

Summary Digest of Public Suggestions-Budget Priorities Committee

In compiling our final report, the Budget and Priorities Committee struggled with including responses from the Public Suggestion page. In the end, because these responses played a significant role in the Committee's work, we decided to include these public suggestions in the final report. In order to stay true to our pledge of anonymity, we have prepared this digest version of the responses; it captures the intent of the responses but is rewritten to protect the identity of respondents. A total of 61 responses were submitted; some were submitted in duplicate and triplicate; these have been combined.

1. PSU should look into providing the benefits packages for medical and dental, with a true cafeteria plan and \$\$ amount per employee. 'Family friendly' policies reward a specific lifestyle, while increasing costs to employees who don't choose that lifestyle. Employees should get our own cafeteria style plans with a set dollar amount (which should cover the employee in a 'good' plan), and if the employee chooses to cover an entire family, they should pay the extra.
2. PSU should develop a hybrid retirement plan that would invest at least some of the money in a 403b. Right now PSU contributes 6% as an employee contribution and an 8+% employer contribution. Perhaps employees would agree to a reduction of these percentages if the employee contribution could go into a 403b, reducing the cost to PSU and also giving employees piece of mind by reducing the dependency between our retirement funds and the Oregon economy and Oregon politics.
3. Remove every other bulb/tube from florescent light fixtures—particularly in larger rooms.
4. Close the campus during break, as is done at some California universities. Employees could be partially paid or forced to take some vacation time.
5. This respondent suggested cutting a specific administrative unit and redistributing its responsibilities to other units. Their rationale was the University would realize cost savings in labor and additional space would be made available for classrooms.
6. Terminate the football program.
7. This respondent made multiple suggestions:
 - Change from a quarter-based system to a semester-based system. This would eliminate the overhead of having to process an extra term each year.
 - Close the university for one week over the Christmas holidays and for the one week containing Labor Day. This would effectively reduce paid holidays by two (Labor Day and Christmas Day) so in recompense President's Day could be reinstated as a paid holiday.
 - Have other university non-paid closures as appropriate. These could be advertised in advance in the academic calendar. Possibilities include Monday, Nov. 10, 2003 and Friday, January 2, 2004.
 - Reduce PSU summer hours to Monday through Thursday (i.e. the university would be closed on Fridays). This would result not only in salary savings (everyone would only be working a 32-hour week), but also in utility savings.

8. Change to a semester system. Reduce the processing of information to three times a year plus summer, to minimize the amount of time and energy spent on repetitive tasks.
9. Require every faculty member teach a full load for the next year and every administrator to teach 1 course per term, generating an additional 200 courses per year. This would avoid "cutting" areas in the short term and it would buy time to think about transforming the institution.
10. This respondent made several suggestions:
 - The B & P committee should operate in a way that supports PSUs agreed upon Visions and Values statement.
 - The visions and values statement should drive the outcomes of the B & P committee.
 - Resources should be driven by the vision and values. Money should not be the driver of the vision and values.
11. Re-open labor contracts (OPEU, AAUP, AFT) so that the university closes during some or all of Christmas break. Secondly, rather than cutting support positions (as will be likely in cut scenarios over 3%), shorten work weeks in administrative offices, saving staff positions and costs. Students and other PSU constituents are more likely to understand slower/diminished service if offices are closed 1 day per week and during some/all holiday breaks. If administrative staffing is cut further and we remain open 5 days a week, we send the message to students/constituents that diminished service is "business as usual."
12. Serious consideration to the role of athletics at PSU. There are a number of top-rate universities without athletics (e.g., OHSU). PSU could redirect subsidies elsewhere. The university should evaluate the costs of moving to Division I in a time of rising budget deficits.
13. Implement fees for adding and dropping courses. For example, a fee for changes made to registration after posted deadlines (\$5-\$10 per change). This might encourage students to pay attention to the deadlines.
14. This respondent made specific suggestions for altering the administrative structure of one of the units. If implemented, these changes would result in labor savings.
15. This respondent made several suggestions:
 - Close all offices on Fridays at noon.
 - Change the standard workday from 8 hours to 7.5 hours.
 - Close the campus from Dec. 25 through Jan. 1, and again for a week between Spring and Summer terms, allowing classified staff the chance to make up hours at other times if they choose.

