

Chair's Report

by Scott Hewitt

For many of us, this is a very difficult time, both personally and professionally. During this unprecedented budget crisis, we are being forced to make cuts, reorganize, and generally maximize our efficiencies. One of the positive aspects of doing this is that we are getting more creative input from faculty, staff, and students, and we are all working more closely together. Continuing the dialogue, thinking creatively and strategically, and being flexible will be crucial for us to weather this storm and to position CSUF for a strong future.

We will have a better idea of our '10-'11 budget when the Governor puts out his budget in January and then the revised budget in May. The Chancellor is asking for significantly more funding for the CSU system; however, it is expected that the State legislature will not increase our funding level. In fact, there are indications that the budget will be a little worse than this year. The current projected State deficit through next year is \$20.7 billion. We will have significantly fewer students in the fall and thus will generate less revenue. It appears that there will be no furloughs next year, and thus no furlough savings. On the other hand, if the state cuts higher education too much, then it may lose federal stimulus funds.

The Senate Executive Committee has decided to focus on six priorities this academic year:

- impact of furloughs, budget crisis, CSU alliance (see article by Acting AVP Ed Trotter and Jon Taylor, as well as the "Senate Vent Tent")
- faculty research/grants/sabbaticals (see the article by Dean Rikli and myself)
- faculty mentoring
- vision/strategic planning (see the "Maintaining Academic Quality" article by AVP Dorota Huizinga and Jack Bedell)
- reorganization
- land and building acquisition (see the articles by Vice President Willie Hagan and Keith Boyum)

The Senate Executive Committee has been very busy with regard to the furloughs and budget cuts. We made recommendations to President Gordon regarding the faculty furlough process on this campus, the faculty furlough days designated by the President, and cutting back on university receptions, dinners, and celebrations. The President, for the most part, agreed with our recommendations. We also held a half-day retreat with the President Gordon and the President's Administrative Board. The main focus of the retreat was on vision, strategic planning, and reorganizing colleges and departments. The letter sent to you by President Gordon and me on maximizing campus efficiencies was one of the outcomes of the retreat. Please take the time to send us your ideas regarding maximizing efficiencies and reorganizing (<http://myweb.fullerton.edu/efficiencies>).

Our campus has already severely reduced budgets across all divisions, but we expect that we will need to make further cuts for the next academic year. CSUF may merge administrative units with other campuses to reduce overall costs. Staff and administrative positions are being held vacant or cut from the budget after the positions are vacated. Our campus is also looking at ways to reduce HVAC usage during the summer, to reduce the energy used by campus computers, ... So far, Academic Affairs has cut way back on OE&E, reduced travel and assigned time, cut back on class sections, not rehired some of our part-time colleagues, and made deeper cuts to the non-College programs in Academic Affairs (including the Academic Senate). As the purview of the Academic Senate falls within the Academic Affairs Division, I will now focus on Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs has fared a little better than the rest of the campus, mainly due to lottery funds and the recent additional stimulus funds. However, since Academic Affairs is about two-thirds of the university budget, out-of-the-box thinking is needed as we look for new ways to streamline our programs and reduce costs while positioning our departments for the future. Some departments already have no OE&E budgets, and some will have lost all their part-time faculty as of this spring. To continue to teach the broad range of courses that our students need, faculty and departments are considering all possible options, including

- Streamlining the curriculum
- Eliminating specialty courses that are not needed for graduation,
- Reducing the number of GE course offerings that meet the same GE requirement
- Eliminating required courses that are nice but not really necessary for the major
- Offering courses less frequently
- Eliminating courses with very low enrollment that are not required for graduation,
- Working with counterparts at other local CSUs to deliver the full range of classes the students need instead of each campus delivering the full range of classes,
- Having faculty teach classes in other departments, and
- Moving departments closer together physically so that they can share staff and resources
- Merging departments.

Each department and program has different needs and will respond differently to this crisis.

Given that the state of California will probably be slow to recover from the recession and that the CSU budget may never be fully restored, it is important to think strategically. What do we want to look like five or ten years from now? Which changes will make us stronger for the future? How can we turn this crisis into an opportunity? Along these lines, there will be an all-day campus strategic planning event on January 20.

On a more positive note, it appears that we will exceed our CSUF external grant funding record by a considerable margin this year, bringing in critical funding for programs and research. We are still educating more than 36,000 students this fall, engaging them in

research, creative activities, service learning experiences, internships, class projects, capstone experiences, ... As we work our way through this crisis, it helps to keep in mind all of the positive things that are still occurring on our campus. As someone who also sits on the CSU Senate Chairs Council, it is clear to me that CSUF is much better positioned to handle this crisis and that our campus community is working together much better than on some of the other CSU campuses.

Please continue to look for opportunities to decrease costs, increase revenues, and maximize efficiencies. The Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Senate will be working with the campus community to maintain and improve academic quality and collegial governance and better position CSUF for the long term. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at shewitt@fullerton.edu.



Dr. Scott Hewitt is a professor of chemistry. He and his research students study how hydrocarbons react in air (smog), combustion systems (incinerators), archeological samples (Olmec tar), and biological samples (aging). Scott is an avid Titan baseball fan and mountain Ultrarunner. He currently serves as Chair of the Academic Senate.