

New Ideas from Faculty and Staff in response to my Update

[In order to keep numbering constant, the latest ideas have been added at the bottom]

1. Consider this from the Oklahoma Higher Education System -- *All employees – faculty, staff, administrators – were furloughed for 1 day per month. Staff people did not come into work. The faculty members were not required to come in, but 90+ percent did if the furlough day arose on a teaching day. The savings in salaries went a long way in alleviating the budget reduction and allocated reductions equally across all employees.* (Oklahoma Higher Education System)
2. Consider offering summer classes only at the Tampa campus. Combining Lakeland and Tampa business classes in the summer seems particularly attractive.
3. Centralize purchases of software to achieve additional savings. [Editorial – non academic strategies like these are looked into and will be put in place before any academic actions are taken]
4. Perhaps new construction could be put on hold. [Editorial – Construction funds are not E&G and cannot be substituted]
5. The only way to respond and have the institution have any chance at all of maintaining any semblance of quality and nationwide creditability, is a long term hiring ceiling (as opposed to freeze).
6. Cut programs, centers that are not central to the mission.
7. Closing dysfunctional departments is the only way to deal with cuts of this magnitude.
8. Reduce enrollments to funded levels
9. Create a Budget Priority Council of 20-30 faculty members. Ask the Council to preserve strong units and apply the cuts to units, or elements that do not meet stringent quality criteria. The Council needs to assess, for each unit and cost center, a three element criterion, "Quality, Centrality and Demand". Units should be protected from cuts if they are demonstrably of top quality, rated at the top of the national scale. It is also important to protect units whose activity was central to the campus mission. (University of Illinois at UC)
10. I believe it makes more sense to talk about numbers of students taught per faculty member, than to talk about caps per class, or courses per semester. Teaching larger classes (at the lower level, at least) is efficient - it streamlines preparations, and it should allow a faculty member to "buy" the opportunity to teach the small classes that support research, diversify the curriculum, and - in the aggregate - attract talented students to programs that offer choices.

11. Why not look at the average number of students taught by faculty in departments, and set targets for increasing those, while leaving the "course load" alone (or at least giving departments with very different programs the flexibility to adjust the course load or not to reach the target numbers of students)?
12. I think we should consider making more core courses available on line.
13. Internet courses could even give faculty the flexibility to be away and to block off more time for their research than, for example, a MWF schedule would permit.
14. It seems to me crucial to distinguish between a temporary, short-term shortfall (even one which might recur periodically), and a long-term, chronic and structural shortage. If we are dealing with the former, then we must choose carefully to make cuts that can easily be undone.
15. It's time to look seriously at administrative costs where there are many options for reducing waste. I propose an objective independent outside review/audit with recommendations for cost savings.
16. Despite the potential for "brain drain", I renew my proposal that USF develop significant incentives for ORP faculty to take early retirement.
17. Brown-outs for lights/air conditioning over the weekend through the summer in dept. buildings, possibly also the fall (they are empty except for the odd student in the computer lab). And during the week, please raise the temperature, so that we do not have to bring in sweaters. I do think that such initiative campus wide will save quite a bit of money over time, as well as environmental resources. (University of Pennsylvania)

Added on July 6, 2007

18. In the spirit of a team effort to help the University through these budgetary cuts, it would be a show of solidarity and a boost in staff moral for all top administrative employees/faculty to decline the current merit increases and compression inversion raises for now and for the upcoming fiscal year.
19. One of two things must happen: if the budgeting holds, we really do serve fewer, but at least they are the better. Or, the state cannot be seen as abandoning its youth, and must cave somewhat.
20. If this were a private company, facing a short term decline but having good evidence of tremendous growth potential, we would get a loan. A loan softens the cut (say down to a conceivable 3%) and is paid back by moderating our fast growth over a period of years. Such fiscal solutions are used successfully all the time in the private sector. If the university is to be run like a business, we should consider (be allowed to consider?) a prudent business strategy that bets on our eventual success.