- Raise the on-campus parking fee to \$75/month, and/or charge for parking according to size of car (less for small, economical cars, more for SUV's, etc.).
- Close the library at midnight on weekdays, earlier on weekends.
- Open child-care facilities to the public, esp. downtown employees in nearby facilities (this may already be done). Hire the extra staff needed from the student body, providing much-needed on-campus jobs.
- Institute a 5% coffee/tea tax on campus.

16. This respondent made several suggestions:

- Start the Fall term a week earlier than usual and close the campus from Dec. 25 through Jan. 1, and close again for one week between Spring and Summer terms, starting the Summer term a week later than usual. Allow classified hourly staff to make up the hours if they choose to do so, and adjust non-classified salaries accordingly, with options available to make up lost wages for those who choose to do so. Or, place all staff on half-time status during those weeks. Staff would be encouraged to take vacation hours during that time, thus using half as much time as during a normal work week and saving the university on energy costs
- Install electric hand dryers in all restrooms, thus cutting down on the purchase of paper towels and contributing to a sustainable environment.
- Close the library at midnight on weekdays and earlier on weekends.
- Close all campus buildings except the library on weekends and at ten o'clock on weekdays.
- Print the PSU Bulletin every other year instead of every year, and raise the cost from \$6 to \$8. In non-print years, a Bulletin update could be published as an insert and made available online and in print for \$1, or added to the Schedule for the Fall term (or whenever) with an appropriate cost increase for that schedule only to defray the additional printing costs. The Bulletin expiration rules would have to be altered slightly.
- Disallow small electrical appliances, such as personal space heaters, coffee makers, etc. in individual offices, thus saving on energy costs.

17. This respondent made several suggestions:

- Establish a separate fee category for students from states adjacent to Oregon. The fee would be higher than resident fees, but lower than non-resident fees. This would encourage more students from those states to attend PSU. Charging students who are residents of Washington, Idaho, and California counties that are adjacent to Oregon resident tuition would encourage more of these students to attend PSU.

- Charge a fee for each add/drop transaction, including retroactive drops approved by petition (perhaps more for these?).
 - Charge late-registration fees for students who register on or after the first day of the term.
 - Conduct a tuition lottery each term: Students could buy lottery tickets for \$1/ticket. The winning number would get a tuition waiver for the term. This lottery could be administered by the PSU Foundation or another entity within PSU, and the funds generated by the lottery could be applied toward Student Services.
 - Set up indoor space for commercial vendors who sell their wares on campus and charge them a higher rental rate.
 - Rent roof space to cellular phone companies for transceiver towers.
 - Assess a fee to students who have been academically dismissed, then reinstated by the Scholastic Standards Committee.
 - Increase the Quick Entry fee to \$25, which is still 50% of the regular Admissions fee. Students who have paid a Quick Entry fee could be given a slight reduction for a regular admissions application, such as \$40 instead of \$50. This would generate an additional \$5 from students transitioning from Quick Entry to regular admission, and an additional \$15 from Quick Entry students who are merely taking courses for personal or professional gain without seeking a degree.
19. This respondent suggested that a specific academic program be reviewed.
 20. Reductions should NOT impact tenured and tenure-related faculty positions ("temporarily" or permanently). Past budget reductions have resulted in the "disappearance" of tenure lines that are never "recovered." Fixed-term and adjunct faculty are teaching more and more of courses. This saves money in the short-term but ultimately leads to the destruction of this institution.
 21. The enrollment model clearly does not work in favor of PSU. Decrease enrollments by requiring a higher GPA and test scores, especially graduate students whose minimum GPA should be increased to 3.25. Such a readjustment needs to be balanced to ensure an increase in protected class students. Eliminate the football program and use the available scholarships to support minority students. The argument that football provides resources for the university needs to be critically examined, for few nationally ranked teams provide clear benefits to the academic mission of the university. PSU has always lacked a clear mission and strong leadership. The result has been the development of numerous groups on campus competing resources. There are, unfortunately, few opportunities for faculty to achieve professional goals without creating a center leading to a poor use of resources and sinking morale. A corporate approach to higher education is doomed to fail because of the differences between the corporate and academic cultures. PSU will only succeed based on the will and expertise of its faculty.

