

ACADEMIC COST CONTAINMENT
FINAL REPORT

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Introduction:

Academics are a priority at ASU. Tuition is a central revenue source for the university. The number of students enrolled, student semester credit hours earned and degrees conferred continue to increase at ASUJ. The complement of faculty and adjuncts necessary to support that increase has remained stable. External accrediting agencies have noted programs at ASU are doing a lot with few resources and caution “leanness” at the expense of academic quality. Investments in the academic enterprise are necessary.

Charge: To consider other actions to further contain costs in the academic arena. Quantify effectiveness of cost efforts and publish the outcomes.

Definitions:

Cost Cutting---reducing unit costs of production

Cost Containment----reducing growth in spending

Cost Management---finding ways to systematically reduce spending

Academic Categories:

Adjunct Faculty---full time faculty numbers stable over 3 yr period and adjunct faculty over 5 yr period despite enrollment gains. **Continue to maintain acceptable adjunct to full time faculty ratio.**

On Line Learning—Percent of classroom instruction has continued to decline over 5 yr period concomitant with gradual increase of combined web/online, web assisted and CVN receiving (from 7.8% to 16.3%). **Continue to explore courses/degrees that can be offered using a distance education format (large scale or otherwise). Ensure that courses/degrees transitioned to an on line format are evaluated for appropriate delivery format and quality. Look at other models (like University of North Texas) which use revenue generation, differing tuition structures and other incentives to engage more faculty in online learning.**

Degree/course offerings—Academic viability analysis has occurred for all degrees offered at ASU as required by the state. Programs were consolidated and others were eliminated or embedded within an existing degree program. Two degree programs currently do not meet the state’s academic viability standard but the number of current students in the pipeline suggests one of them will be successful in meeting state standards. Academic Affairs is tracking those academic programs that are marginally viable and should the number of graduates continue to decline, those degree programs may be discontinued due to their inability to meet academic viability standards. Program consolidation, elimination of duplicative courses and discontinuation of programs to date have not resulted in real dollar savings but some efficiencies have been demonstrated with program management and operations. The 120 credit hr mandate for BS degrees will result in student savings but cost the university in revenue generation. **Continue to monitor program viability of all degrees offered at ASU. Continue to explore interdisciplinary and other degree offerings and expand existing programs which attract students to ASU and have a high market demand.**

Support centers in academic units—A portion of the academic budget is used to fund centers/programs that do not generate academic credit. Examples include, the Office of Research and Technology Transfer (ORTT), Delta Center for Economic Development, AR Heritage SITES, Interactive Teaching and Technology Center, Academic Support Center for Athletes, Fowler Center, ASU Farm and Continuing Education and Community Outreach. In the last fiscal year, ORTT has moved from 100% state funding to 100% support through the recovery of externally funded indirect (administrative) costs. All other units have not been able to generate sufficient revenue to cover their expenditures from external sources. All units are held accountable for meeting revenue standards (if applicable) with noted performance improvement but do not have the ability at this time to be wholly self sustaining. **Continue to set goals such that units are receiving a higher portion of their funding from external resources and less from the academic budget. The goal would be self sustaining operations.**

Classrooms—Classrooms have been remodeled for increased seating capacity. Centralized scheduling is occurring for large classroom spaces to maximize efficiencies. There is an attempt to minimize IT costs by installing only necessary teaching/learning items in the classroom. **We are creating efficient deployment of teaching resources with technology enabled course re-design. Some changes recently proposed with the technology fee will allow additional classroom renovations as well as purchase power for individual and classroom computer and other AV support.**

Faculty---As senior/tenured faculty retire, hire assistant/associate professors as replacements. Promote early retirement option to acquire funds necessary for internal reallocation. Faculty teaching loads are currently 12 semester hrs undergraduate and 9-12 semester hours graduate. **The university should consider an early retirement option for faculty. Funds realized should support new faculty hires, internal reallocation of lines to support high growth and new programs and funding to support faculty workloads commensurate with a Research I institution.**

Internships—Clinical travel costs are high. An iPad application (Facetime) has been used to perform student intern supervision in the Dept of History which has resulted in time saved in travel and travel mileage to the university. **Recommend that other departments that require student internships which involve significant faculty travel consider this an option for supervision oversight.**

Other—

Paper and printing costs are reduced significantly secondary to syllabi, handbooks, budgets, student applications, etc being posted on line or through an on line educational platform. **Continue to be as paperless as possible. Utilize networked printers (when appropriate) to save on individual printer costs.**

Concurrent Enrollment—**Expand the number of schools involved in concurrent enrollment to increase the number of credit hours produced. Revisit articulation agreements with schools to understand if our territory and the classes offered could be expanded to include additional schools.**

Staff—Staff resources do not follow the timing of some of the work on campus and inefficiencies exist. In some instances, personnel could be cross-trained. **Identify expert/consultant to analyze work processes and provide recommendations for increased efficiency which will result in cost savings.**