

MEMORANDUM

To: The Western Campus Community

From: Bruce Shepard, President
Catherine Riordan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Eileen Coughlin, Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support Services
Rich Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for Advancement
Steve Swan, Vice President for University Relations
Brian Burton, Dean College of Business and Economics
Brent Carbajal, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Chris Cox, Dean, Libraries
Moheb Ghali, Dean, Graduate School
Roger Gilman, Dean, Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies
Dan Guyette, Dean, College of Fine and Performing Arts
Michael Henniger, Interim Dean, Woodring College of Education
Arlan Norman, Dean, College of Sciences and Technology
Brad Smith, Dean, Huxley College of the Environment

Date: May 4, 2011

Subject: Rebasing for Western's Future: Proposals for Discussion

Introduction

At the end of the current special session of the Washington State Legislature, Western Washington University's state support will have been cut by at least 50% in three years, and the reduction to our total budget (after including tuition) will be over 13%. These cuts are permanent and there is no reason to assume that state funding will improve in the foreseeable future.

We feel that the best response to this reality is to rebase the university. We are determined that Western will remain the high quality public university that it has become. Thus, we can no longer continue to do all the wonderful things we now do and maintain the quality that our state has come to expect from Western. Last week, we shared a longer explanation of the rebasing strategy that can be found [here](#).

Over the last few months, planning unit leaders, faculty governance, and student governance have been considering all of the possibilities for program modifications and cuts. Over the last week, all

colleagues were invited to share with their planning unit leaders, one-on-one and confidentially, their ideas regarding possible rebasing. The involvement was amazing and it generated many good ideas.

We have now sifted through all of the possibilities and this document presents those that are still under consideration. The proposals are presented by division, with short introductions and links to the specific proposals. These proposals will now be discussed and debated in the University Planning and Resources Council.

The proposals are conceptual at this point. As the process continues and the budget picture in Olympia becomes clearer, we will add more detail. Our goal is to cut deeply enough that we will be able to both absorb the budget cuts from the legislature and preserve, protect, and reinvest in the high quality education that students receive at Western.

This has not been easy and it will not get any easier going forward. One of the hallmarks of Western is the across-the-board high quality of all of our programs and operations. Everything we are contemplating will be a genuine loss. But, given the serious and permanent cumulative cuts to our budget, we cannot allow the overall quality of our university to erode. Our rebasing efforts may change some things about Western, but we will never alter our fundamental commitment to providing our students with an outstanding public university education.

University Relations

Discussions about the vision for the [University Relations Division](#) began in September, 2010 with a division-wide planning meeting in which all employees participated. That session, which included a SCOT analysis, provided a baseline for short and long term planning. A second six-year visioning session, one focused on Western's new mission statement and strategic goals, was conducted in January 2011 with a meeting of the division's directors. Results of that session were sent to all division employees for feedback and recommendations. A third request was made of division employees on April 22 to meet individually with the vice-president for University Relations, if they so desired, to share thoughts and ideas on potential opportunities for rebasing within the division and university-wide.

University Relations has approached the rebasing initiative with a focus on meeting the future needs of the university and doing so with a model that maximizes operational effectiveness, and innovative and sustainable operations. While we take great pride in knowing that we are very effective in the fluid and rapidly changing worlds of governmental affairs, marketing and communications, we also know that challenging budgetary times are forcing us to approach our future work in different ways.

More details on the rebasing proposals in University Relations are available [here](#).

University Advancement

University Advancement exists to support Western Washington University through securing and managing private resources, building strong relationships with alumni and friends, engaging volunteers, and expanding linkages between the University and its communities. Advancement must be aligned with Western and its new strategic plan.

Since we are a small division we need to seize opportunities to restructure, find efficiencies and rebase on a continuous basis. Starting with the beginning of this fiscal year, however, we have intentionally realigned staffing and work priorities to best deploy our diminishing resources for the highest use for Western and the anticipated comprehensive campaign. We conduct our business to best serve the University by keeping abreast of best practices and staying current with how the economic climate is impacting the fundraising profession.