22. This respondent suggested changes be made in personnel in a specific academic unit.
23. Raise student fees to support important enrollment-related student services as has been proposed and agreed to by student leaders.
24. The Athletic program serves a handful of "scholar-athletes." There is little real community support for the program. If there is no serious budget cut to Athletics, specifically football, then cuts to the core of the university--academic programs and infrastructure--are unconscionable.
25. This respondent made several suggestions:
 - Host summer conferences/meetings/special courses on the PSU campus. Events could be directed at adults (professional conferences, business or academic), retirees or high school-age students (band camps, marching band competitions, cheerleading camps, science camps, sports camps). Event participants would stay in vacant dormitories.
 - Expand the student Union to provide more entertainment options, make it a gathering place (and a place to spend time/money) outside of school hours. This would require an outdoor component. Utilize the central location and beauty of campus as a draw.
 - Plan a roof-top terrace for use in the summer months. Include removable rain shelter options for year round use. Or plan a Park blocks terrace (at the south end?) with indoor and outdoor options--a new facility would be built. Make it a main venue for concerts to draw visitors.
 - Devise city-wide festivals to celebrate unique attributes of PSU and emphasize the integration of PSU with the city. In short, we can and must make campus a major draw--for students, employees, non-affiliated Portlanders, and tourists as well.
 - Consider scaling back costly sports programs to save money.
26. Review and centralize scheduling of campus space. Allow for special needs, utility and revenue.
27. Establish a participatory planning process beyond crisis management that brings together relevant offices to continually coordinate and reevaluate community values and available data to establish a living academic plan, supported by a useable facilities plan and implemented through a multi-biennium budgeting strategy. Good Planning is a rational method of problem solving that provides decision makers with information and alternatives that allows them to make adaptable solutions that can be implemented over time.
28. Change from the quarter system to the semester system.
29. Set up a volunteer division through HR, like other agencies (hospitals, county agencies, etc.) do. There's sure to be a diverse population of people with a wide range of skills and talents who would be interested in volunteering at PSU, and there are plenty of opportunities here for them. This would not be a measure to reduce paid personnel, but rather a means for raising our service level without incurring cost, or at least minimal cost. We could offer volunteer incentives

packages that could range anywhere from library and gym privileges to auditing classes.

30. Allow billboard advertising on campus. Given the commuter traffic passing through campus that, combined with our diverse and sizeable student body population, makes a decent audience. Billboards with ads from major companies might be a good revenue source.
31. Eliminate intercollegiate sports entirely. This will reduce the claim on incidental fees by a considerable amount. Raise the instructional fee by an amount which in aggregate will equal the amount saved in incidental fees. The result is no rise in tuition to the students but a large increase in university income for academic purposes: increased gift revenue for the university. Big athletic supporters won't give as much to academic purposes as they have been giving to the Athletics and Viking Fund, but even if they give 10% as much, PSU is ahead by that much.
32. Our students, as wonderful as they are, come and go and we never see them again. There is a lack of "campus" and "spirit." Put more \$ in those areas and less in "select" academic/teaching units.
33. Athletics should be cut significantly.
34. This respondent advocated budget increases for specific programs in a particular academic unit.
35. Eliminate the tuition plateau. The reduction in total sch would be balanced by increased tuition revenues. Students who now overload themselves do not do well in any of their classes. They would take more reasonable course loads, and they would improve the classroom environment. Eliminate the athletics deficit - probably requiring PSU to give up the idea of big-time athletics. This kind of program has no place in an urban university.
36. Eliminate the football program.
37. A Division I program that can not draw more than 700 people to a varsity basketball program is in dire straits. A football program that has more staff than the attention to academic advising is also scary. Recently both Cal-State Fullerton and Eastern Tennessee cut their football programs. Cutting ours could increase the monies available to lower cost sports like soccer or and allow full compliance with Title IX. The argument that varsity athletics is a recruiting and retention tool is valid on certain types of campuses; ours is not one.
38. Eliminate University Studies and return to a modified distribution model. This would free up resources, and free up classroom space and computer facilities. There is no possible way to justify University Studies in the current budget climate, all pedagogical considerations aside. The University community has a whole range of courses that could easily fulfill distribution requirements now, as they did in the 1990's before the advent of UNST. Eliminating UNST would also eliminate an entire layer of administrative oversight as well.
39. Our Public Safety Department is already understaffed and under-resourced. They have an already tough job keeping our campus safe and further cuts on them would be detrimental to the entire campus.
40. This respondent described a specific program in great detail and was against the loss of access to state contracts that might result from PSU being removing itself from the OUS system.

