



UW Oshkosh Budget Feedback Survey Executive Overview: Summary of Responses

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The state of Wisconsin is now involved in the review of the Governor's 2009-2011 biennial state budget (now pending before the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance). As part of the ongoing review and development process at UW Oshkosh, the campus community was afforded an opportunity to provide input and advice through 11 open-ended questions¹. Responses were collected during the period March 2-24, 2009. During this period 472 respondents provided partial responses to the questions; 381 respondents completed the survey in its entirety.

That question sought identification of respondents into the categories (the numbers represent the survey tally total as reflected in the database):

1. enrolled student -	48 respondents (14%)
2. faculty member -	73 respondents (22%)
3. instructional academic staff member -	17 respondents (5%)
4. professional academic staff member -	54 respondents (16%)
5. classified staff member -	36 respondents (11%)
6. UW Oshkosh graduate (alumna/alumnus) -	89 respondents (27%)
7. other (e.g., member of the public at large) -	18 respondents (5%)
Subtotal	335 respondents (100%)
8. <i>skipped question -</i>	<i>137 respondents</i>
Total participation	472 respondents

Part One – General Impressions

- Strong belief in value and quality at UW Oshkosh
- Recognition: “these are difficult economic times – for individuals, the university and the nation at large”
- People appreciated opportunity to provide input; survey design could be improved
- Many thoughtful ideas and suggestions shared
- There are opportunities to clarify and explain many different budget-related concepts, such as: biennial budget totals, General Purpose Revenue (GPR), Program Revenue, Segregated Fees, Capital Budget, etc.
- Genuine interest in more opportunities for input – forums, meetings, discussions, additional surveys, etc.

¹ After the first 30 responses were collected during the first 24-hour period the survey was open, an additional demographic question added as the 12th item.

Part Two – Summary of Key Findings

1. All constituencies surveyed strongly support the five budget criteria² qualified only by some expressions of concern relating to vagueness, breadth, priority and potential interpretation.
2. Most constituencies said the listed budget criteria covered the critical goals. However, many faculty said that research and support for the liberal arts were missing while many students, alumni and community members noted concerns relating to affordability (financial aid) and access.
3. All constituencies favored protecting direct instruction and student academic support, although many respondents would change how the listed priorities were ranked. Campus safety received less support than the other three listed priorities. Students, alumni and community members tended to favor affordability, quality education, and graduation, while the faculty supported scholarship, development and institutional integrity.
4. Constituent opinion largely supports maintaining student enrollments – but only if quality can be maintained, sufficient resources are available, and the available financial resources can support these higher levels.
5. All constituencies gave a mixed response to the Growth Agenda. While many respondents favored it, essentially an equal number said it should either have lower priority than current programs or should be scaled back. Many respondents said they did not know enough about the Growth Agenda to respond.
6. Respondents offered a wide array of suggestions for reducing the impact of budget reductions. Some constituents favored targeted cuts over across-the-board. Some frequently mentioned options include the following:
 - Increase class sizes and eliminate low enrollment courses.
 - Explore alternate course delivery – whether hybrid, on-line, technology utilization, or D2L.
 - Cut administrative overhead – including positions, paperwork, and programs.
 - Increase faculty and instructional staff teaching loads.
 - Reduce credits-to-degree and improve coursework alignment.
 - Increase tuition and fees in such areas as: labs, differential tuition, excess credit, parking.
 - Eliminate low-demand (enrollment) academic programs – courses, majors.
 - Reduce compensation – salary cuts, hiring freeze, job sharing, furloughs, etc.
 - Adjust the university’s calendar – consider a 4-day week, more/fewer Interim & Summer classes, etc.
 - Revise majors – fewer requirements, end duplication, improve credit transfer, etc.

² UW Oshkosh has established a set of budget development criteria that have guided us in previous budget planning scenarios. They are: (1) Budget for activities that are central to the mission, add value, or are required. (2) Protect the direct instructional undergraduate and graduate teaching mission. (3) Protect the integrity of services supporting the central university mission. (4) Continue a commitment to the strategic plan and university priorities. (5) Value employees and abide by contracts, policies and established procedures.

- Increase faculty and instructional staff teaching loads.
 - Eliminate auxiliary programs – marketing, police, sports, clubs, selected student services, etc.
 - Go Green – conservation and improved efficiency – energy, building utilization, paper, heating, new construction, housing, meals, etc.
 - Buildings – stop new construction, close during breaks and summer.
 - Adjust tenure/promotion expectations and retain/reward teaching.
7. Constituents had differing views over the question of job security. The alumni, students, and public were open to a variety of options including cutting employees, while the faculty and staff tended to favor measures to prevent layoffs. Frequently mentioned suggestions include:
- Reduce hours, increase part-time employment, flexible scheduling, layoffs, etc.
 - Reassign work, job sharing, cross-training, collaboration.
 - Hiring freeze, compensation freeze/cuts, furloughs, encourage retirements.
 - Increases workloads – teaching, service, advising.
 - Eliminate low performers and layers of management.
8. Responses from all constituencies indicated that the university has made a strong effort to engage the campus community in the budgetary process. Suggestion for additional communication included the following items:
- Electronic Communication – additional surveys, continued emails, blogs, improved budget website, podcasts, etc.
- More efforts to engage students including university-wide “town hall” sessions and through posters, focus groups.
 - More discussion and information sharing at the unit, department, division, and college levels.
 - Dissemination of more detailed information – improved clarity in priorities, and budget options/scenarios.
 - Improved newspaper coverage – Oshkosh Northwestern and Advance-Titan.
9. Recommendations for reducing costs to students emphasized auxiliary expenses such as textbooks, housing, food, segregated fees and sports:
- Cost of textbooks – explore rental, e-books, less expensive options, use of older editions.
 - Increase assistance – scholarships, grants, financial aid, and fees.
 - Reduce extracurricular costs – athletics, meals, parking, housing, police, etc.
 - Time-to-degree- credit reductions, transfer credits, improve advising.
 - Don’t construct new buildings
10. Constituents offered a wide range of suggestions for increasing university efficiency:
- Sustainable Campus – conservation, utilities, paper, recycling, reuse.
 - Reduce administrative overhead – positions, support staff, diversity.
 - Establish productivity benchmarks.
 - Consolidation (of positions and functions) – eliminate duplication of service.
 - Contracts –streamline, renegotiate, audit, address for waste, etc.

- Eliminate non-essentials – police (city provide), athletics, various student services, etc.
- Combine departments and academic functions.

11. Other comments and advice identified suggestions not found elsewhere in the survey:

- Improve advocacy and lobbying efforts.

- Concern over internal university morale.
- Close other UW campuses and references to impact of the state's criminal justice process and corrections system.
- Engage and inform external community.
- Recruit student and community volunteers.
- Pursue federal and state stimulus funding.

UW Oshkosh Budget Perspectives – Access Link for Complete Survey Results

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=GPYKvX2pInPfnNnLBip5AH_2bIS0u9nAEG0FhIKa_2fj8_2bs_3d
