



UMB Staff Senate

August 1, 2009

TO: David, J. Ramsay, D.M., D. Phil. UMB President

From: UMB Staff Senate

Subject: Suggestions for State Budget Reductions: Immediate and Future

Unless people have their heads buried deep in the sand, I believe that there is not a UMB employee who has not been inundated with newspaper, TV news or e-mail messages regarding the current Maryland State fiscal situation. We are pleased that the Staff Senate has this opportunity to participate in the concept of shared governance. The word "furlough" has appeared once again in discussions of FY10 budget reduction options, and many people may feel that this type of approach is easy and temporary. While it is easy, it seems that it is far from temporary. The staff members on this campus have just begun to recover from the FY09 budget issues and furloughs that many of us faced. There are a number of suggestions that came out of our recent request from the staff on campus to come up with ways to save money. Some of these are immediate in nature and others will pay off dividends in the future. Serious consideration should be given to these suggestions. They come from the hard working employees of this University and they have a "hands on" approach to ways of saving funds that can help ease the concept of furloughs on this campus.

We have compiled categories of items that the UMB staff feel should be considered as viable ways to save University and State funds. Many of these items are not new to people on this campus. They have been bringing them up for some time now, but we propose that NOW is when we need to consider them as viable suggestions to consider addressing these financial deficits that we face this year and that are anticipated in FY11.

1. Immediate- Entertainment and Celebrations

It is very tough for employees to be told they are being furloughed one minute when there is an expensive celebration right around the corner. For example, we are getting ready to celebrate Founder's Week in October, but by then we may be deep into another mandated furlough period. Maybe we should consider celebrations of this type to be a luxury and not just an annual event. We are sure that someone can tell you the cost of the staff and student luncheons that are also planned during Founder's Week. We would advise the administration

that the money they plan to spend on these functions can be put to better covering the current and upcoming deficits. Multiply that by the number of planned and unplanned celebrations on this campus, and the dollars adds up.

Another example for the long term is the annual Staff Service luncheon. The staff members feel that it is absolutely great that people with 25, 30, 35 and more years of service receive recognition. The problem with the current celebration is it is far too extensive and costly. Simply limiting the invitations to the staff member celebrating their years of service and eliminating the proposed guest would save at least half of what this event currently costs.

Another planned event for September is a Back to School/Back to Work Ice Cream Social hosted by the SOM Dean. Many people received an invitation to this celebration from 3-5 p.m. Again, many people said that those dollars spent to provide ice cream could be put to better use.

In general, we should celebrate important milestones or honors for people but we need to live within our means more now than ever. It cannot be business as usual. We are all faced with the same budget constraints. This should apply to how we celebrate as well. Let's do it, but not over do it.

2. Immediate/Future- Facilities

We cannot tell you how many staff members have commented as to how much the temperature in many of our buildings is wasting energy and State funds. Again, this is not a new issue. It is ongoing but it is time that we take it seriously and realize how much money we are wasting. Over and over people have complained that the buildings are too cold in the summer and too warm in the winter. We have sophisticated heating and cooling systems in this institution that are computer regulated. People cannot adjust the temperature in their workspaces or buildings. What they are doing is wearing sweaters and layers of clothing in the summer and less in the winter due to the fluctuations in the temperatures during those seasons. We think that this issue can easily be resolved. Our Facilities Department should be able to set these temperatures in a fashion that will result in both immediate and long-term energy savings to the University.

There are far too many lights in our spaces that are not required. Many people have resorted to turning off their overhead light altogether and simply work at their desks using desk lamps or the natural light from available windows. For example, a 100 sq. ft office typically has four banks of light fixtures in the ceiling. Each has three long light bulbs for a total of 12 bulbs in each office. It is so bright in some offices that Facilities could literally take out two of the bulbs in each bank and not affect visibility. It may not seem like much, but multiply this process over the entire campus and you have significant energy savings.

People need to learn to turn off unnecessary electronic items in the evening since they are not used. Items like computers, printers, coffee pots etc. The savings would mount up quickly and be sustainable for the future.

The campus spends too much money painting spaces that may not need it. There must be a schedule where the campus painters go around to various spaces to repaint hallways and other rooms. Maybe some of this work can be put off unless it is absolutely necessary. Doing it just for sake of doing it does not make sense in these times.

We need to halt all unnecessary construction and renovations unless they become absolutely critical to the function of the campus.

Many of the buildings that we have are quite old and the plumbing is well up in years. There are a number of places where we lose money with dripping water sources. Bathrooms and labs constantly have leaks that require fixing. Many of the work orders placed on these items may not receive as high a priority as they should. Dripping water situations allowed to remain unresolved turn into serious increases in utility costs.

The idea of flowers and plants on the campus is a noble one. We seem to spend a LOT of money on planting, caring for, and then replacing thousands of plants and flowers on this campus. Plant half as much and switch to perennials and the money savings can be felt immediately as well as in the future.

3. Immediate/ Future – Printed materials

The first item on which we believe this campus needs to make a ruling is mandatory direct deposit for ALL employees, and to stop printing checks and pay stubs. Instruct people how to get pay stub documents online through the State, and the savings would be tremendous. The money spent on the heavy gauge paper used to print these pay stubs on should be significant and easily calculated. The savings for administrative personnel to process and print these pay stubs could be put to better use. The time spent by Departmental personnel to pick up the checks, verify them, stuff them in envelopes (that the Departments must purchase with State funds), distribute them and follow up with those who do not pick them up can also be spent on better things that these people are being paid State funds to do.