More details on the proposals from University Advancement are available [here](#).

Student Affairs and Academic Support Services

The [Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services](#) approached budget reduction planning with an understanding of the need for inclusive decision making that involved all departments. Within the division, staff had an opportunity through departmental meetings, a division-wide meeting, and one-on-one meetings with the Vice President to identify areas for reduction and rebasing and to ask questions. In addition, Directors and Administrative Team members utilized planning retreats and regular meetings to examine our options for reducing the budget and identifying areas in greatest need for additional investment.

As a result, the budget reductions identified include programmatic cuts and the elimination of positions both in auxiliaries and in state funded areas. In this process no department was allowed to increase fees in order to achieve reductions. The division further understood the importance of involving the Associated Students in discussions and planning both to share information and to identify areas of reprioritization to support key strategies and core services. These discussions are ongoing and still pending student committee review.

In approaching our reductions, our focus was on (1) protecting core services to ensure that students have the necessary support to access and complete their education at Western, (2) looking for more efficient ways to structure and provide service, (3) ensuring that we remain compliant with institutional, state, and federal mandates, (4) wherever possible placing priority on protecting personnel, and (5) prioritizing reductions and rebasing with a focus on understanding and positioning for the future.

More details on the rebasing proposals in Student Affairs and Academic Support Services are available at this [link](#).

Business and Financial Affairs

[Business and Financial Affairs'](#) rebasing proposal closely follows the criteria noted in the “Next 100 Years” directions, starting with Western’s Strategic Plan and core mission. Fortunately, utilizing feedback from 30 meetings with divisions across the campus, the BFA division recently updated its [SCOT Assessment](#) and [Strategic Plan](#), and developed [objectives and initiatives](#) for the future. The division also held four town hall meetings in February to gather ideas and the VP held open office hours in late April to collect additional ideas. The ideas were gathered and discussed with the directors and many were worked into the proposals and the division’s strategic plan.

We have worked hard to avoid reductions that would result in reduced services to the campus. However, the level of cuts could push us into reductions that diminish some offerings and services. We have attempted to carefully select reductions that will have minimal impact, or where offerings or services can be provided in another manner. We look forward to discussing these issues with the campus community.

More details of BFA proposed reductions can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Academic Affairs

[Academic Affairs](#) is comprised of 13 separate planning units, including the seven colleges, the library, undergraduate and graduate education, information technology and extended education. In reviewing rebasing proposals, we considered each program for its centrality to our core liberal arts and sciences mission, its overall quality, and the ways that it served our students and our state.

The rebasing proposals in Academic Affairs can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

What is Next?

The most important reason to share proposals at this point is so that possibly affected units can begin focused discussion on the proposals – seeking to assess and improve them. Those efforts and those identified above as concluding after the end of the current academic year need to begin now.

We will be relying heavily on the University Planning and Resources Council to listen, consider, and then share further ideas, concerns, and assessments. This broadly representative body will be seeking your views through open forums and through a series of meetings at which proposals will

be openly considered. The Associated Students is represented on the UPRC and will be seeking student views through open forums.

Once budget levels and tuition rates are set in Olympia, we will then be able to form an operating budget for the next fiscal year. We will follow the usual “sources and uses” approach; that is, you will see, on the sources side, where rebasing dollars are coming from and, on the “uses” side, where they are going. The campus will then be able to share reactions and, eventually, the president will then recommend an operating budget for the Trustees to consider adopting. Normally that would be at their meeting in early June.

Flexibility on time lines will need to continue to be the word of the day. The legislature is in special session and, as this is being written, we hear two very different rumors: 1) that they are relatively close to bridging their differences, and 2) there may need to be a second 30-day legislative session following the conclusion of the current session at the end of May.

We encourage you to engage in this important process that will help protect and strengthen the excellence that is Western Washington University.