21. Argue that now is the time to restructure the SUS. The State legislature is largely responsible for creating a complex and unwieldy university system. Why would these cuts be uniform across this system, as Mark Rosenburg's letter seems to indicate, when success across the SUS system is not uniform? No business would hammer its most productive divisions (UF, FSU, USF) when there are clearly less productive divisions in the mix.
22. I believe the only equitable solution is to ask each department Chair (PROPORTIONALLY TO DEPARTMENT SIZE) to cut adjunct, staff, and instructor lines.
23. I also believe staff cuts can be made in the administration, and administrative spending can be limited.
24. Allow qualified full-time faculty to voluntarily reduce their permanent FTE by X%, with an associated permanent raise of .5X%. By qualified, I mean the faculty member has a compressed or inverted salary and at least an average evaluation of strong. This should motivate faculty to seek outside grants to bring their FTE back up to 1.0 using RO accounts and outside grants. It would result in a true incentive system for securing outside grants. Ultimately, it might become the norm for all faculty to be funded .80 with E&G, but with a more realistic salary rate. Productive faculty could become 1.0 through research grants and RO accounts.
25. Like most regressive tax proposals, the furlough idea does not distribute burdens equally. My suggestion, given the serious discrepancy in salaries on campus, would be that those who have profited more over the years can and should pay more now. Thus, cap all salaries, both administrative and faculty at \$90,000.
26. Offering all summer classes at the Tampa campus, only, could have other unintended consequences. Many faculty who teach summer classes rely on the supplemental income to support their families. Arbitrarily preventing non-Tampa faculty from teaching in the summer would be unfair. On the other hand, requiring non-Tampa faculty to drive to Tampa to teach in the summer would impose the additional cost on those faculty of increased time away from family and other responsibilities (including research), and these faculty would presumably be eligible to request travel reimbursement (an additional 'hidden' cost to the system).
27. It is also time to look at the elimination of certain programs and departments.
28. I am supportive of suggestion #1, monthly furloughs, which were implemented across Canada during the 1990's. A 1-day per month furlough, always a carefully selected Friday, tended to build morale since all members of the unit contributed equally in a proportionate sense and long weekends are precious to most people. Also, there is a big difference between a furlough (i.e. unpaid holiday) and wage roll-backs or job cuts. Furthermore, every time there is a furlough it sends a message about the

- cost of funding shortfalls and, coincidentally, brings about a 5% salary savings with no job cuts. In the Canadian context the furloughs were gradually reduced over 2-3 years as budgets returned to a more normal setting and all contract negotiations continued as if there were no furloughs in effect.
29. USF has a very generous leave benefit for both faculty & staff and on top of that there are sick leave pool & sick leave donations which can be used almost like a short term disability benefit. Each of these benefits is a wonderful thing and should be preserved as much as possible for the truly needy, but there is most definitely abuse. Work time translates into budgetary dollars and we should not be allowing people to use hundreds of extra hours of leave year after year, above and beyond their own accrual, especially during tight budget years. I urge you therefore to look at sick leave benefits for possible savings.
 30. Another area we might look at is the faculty fund for replacement computer equipment. Computers, like most technology has fallen in price relative to performance. While once a standard price for a new computer system was easily \$1500 it is now possible to get much more bang for the buck so to speak. If we considered dropping the maximum computer purchase price for desktop computers to \$500 and maximum laptop purchase price to \$1000 we could lower our overall budget for technology while still providing upgrades as is required.
 31. When I worked for the University of Nebraska at Omaha, we worked full schedules during the Fall and Spring terms (8-5), closed the entire university for the Christmas break and set summer hours (7:30-4:30 or earlier). This not only helped in cost-savings to the university, it was a good way to keep faculty and staff motivated throughout the school year, better plan and more rested for the upcoming busy fall and spring terms. It really made a difference amongst the employees and how they valued the campus.
 32. The administrative costs/waste issue will only save a few million \$, but every little bit counts and everyone will need to cooperate by, for example, turning off lights when they leave the building.
 33. We should freeze enrollment until Tallahassee is willing to pay full freight on the increased enrollments they continue to request.
 34. We could severely limit pay raises including pay raises intended to correct salary inversion.
 35. Use University's unrestricted net assets to offset the reduction.
 36. Keep a long-term perspective. While the tuition increase will not show itself fully for two or three years, it will eventually recover a considerable portion of the potential current loss. Therefore the reductions could be viewed, in substantial part, as non-recurring. Temporizing is therefore not all bad.

37. There is always quite a bit "loose" money generated through various methods such as year-end sweeps. It's non-recurring, but it only has to tide us over for two years.
38. Like the one about axing dysfunctional departments - I'm sure that is always "someone else's department, not mine."
39. I have a few suggestions: During the summer have a four work week allowing staff/faculty to work 10 hour days this way the university is closed from Friday to Monday and close during the Christmas break , when I work during the holidays it is really sickening to see how empty the University is. The colleges are wasting so much electricity and water. I know that the community colleges do this.