The University needs to get the PeopleSoft electronic time sheet working once and for all. This can save a ton of paper that is again printed, distributed, checked and maintained on file which can go away immediately if we would only activate and use the electronic time sheet portion of the software that we spent money to bring to this campus some 4+ years ago.

This campus has a lot of printed material that is distributed to each member of the University on a regular basis. The campus just spent money to print the campus directory and distribute boxes and boxes of these directories all across the campus. The University has a very viable

directory online and it can be updated by the employees themselves rather than waiting for the next mass printing of the campus directory. The campus should immediately cease printing documents of this nature and save those funds.

Campus publications like the Voice and the Buzz from the School of Medicine should be made available online as the only source for the employees. This would save money immediately. Schools should also make their publications available online as the only option in order to save printing costs across the campus. Campus bulk mailing of paper and heavy card stock should be distributed via e-mail and save the funds spent each time to produce them.

4. Immediate/Future- Campus practices

The practice mandated by the State that we utilize vendors like State Use Industries should not be part of our best practices when spending State funding. Everyone knows that the costs of these items far exceed other vendors. We have a practice where competitive bidding is a standard part of the order process in many cases. For State Use Industries, however, this practice is ignored and people are forced to spend far more for an item than a non-State employee would. On top of that, it takes far too long to get your item. Other vendors can ship immediately and you receive your items in a day or two. State Use Industries can take a long time to receive your item. What ever we need to do to make State Use Industries competitive we should do, or we should allow people to shop reasonably for the items they need and get the best use of their State funding and SAVE!

The convocation and commencement process could be better planned to save money for the campus. Scheduling multiple schools ceremonies at the same time can save money each year.

5. Future- Payroll and HR issues

There should continue to be a hiring freeze on ALL positions unless they are scrutinized by a panel of concerned experts and deemed critical to the operations and function of the University. Consider elimination or a cap on the amount of overtime allowed to employees that are paid from State funding sources.

We should look at the idea of offering incentives for early retirement packages for campus employees where State funding can be saved.

The work week is an area where we received many suggestions. Going to a version of a 4 day work week could result in savings to the campus.

There have been suggestions of having the campus close for periods of time (holidays, etc.) to save on heating, lighting and other services that would not be required during this closure.

In the area of benefits, there were also suggestions of temporarily reducing employee benefits. This does not seem to be a popular option since once given up, benefits might not be reinstated.

There was talk of reducing tuition remission benefits for dependent children during these lean times. There were also suggestions of reducing contributions to employee retirement programs. There were also suggestions that the number of holidays may be looked at possible reducing.

Again, we cannot over emphasize that reduction of employee benefits is a serious issue that needs intense review to be able to assess the impact on employees now and in the future. Giving these sorts of reductions as an alternative does not guarantee that they will be reinstated once the financial downturn is reversed.

6. Immediate/Future- Furloughs and lay-offs

It was unanimous across the staff on this campus that layoffs of employees should only occur as a last resort.

Future furloughs of UMB employees should remain on the back burner now and in the future. The overwhelming consensus of the staff is that furloughing of State employees could appear again to address this financial situation. Many people were not very happy with the recent version of the furlough policy that UMB implemented in FY09. By far, people who are in favor of furloughs as a viable option to save State funding feel that future implementation of this option should be more flexible and fair to everyone on the campus. The recent 4-hour mandatory furlough received extreme criticism. Allowing flexibility on how to take furlough time to be determined by the individual affected shows compassion to the person having his or her salary reduced and puts the choice in the employee's hands rather than in the hands of administrators. The process should not be made easy for the sake of the central offices and force employees to accept as only one option as to how their salary will be reduced. That decision belongs to the individual affected.

The equity issue of the recent furlough system has also been criticized. Waving State funded employees under a certain salary level is inequitable. The decision to cap the amount at a single level is inequitable since a person making \$100K had to forgo the same number of furlough days as the person on campus making \$300 or \$400K. As a percentage of their pay, employees at lower incomes ended up paying MORE than people at the upper ends of the salary levels on this campus.

We believe that it is important to note that we saved the ideas of furloughs and layoffs of employees to the final solution in our message. Many people feel furloughs and some layoffs are the quickest and easiest way to immediately save State funds. We are afraid this option will become more popular as a solution for the State and for those who make critical decision

on the UMB campus. Furloughs and/or layoffs should not become a normal part of our annual schedule of events.

The staff on this campus put a lot of time and effort into quickly turning around their ideas to help this campus save funds to deal with shortfalls that we anticipate in our State funding. We received over 175 e-mail messages from concerned staff on this campus. We have compiled their ideas and suggestions in this message for you and your senior decision makers on this campus to use when determining how UMB will deal with shortfalls in State funding now and in the future.

Many of these ideas and suggestions can have an immediate impact on how State funding is spent on this campus and likely will result in significant savings across the campus. Those involved should consider these ideas and find a way to implement what can be done as soon as possible so that the resulting savings can be quantified in the future.

The Staff Senate thanks you once again for allowing the Staff on the UMB campus to have their voices heard. We understand that you have a difficult situation to deal with in regard to these budget shortfalls, but we are confident that the decisions and practices put into place to deal with the UMB portion of the shortfalls will include many of these suggestions and recommendations. We stand ready to assist in discussion and development of policies and procedures that can be put into place to deal with the difficult financial times.

Sincerely;

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