

Results of the Budget Survey Conducted by the Faculty Consultative Committee

The following is the result of a survey conducted by the Faculty Consultative Committee at the University of Minnesota, Crookston with consultation of the Chancellor. The purpose of the survey was to generate and facilitate a dialogue of ideas to strategically position the campus for the future in this time of budgetary realities. The survey consisted of the following three open-ended questions:

- 1) Please provide suggestions regarding cost saving measures in your department/unit, keeping in mind the University's mission, vision and core values.
- 2) Please provide suggestions regarding cost saving measures for the campus as a whole, again keeping in mind the University's mission, vision and core values.
- 3) What suggestions do you have for revenue generating initiatives either in your department/unit or the campus?

There were sixty-eight respondents to the survey that included all faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota, Crookston campus. The twenty pages of responses were then organized into thirteen themes that follow. The themes reflect the general comments and are summarized to provide some idea of the content or essence of the comments from all respondents. The actual survey comments will not be disseminated due to need for confidentiality of the individual comments found in the survey.

Cost Cutting ideas:

- 1) Energy management

This area was of high interest as over thirty comments were made on this topic. Focus was clearly on three or four areas. Energy conservation was simply stated as turning off lights, closing windows, setting thermometers correctly, building upgrades, lower cost heating alternatives, having fleet vehicles that are more economical, and carpooling. Closing campus over various low usage and/or high cost periods was offered numerous times. Mentioned times included between Christmas and New Years, the Fourth of July week or a shortened work week with Fridays off. Gains included energy efficiencies and workforce reductions. Travel efficiency was another area that included ride sharing, use of lower cost transportation such as Amtrack, use of technology such as computer interfacing programs or ITV for meetings rather than travel, and reduction of trips whether it be athletics, administration or faculty/staff. A final idea suggested revolved

around campus faculty research on energy alternatives incorporated with our heating plant and natural resources opportunities related to programs at UMC.

2) Cutting positions

This area covered the idea that UMC is too top heavy, administrative and supervisory positions (academic, support services and facilities management) need to be re-evaluated for effectiveness and reorganization of these areas should lead to position cuts. Also many specific supporting areas should be reorganized and positions should be weighed for benefits vs. cost to campus. Perhaps some things done on campus could be farmed out or services provided by TC campus for cost savings. For faculty positions, any faculty not teaching required credit load should be performing other relevant duties to compensate.

3) Reevaluate athletics

The general comments reflected the desire to reevaluate athletics with respect to the NCAA Division II standing. Specifically, most comments in this area reflected a desire to “find” an alternative (e.g., a NCAA Division III conference) to the current NCAA Division II competition to allow for better results for the student athletes and their respective teams. The comments revolved around the idea of the level of competition and the cost of competing NCAA Division II athletics.

However, there also were some comments that mentioned the fact that many of the DII student athletes would not be at UMC if not for the scholarship opportunities afforded to these students.

4) Department reorganization

The main idea underlining this theme involved the idea that UMC should reorganize the departments to have either 2 or 3 departments. Most comments mentioned how the campus was previously organized as 3 departments/centers and how this structure would probably save money for UMC. Specifically, it was mentioned how the Agriculture and Natural Resources departments should merge and the that the prior associations of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Science department, Business department and the Math, Science and Technology departments be reestablished to save money with respect to primarily the administrative positions.

5) Online issues specifically with regard to on-campus students

Many people mentioned concerns over the administration of online courses. Specifically, one area related to the re-imbursement for instruction of the online versus on-campus sections of a course. The following comments are some examples related to this idea. Many on-campus classes have seats for more students and the salary for the instructor is the same whether there are ten or forty. Online instruction salary is based on a per student basis and is usually added to the full time person's salary. The practice of an instructor teaching both an on-campus class with a set limit but accepting many more students online on a per student basis is not economical for the campus.

The remaining comments under this theme are focused on enrollment of students in online versus on-campus sections and courses. General comments involved the administration of online courses and if this needs to be re-evaluated. Specifically, there were comments about coordination of online courses between the various departments and the Center for Adult Learning. Also mentioned several times in the survey was that there should be a mechanism to prevent online courses from "cannibalizing" the on-campus courses. Suggestions included charging a hefty fee for on-campus students to take online courses or just stop allowing on-campus students from taking online courses. Other comments suggested that UMC increase online offerings by turning very small classes into online sections and increasing online courses in the summer.

6) Curriculum efficiencies

The general comments indicate a need for efficiencies in course offerings, such as increasing class sizes when possible, offering low enrollment courses less frequently, and not allowing enrollment in online courses for on-campus students. Other suggestions include reviewing the entire curricula with 'outside of the box' thinking to find course combinations rather than course duplications. Fewer courses offered but with larger enrollments and fewer adjunct faculty cuts instructional costs.

There were several comments about low enrollment programs. It was suggested low enrollment programs need to be examined for identifying what can be done to improve enrollment such as identifying which programs have best placement rates and advertise this point. Restructure and/or combine academic programs if needed. Cut programs that don't have sufficient enrollment, cannot be restructured, and have low placement rates. However, the idea that UMC needs to be careful of negatively affecting student academic achievement and student experiences by limiting curriculum.

7) Cut CIHS

Several survey respondents felt that the College in the High School Program should be terminated. They asserted that not only was the program an added cost to UMC but that there were unnecessary expenses like the purchase of t-shirts , book bags, pens, and the like that could also be eliminated.

8) Travel efficiencies

Travel expenses were cited by many survey respondents as an area ripe for cost reduction strategies. Suggestions from respondents included: better overall coordination of trips especially to the TC's; more carpooling to meetings, conferences, and events when possible; development of an online ride-share system; sharing of hotel rooms when possible; only partially reimburse expenses when family members travel with employees; reduce Department Head travel; use telephone and video conferencing to reduce travel; attend fewer week-long conferences; eliminate unnecessary trips to downtown Crookston and Grand Forks; reduce field trip travel by clubs and classes; reduce athletic travel; reevaluate the need for international travel (trips to China, Korea, Taiwan, India, Norway, etc.); fewer plane trips; use Amtrak to travel to TC meetings.

9) Cutting back on length of appointments

All positions greater than 9 month should be evaluated for costs vs. benefits and 12 and 10 month positions should be cut to 10 or 9 month when possible.

10) Retirement/benefit options

Survey respondents suggested continuing to encourage retirements by offering incentives and early buyouts. This would entice people who are thinking about retirement to be more comfortable about doing so. Cash incentives, unused sick leave being offered in exchange for Rx or severance, and extended health care options were recommended to provide motivation for early retirement. Replacing long term employees with new employees usually saves money even if incentives for retirement are given.

11) Paperless

Survey respondents point out too much paper wasting on printing and copying services; and the fact that huge piles of paper left every week at the printers around campus and students printing a hundred pages from an e-book. Survey respondents suggested that we should be a paperless campus. The suggestion involve reducing the amount of printing and the use of copier services and do everything via e-mail; and using ImageNow/WebNow to view applicant data rather than printing.

Revenue Generating ideas:

12) Campus utilization

There are many comments about summer classes, summer short courses, summer camps, and use of UMC facilities for other activities for a charge or fee. Ideas about summer activities included camps tied to majors, courses or camps for gifted children, certification workshops, customized training and retreats or conferences for businesses or others in the state and region.

13) Grant writing

Many responded about the need to seek more grants. Some thought grant writers should be hired to assist faculty in applying for grants. Grants also should be sought for equipment and classroom lab facilities in addition to special projects.