

WOU FACULTY SENATE SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE (FST) – STATUS SUMMARY 10/23/20

Committee Charge

- The FST was convened to provide an opportunity for additional faculty input to the Article 15 Taskforce.
- The FST charge was to provide incremental budget models to reduce faculty salary and OPE.
- The timeline to do this work is of short duration, over a 3.5 week period, with a final report due to the university president by October 28, 2020.

Committee Process

- Chair and vice-chair elected, committee vote following established Faculty Senate procedures.
- Institutional data review including: notes from Summer 2020 Article 15 panel discussions; July 2020 budget reduction scenarios and proposals from College Deans and Divisions/Departments; various budget document summaries (student credit hour production (SCH), revenues-expenses, enrollment trends, student census of majors, General Education enrollments and faculty salaries).

Key Factors Informing Taskforce Assessment

- Projected WOU budget shortfall in the next fiscal year that requires immediate action.
- Steady decline of University enrollment over the past 10 years.
- Ongoing global public health crisis is impacting University operations, enrollment, and revenues.

Taskforce Assessment

- The short 3.5-week timeline provided to the FST as a working group is insufficient to render a meaningful, well-informed, data-driven decision regarding budget reductions to academic programs.
- The act of faculty members from their respective academic program areas recommending budget reductions or program elimination in other areas outside of their home Divisions would be highly detrimental to the long-term collegial health and success of the institutional community.
- The Deans and Division Chairs previously formulated a collection of budget reduction proposals back in July 2020, totaling millions of dollars in cost savings. These existing draft proposals should be reviewed by the various academic stakeholders, leveraged, finalized and utilized by administration for developing a final budget management plan for submission to the Board of Trustees.

Recommended Actions

For Immediate Action:

- Convene the respective Deans, Division Chairs, and relevant stakeholders to review and finalize the existing draft budget reduction plans that were developed in July 2020. Utilize these plans as the basis for budget reductions to the academic program areas, while maintaining the integrity of established institutional values regarding academic excellence, general education and student success.

For Near-Future Action:

- Convene high-priority working groups of faculty-staff-administrators to address recruitment-retention-declining enrollment trends, and to optimize efficiencies for program delivery and class scheduling.
- Optimize strategies for Institutional Research data collection, analysis, dissemination, and utilization by academic program areas with clearly defined goals and incentives for increasing productivity.
- Develop and/or augment existing formalized processes for academic program development, review, management and adjustment with clearly stated objectives.