

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dr. Gary Oertli, Interim President  
**FROM:** College Council  
**RE:** Budget Recommendations for 2009-2010

## SUMMARY

The College Council commends the campus-wide Herculean effort to meet the demands of the increased workload during the current economic decline. The College has asked all staff to work harder with less and personnel have universally risen to the occasion. Recognizing that financial cuts must be made, the College Council believes it is important that budget reductions are aligned with the college-wide priorities: *Promote Student Learning and Success, Ensure the Financial Health of the College and Prepare the College for its Preferred Future*. As a result, the Council suggests filling key positions to alleviate strain placed on staff and campus resources, acknowledging this may represent additional budget cuts elsewhere.

Clear efforts to reduce costs while providing essential services have been demonstrated by all departments. The Council recognizes and appreciates the inter-departmental attempt for equitable reductions, however, it is a fact that departmental reductions differentially impact college-wide priorities. This situation requires difficult choices to be made.

The Council identified several themes in this year's budget hearings: Balancing Growth and Capacity with Decreased Funding; Reallocation of Funds; and Efficiency.

## BALANCING GROWTH AND CAPACITY WITH DECREASED FUNDING

Due to a remarkable campus-wide effort, South Seattle Community College met and exceeded the 4.3% reduction in funding for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, however, this was not without substantial impact. Previous budget recommendations from College Council during fiscal year 2008-2009 included alleviating the need for additional staffing. This need for additional staff has been exacerbated by freezing new hires and vacancies, compounded by increased enrollment.

A disparity in departmental staffing resulted partially due to the timing of vacancies and personnel attrition. Increased enrollment during the economic downturn has placed considerable demands on specific areas, exemplified by the increased demand for financial aid services, advising, transcript evaluation, IT services, campus upkeep, and security. The College Council feels it is necessary to fund these support services along with maintaining instructional staffing and library services when classes are offered on campus. In this next financial year, staffing levels must be adjusted in order to relieve disparity and with consideration for present and future increases in enrollment. In the current financial climate, it is likely that many areas will continue to be under-staffed, however, priority needs to be on positions which are most critical to student success. The College Council feels positions requested by Student Services, Office of Instruction, and Administrative Services are aligned with this goal.

## REALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The budget hearings illustrated the commendable campus-wide efforts to retain essential personnel by reallocating funds and finding alternative funding sources. For example, contract revenue, grants,

contingency funds, and other non-state funds are covering essential functions shifted from the state budget. The College Council is concerned that alternative funding sources may not be sustainable.

### **EFFICIENCY**

Increasing use of student “self-services” is helping some departments meet funding shortfalls. For example, Student Online Services reduces demands on staff in Admissions, Registration, and the Cashiers Office. Approved funding for the Virtual Desktop will reduce licensing, labor, IT support, hardware costs, and recycling costs. Self-service represents substantial cost-savings, but it is not “no cost.” The College Council recommends devoting resources that will facilitate additional online services to promote college-wide priorities.

Additional benefits are also achieved by using “green” alternatives. We applaud campus-wide efforts to find green alternatives and encourage these practices. One implemented example is the hazardous waste disposal costs reduced by switching from preserved to fresh animal samples for classroom use. College Council recommends the college continues to explore additional opportunities such as reducing redundancy in printing, copying, and mailings. Green alternatives may or may not represent immediate cost savings, but will likely contribute to long-term cost savings and prepare South Seattle Community College for its preferred future.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE BUDGET HEARINGS**

The 2009-2010 budget hearings highlighted South Seattle Community College’s efforts for transparency in the budget process. Having a single person speak from each department has streamlined budget presentations. In order to best address specific budgetary questions, the College Council recommends additional department members with specific budget knowledge be encouraged to attend hearings.

Attendance at the budget hearings continues to be disappointing. The College Council recognizes a trend for shorter departmental presentations, likely a result of the streamlined process. We suggest decreasing the allotted time for each presentation from 60 minutes to 30 minutes. We hope informing the campus community of the reduced time will encourage greater attendance. The Council also requests department heads and campus leaders encourage staff participation in promoting transparency, consistency, and clarity in the budgetary process.

The Dean of Diversity and Retention and Student Life on behalf of the Services and Activities Fee Board has asked to have the student led S and A Fee Board present their annual allocation budget as a part of future College Council Budget Hearings. These students monitor the S and A Fee and Universal Technology Fees which represent combined budgets of approximately \$800,000. Several departments from across campus are funded out of these monies including staff salaries, services and activities. The Council strongly endorses this request.

### **COLLEGE COUNCIL 2008-2009:**

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