, the faculty have been a regular part of a process that has attempted to minimize such actions through every other cost-savings measure possible.”

Student Senate President Pro Tempore Reggie Cuyler said students understand what the administration is up against.

“The vice presidents and the president have been very considerate of student interests and needs,” said Cuyler, a member of the Budget Crisis Committee, which met more than a dozen times. He lobbied for, and won, assurances that Strozier Library would be held harmless when it had been slated for cuts. “That was one of the top issues for the student body, and the administration listened.”

Wetherell said the university will receive approximately \$22.9 million annually for the next two years in federal stimulus money that is non-recurring, which will aid in retaining affected faculty for the maximum length of time possible.

In addition, pending Board of Trustees approval, tuition will be raised 15 percent for in-state undergraduate and graduate students, which will bring in \$9.3 million in 2009-10. The increase will not apply to out-of-state students or law or medical students.

“Although these revenues will help us offset the current budget reduction, we will still face a significant gap that will become more urgent when the stimulus money goes away in two years,” Wetherell said. “That’s why we’ve planned for three years out.”

Over the past 18 months, administrators at Florida State have cut enrollment, frozen positions and hiring, reduced travel, cut utility usage, reduced supplies and severely reduced the president’s and six vice presidents’ budgets. In addition to millions of dollars in cuts in administrative functions, the new plan recommends various changes in academic programs.

For example, these recommendations include:

- In the College of Arts & Sciences, the geology department would be suspended as a separate department but could be merged with meteorology and oceanography into a new Earth & Atmospheric Sciences unit.
- In the College of Business, The Dedman School of Hospitality and the Golf Management Program would come under separate accreditation from the college so they could be open to more students and become self-supporting.
- The colleges of Communication and Information have merged into one, the College of Communication and Information.
- The College of Social Work is exploring the possibility of merging with another college.
- The College of Visual Arts, Theatre & Dance would restructure into three schools: Theatre, Dance and Art Design. The college would suspend its lighting program, scenic design, and Art Education B.S. degree.
- FSU-Panama City will become self-supporting in three years. Its budget would be cut by 25 percent (although it would receive federal stimulus funds). It would suspend its Information Studies and resident MBA program except online and is developing a plan with Gulf Coast Community College to accept freshman and sophomore students, pending Board of Governors approval. Florida State will encourage students who are not admitted to the main campus to begin their studies at the Panama City campus, Florida State's "Campus on the Coast." Military personnel with honorable discharges or currently serving will be admitted to select undergraduate and graduate programs at Panama City.
- The Ringling Cultural Center would be self-supporting in three years.
- The Asolo MFA acting program also would become self-supporting.
- The colleges of Education, Human Sciences, Music, Nursing and Social Sciences also would suspend or restructure some programs.

Members of the Florida State community can visit:

<http://campus.fsu.edu/budget> for a complete list of the proposed program eliminations.

The same information will be posted for the general public at: www.fsu.edu.

If the trustees give the administration approval to proceed with the proposed plan, the university will work closely with undergraduate students in the affected programs to work out plans for completing their degrees. Faculty will be retained on stimulus funds to also ensure master's and doctoral degree students who are affected can graduate.

"The administration has planned effectively to deal with the budget cuts so that the impact on the quality of the university is minimized," said Music Therapy professor and past Faculty Senate President Jayne Standley. "This has been accomplished over the past year in an open format with input from all areas, especially faculty and students. I feel confident that the overall plan is the best that could be devised under extraordinarily dire circumstances, and that the university community will continue to work together to ensure a quality education for the students of Florida State."

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