41. Continued financing of Division 1 football at the expense of academic faculty and student support positions reveals a leadership failure and a reckless disregard for the core educational mission of PSU.
42. This respondent made several suggestions:
 - Maintain or expand faculty, staff, and expense accounts for those departments working to secure/support research grants, private grants and private donor support.
 - Provide financial incentives for faculty and support staff to reward efforts and success in gaining funding for research or other PSU projects.
 - Profile or highlight successes more.
 - Turn off more lights.
43. Form a committee of students, faculty and staff to examine each and every level of administrative structure, staffing, critical roles they play, and recommend cost saving measures. This will have the added bonus of giving all the stakeholders the notion that the university is open and transparent with regard to its operation.
44. I wonder how PSU benefits from spending \$7.6 million annually on athletics at PSU? The IAB reports that 330 student athletes are served, which works out to spending \$23,030 per athlete. If we are not running these programs for Oregon students (54% of the athletes come from out of state-- see IAB report), or for PSU students (a survey 8-9 years ago found that something like 80% of PSU students graduated without ever attending a single athletic event), then for whom, exactly, are we running these programs? It seems like a lot of money spent year after year on a small segment of the PSU population that most PSU students and faculty don't even care about.
45. This respondent suggested the elimination of specific administrative positions.
46. This respondent made several suggestions:
 - Cut Athletics.
 - Cut the OUS administration - PSU should go independent. It makes no sense for us to stay within the system.
 - If we're concerned with education, it makes absolutely no sense to cut CAE's budget. The cost/benefits ratio is so much higher than almost any other program.
47. Maybe we should learn how to deal with budget cutting from prime time TV. Look at the last 20 minutes of the season finale of "Boston Public."
48. Renegotiate the cost of benefits.
49. Reduce the athletics program. I thought it was a terrible idea to enter the Big Sky conference; it has not proven to be fiscally responsible. The athletics program needs to do with less and possibly even step away from the Big Sky.
50. This respondent suggested the elimination of specific positions in a particular administrative unit.
51. This respondent suggested restructuring two academic units and eliminating a specific position.
52. This respondent made several suggestions:

- Re-examine the "reserves" that are presumably available. It doesn't matter whether the money is identified as "reserves", "cash holdings," "services and supplies," etc. Funds available should be "on the table."
 - Don't add to the Oregon unemployment problem. There are employees who are willing to work part of a normal work week (e.g., 4 out of 5 days) in order to save positions.
 - Close the University (for a week between quarters, for example)
53. Shut down athletics program completely and use savings to increase faculty salaries. Faculty would then turn their attention to generating extramural dollars through fellowships, grants and contracts.
54. Recommend that a committee be formed to analyze the potential dangers that follow from moving from a state-support to a market-oriented revenue model. Do not increase course loads; aspirations to be "research extensive" would be destroyed in that one move.