Added on July 10, 2007

40. One suggestion I have re. making retirement more attractive to faculty is to increase the sick leave payout. Currently a maximum of 480 hours is paid out upon retirement (25% of total sick leave hours not to exceed 480). Since faculty don't get sick, they accrue years of sick hours and lose thousands of hours. The big problem is this is a Florida Statute, Statute 110.122, so it will likely take some time/effort in getting it changed.
41. Cap the amount of money being offered new "star" faculty and begin hiring those individuals who can TEACH as well as do research. (For the price of one "star" teaching a 2-2 load we can afford to hire three instructors teaching 4-4 loads or two tenure earning faculty at 3-3 loads. You do the math!)
42. Check the loads of ALL currently employed faculty. No faculty should have less than a 3-3 load unless they are doing exceptional research and/or teach unusually large classes. Faculty should be annually evaluated on their research productivity, and if it is not sustained, they should be given more courses to teach. "Living off one's reputation" is not justification for eternal 2-2 or 2-1 teaching loads!
43. Hire more instructors to teach 4-4 loads. Because they do not have to publish, instructors are normally more willing to spend time in the classroom and be more committed to their students. Also, because they are assessed ONLY on teaching...a classroom focus is encouraged.
44. USF has a lot of administrators. Are they all needed? If so, fine; if not, a thinning of the ranks might be called for.
45. Administrators who have academic credentials might help out by teaching at least one course a year (if not a semester).
46. Reduce top administrative salaries!
47. It is important to restrict the impact of the budget cuts to non-critical functions, to the extent possible. This requires a clear definition of the core academic and research mission of USF. In this vein, restricting the number of affected units rather than a widespread general budget reduction would be a better option
48. I understand that a large proportion of the E&G budget (75%?) is related to salaries. However, that should be the choice of last resort for budget cuts.

49. Synchronize everyone's vacation/leave time to a week (or two?) in December during which the University is shut down. Only essential utilities are maintained during this period. The resultant savings in utility costs may be substantial, and employees may not mind an extended winter break.
50. We should not permit these cuts to result in loss of momentum in research and academic endeavors that have been carefully nurtured at USF over the past years as the recovery time may be painfully slow.
51. Given a cut of this magnitude, I think it imperative that divisions, departments and institutes not "carrying their weight" be downsized, merged or considered for elimination. The USF plan for its future directions and foci should be used in making these decisions.
52. Any criteria applied would be most effective at managing costs with the least damage if applied by unit on a per faculty member average across the unit, making adjustments for grant and research productivity both within departments and between units. If a department is bringing in millions in grant dollars, it makes little sense to give those faculty members the same SCH assignments as faculty members in units bringing in thousands. Research dollars support graduate enrollment through grant funds. Having productive research faculty members shift effort to lower level teaching may cost more than gained, as the State funding formula strongly weights upper-level graduate and PhD SCH. It takes quite a few first year butts in seats to match one PhD student enrolling for 9-12 hours of PhD hours. We need to consider not only total SCH, but 'weighted' SCH, where SCH is multiplied by a weight equivalent to the different levels of funding provided.
53. Increases in new student enrollment should be realistically evaluated from a fiscal point of view. If the per student cost of increasing enrollment really is a 60% loss, then we have no option but to freeze enrollment levels until budget cuts are restored.
54. USF is the only state university with a requirement of 6 credit hours of exit courses. Now that we are enrolling more freshmen and have increased admission standards, it makes no sense to continue these very expensive exit courses.
55. Combine the various college-level computer centers/servers save money? As you know, many universities have one central computer center, server, etc... for the entire university rather than by college.
56. Centralize certain processes that are currently done by individual departments, such as shredding or large print jobs? What if the university did all bulk printing in-house, such as copies for courses and marketing materials? We could charge the departments just the cost of printing, and since it is done in bulk it will save money across the board.
57. The department chairs call on lightly loaded faculty to volunteer to teach one extra section to reduce adjunct funding. Faculty members who volunteer and teach an extra section in this crisis would get a letter of recognition put in their file and would be considered to receive one course off in a future year when "normal" funding levels have been restored. The downside to this idea is that many of these adjuncts depend on USF for their income and if their contracts are not renewed they will be forced to seek other employment. USF could as a result loose many talented adjuncts so the final decision should probably rest with the

- department chair. Some adjuncts teaching specialized courses might be difficult to replace.
58. Consider converting College X into pay as you go program and College Y into a pure research unit by pulling out all E&G support.
 59. Encourage (possibly give incentives) to senior (read higher paid) faculty members to take a one-semester leave of absence without pay. Higher paid faculty members typically teach only two courses per semester. The salary saved could be used to cover six or more courses, thus reducing the need to pay adjuncts and/or new hires.
 60. Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of outsourcing ancillary departments that provide services to the University, but are not part of our core competencies. For example: Grounds Department, Janitorial Department and other departments that are not directly related to education and research. Corporations who specialize in these areas should theoretically be able to conduct these services more efficiently and thus provide the services to us at a lower cost. Although a drastic change, It might be worth looking in to during this time of crisis and need for efficient operations.

