



**Provost and  
Vice President for  
Academic Affairs**

921 South 8th Avenue  
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Pocatello, Idaho  
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November 5, 2009

**Letter to All Faculty**

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the University's response to the current state-mandated budget cuts, as presented by President Vailas at Wednesday's assembly of faculty and staff.

As you know, we are required to "give back" 6% of our budget, which totals four million dollars. This is a painful cut coming so soon after the 12% giveback of last year. What's more, all indications are that we will likely suffer yet another substantial cut before the year's end, if not even a third cut.

The bottom line is that as an institution, we are in dire shape. We simply do not have the resources to sustain such deep reductions in our already meager budget.

Given the fact that the entire institution is operating close to empty, we have few acceptable options. A typical response is simply to direct every unit to return the requisite percentage (6%, say) from its budget. This might work in normal times, but our units have already been cut to the bone. Across-the-board cuts would devastate our departments and colleges and would inevitably mean cutting faculty, probably more than 32 faculty in the first round of cuts.

As you know, both President Vailas and I have reiterated that our key priorities are to protect core faculty and programs as well as student enrollment and services. Eliminating tenured and tenure-track faculty (or even reducing their salaries) is not an option we want to take.

Given the institution's fragile fiscal shape and our determination to protect core faculty, few options remain. In order to respond to the givebacks while preserving our priorities, we have proposed a plan that would retain as many faculty and staff as possible and would trim administrative positions and reorganize units for maximum efficiency.

The plan would increase shared governance, create the potential for research and teaching collaborations, reduce bureaucracy, and eliminate unnecessary administrative layers. Clearly, this is a win-win scenario.

At the assembly, the president made clear that the proposed plan is simply that: a proposal that all appropriate constituents will need to carefully consider, discuss, and fine tune—or even reject, if necessary.

He directed that I empanel three task forces comprised of senior faculty to consider various reorganizations and to sponsor public forums that will enable the entire campus to participate in substantive discussions about potential reorganizations.

I have appointed Associate Vice President Kandi Turley-Ames to chair the task force to examine programs in the arts, humanities, education, and social sciences. Associate Vice President Linda Hatzenbuehler will chair the task force that will examine programs in pharmacy and the health professions. And Vice President Pamela Crowell and Associate Vice President Steve Adkison will co-chair the task force examining engineering and the sciences.

The three chairs will appoint representative members from the ranks of senior faculty and will hold appropriate sessions to examine the proposed model and permutations of it. The three taskforces will report their findings to me, and I will then call a meeting of all faculty and staff to discuss the findings and recommendations of the task forces.

As you can see, we are seeking maximum input and participation in this process. I hope you will participate actively in the process.

I must say, that I am very enthusiastic about our potential as an institution to emerge from this period of serious state budget cuts as an even stronger institution than when we began.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary A. Olson".

Gary A. Olson, Ph.D.  
Provost and Professor

GAO/cmt