

Chancellor addresses state budget planning

by Chancellor Richard H. Wells - Friday, October 17, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1379/chancellor-addresses-state-budget-planning/>

To the Members of UW Oshkosh Community,

As you know, the global economic downturn is negatively impacting state budget planning. Governor Doyle recently announced that the state's 2009-11 biennial budget may have to address a budget shortfall of \$3 billion or more.

On Nov. 20, the state will complete a fiscal analysis on current economic conditions and revenue. This projection will inform policymakers on the scope of the problem for the 2009-11 biennial budget, as well as the potential necessity to make adjustments in the second year of the current 2008-09 annual budget.

Governor Doyle has asked all state agencies — including the UW System — to resubmit 2009-11 biennial budget requests (by Nov. 17) reflecting a 10 percent reduction in spending. We will be working on that request while obtaining campus feedback and providing campus-wide updates on these issues.

We remain hopeful that no emergency reductions will be required during this academic year. However, it is possible that we may be called upon to make some changes to our current budget. Regardless, in formulating contingency plans, we will continue to work closely with faculty, staff and student governance leaders and the U-Plan Council.

In our current budget, we made a number of strategic decisions to preserve our flexibility and to ensure the availability of a limited pool of one-time funding for potential budget lapses. We will use and apply our established and proven principles to make thoughtful, orderly and strategic decisions on how to deal with any requirements or contingencies that may arise.

- Given the use of such sound fiscal practices, we are confident that there will be no need to reduce course offerings for the spring semester.
- Further, we do not anticipate that there will be any need to make personnel reductions through layoffs during this fiscal year.

While we are confident in our ability to deal with challenging contingencies, it is important to say that changes in our fiscal base will require us to make some changes in our priorities.

- All requests to fill future position openings will be considered within the context of our strategic plan and priorities.
- While unlikely, some of the Growth Agenda initiatives and positions may need to be delayed.

Our University has an exceptionally strong strategic and operational planning process. We have used our finance and budgeting plan to guide all budget development activities. The following major principles will guide our action in making any decisions required to respond to limitations in available funding.

1. We will continue to provide strong and effective public advocacy to reduce the negative impact on students and to strengthen financial aid.
2. We will continue to have open, transparent and understandable decisions relating to financial issues.
3. We will continue to set clear objectives and priorities that provide direction in budgeting.
4. We will continue to support the processes of shared governance and work with all key internal constituencies while also providing opportunities for campus input for all major decisions.

In order to provide an opportunity for the campus community to express concerns and provide advice, we have scheduled a campus-wide budget forum to be held Monday, Oct. 27, 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Room 202, Reeve Union.

We have also scheduled a special U-Plan meeting to be held Tuesday, Oct. 28, to review current issues and receive input and advice from student, faculty, staff and classified staff leaders.

Focus on Students

The strength of our academic community is found in our deep commitment to our students. Central to the core of that commitment is an understanding of the relationship between the educational needs of our students and the benefit they provide to our quality of life and the strength of our communities and economy.

I am particularly concerned that we respond more swiftly and effectively to the financial challenges facing our students and their families. The uncertainty of the marketplace is directly impacting people's jobs, homes, careers and employment prospects, and in turn, it is affecting the ability of our students to stay enrolled in college.

In this difficult and challenging environment, I feel we need to find new ways to identify and support students facing extreme financial challenges in order to keep them in their classes. To this end, next Wednesday I will announce the members of a Student Financial Emergency Response Team comprised of key individuals with leadership responsibilities that will be asked to reach out to students in financially stressed situations. The team will help students develop short- and long-term approaches to difficult financial challenges.

With our focus fixed on students — and with our commitment to use and build upon our established framework for making sound financial decisions — I am confident that our campus community can withstand the difficult challenges posed by potential reductions in the available public funds. I ask that during these difficult times, we continue to be sensitive to the needs of our students and use the available campus resources such as the Student Financial Emergency Response Team to provide assistance.

Invitation

Campus Budget Update
Open Forum
Monday, October 27, 2008
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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Richard H. Wells
Chancellor

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- [UW Oshkosh forms Student Financial Emergency Response Team](#)
- [Financial Aid Office releases Financial Aid Weather Report](#)