Added on July 13, 2007

61. One day per month furlough without pay to reduce costs. If this would prevent layoffs, it would be worth the sacrifice. (several has suggested this)
62. FMHI used to be a medical facility and still has emergency power. Some lights are on all of the time. Can that be reversed or curtailed to save electricity costs?
63. Re-engage the property list serve as a way to re-use/recycle equipment, property and office supplies before purchasing. Recycle office supplies (envelops, file folders).
64. Turn off lights when not using rooms. Turn off equipment where possible over the weekends.
65. Remove telephones in rooms or offices where not necessary. Revoke or cancel long distance calling cards from non-essential employees.
66. Travel only when necessary. For non-academic areas: Attending conferences send only one employee instead of many. Draw straws to see who gets to go or use as a reward for performance. Employee must present information to group upon return to ensure that they benefited from the trip and paid attention.
67. Go to 10 hour days and close the university down for the exception of critical offices and some classes on Fridays and weekends.
68. Closing for non-critical times, such as two weeks during Christmas and spring break (HCC does it) and asking employees to utilize their leave for these times off, allowing those without enough leave to cover the four weeks a year the option to (1) go into a deficit and pay these times back as necessary during the year or (2) take leave without pay. This would not cost the university any additional dollars and reduce the amount of leave that many faculty and staff members carry. These exorbitant amounts cost the university a lot of money when the employee

- retires or terminates employment from USF. This would reduce those pay out as well.
69. Close the University for the last two weeks in December and during the Week of Spring break. Let this time be Administrative Leave for everyone. For others that have positions that require them to be here, give them a choice of being off at another time. By closing the University, this would alleviate a lot of electrical power and other things, thus, bringing about a cost savings.
 70. I would like to suggest that we use the schedule that HCC has for the holiday week. Instead of suggesting that employees use their vacation time they earned for the holiday week, I suggest that the office close for two weeks, giving employees paid leave that they do not have to use – while saving the university money on their electricity which would be more of a cost savings and would strengthen employee morale in this sensitive time instead of lowering staff morale. I think it would encourage productivity and well-being while saving the university money.
 71. Encourage working from Home in administrative areas thus saving travel expenses and energy costs.
 72. Shorten the mandatory one hour lunch for some folks that sit idle at there desks and would benefit by leaving a half hour earlier to save energy.
 73. Here in Cooper Hall and other buildings on campus rooms are used on the weekends by several outside organizations-Why don't we charge a nominal fee for the use of these rooms?
 74. Rather than providing additional paid holidays off during the winter break and new year require non esental support to use leave time. I would prefer to use my leave than lose my job.
 75. I think that USF (including all branches) should shut down entirely between Christmas and New Years. There are very few people here anyway, and the buildings could be locked (except for the few that have experiments going on) saving massive amounts of electricity. Employees would be asked to take personal time. With our two floating holidays, this would only cost each employee three days ... and only two if each chose to use their personal day.
 76. A major problem concerning class size is the inability to find sufficient room during normal MW and TR classes. In my time at USF I have noticed certain large and small size rooms that for the most part go underutilized on the Tampa campus.
 - a. 1. Large meeting room at Alumni center
 - b. 2. Marshall Center ballroom and other MC center 2nd floor rooms 3. Marshall Center 1st floor rooms (though small, classes of 30 could be squeezed into some of them) 4. Rooms in the basement of the Sundome 5. Possible rooms available in the IAF building I realize that the IAF, MC, Alumni Center and Sun Dome have hithertofore been off limits to class meetings, but drastic times call for drastic measures.
 77. The 'bonus' of the university president and other 'perks' (extensive nonessential travel, expense accounts, catered events) of high level administrators should be greatly reduced if not eliminated. Students, faculty and staff should not suffer from "budget cutbacks" while the upper echelons of the university administration

- still receive perks and compensation packages which are completely out of proportion with the difficult financial times in which we find ourselves.
78. Might it be possible to save money and boost exit course enrollments by hiring lower cost TA's and adjuncts to help established professors?
 79. Those of us in support positions who have remote access to the University computer and phones could be allowed to work from home one day/week thus saving on power in our respective offices for the university as well as saving on gas traveling to/from the office and wear & tear of our vehicles. That could result in a small "increase" in our personal budget and "decrease" in expense for the university.
 80. I have heard that in Pasco County, they paid the employees for the two weeks during Christmas "technically they only paid us for two days district vacation and the other days were called nonworking days", AND there was no decrease in salary the year it was implemented at the district office – it happened to fall on a year that they got a very small 2% raise. Because the University staff is not getting a raise this year, this would be the perfect year for the University to do that here. The University could take away the personal holiday option that is given out, and give the two weeks (which is really not two weeks because of the holidays and the fact that the university is closing on Friday and Monday's anyway during the holidays. Who know the University might even save money too!
 - 81.