

TRENT UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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To Members of Joint Committee:

At the January 21 meeting of Joint Committee, the University Administration presented TUFA with a sketchy draft budget document that formed the basis for proposed catastrophic instructional staffing cuts. At that time, TUFA expressed shock that such numbers were being presented only weeks after bargaining had concluded. The Union posed preliminary questions and comments, and indicated that further consultation with our membership would likely give way to further questions. Having now completed some preliminary consultation, additional questions have been raised and are presented below.

Given the deeply concerning measures being advanced in next year's staffing plan, we believe it is incumbent on the University's administration to disclose how they arrived at their conclusions. The questions are designed to guide that disclosure.

Proposed Budget

1. It would seem that you have estimated expenses at the extreme high end and revenues at the extreme low end. In other words, what is the evidence for these estimates?
2. Line # 1 – Structural deficit – What figure has management budgeted for the tuition increase legislated by the Ontario government for 2010/2011?
3. How was the \$1.7million figure arrived at? And why did the \$1.7 million figure of January 21 evolve into \$2.6 million when the figure was posted to the intranet?
4. What is the detailed breakdown of government grants? What if any information is there that any of these grants will be discontinued?
5. Line # 2 – Have you factored in how improvements in equity markets since the last evaluation and agreed upon contribution increases will affect the magnitude of required special payments?
6. Line #3 –What information is there to justify your assumptions regarding fringe benefit inflation, given the retirement of faculty and non-replacement of faculty over the past period of time?
7. Line # 4 – Why is there an assumption that we will not receive *any* One Time Funding in 2009/2010 given that there is the potential for additional operational funding for Ontario universities in the 2010 Ontario provincial budget (pending March 2010), and given the fact that every year for the past number of years you budget no one-time funding, and every year for the past number of years, the government has been adding it to the budget?
8. Line # 5 – You've added in your budget assumptions an increase in the base costs in excess of inflation. What is the reason for this?

9. Line # 6 – Increased Revenues from Improved Enrolment. What conversion rate have you assumed on the 15% increase in applications? How is this estimated and how does it compare to the 2009/10 experience? What is the range of possibilities that you have considered for the conversion? (*we note that your figure on the University's website is different from the document we received January 21*).
10. How does the monthly cash flow for the current year compare to the cash flow for similar periods over the past seven years?
11. What is the source of the Special Purpose Funds account? What was the criterion for using this in the past to achieve a balanced operating budget? Why are you not proposing to use it again this year as we go through the visioning exercise?

2. Strategic planning:

1. The current proposed instructional staffing cuts appear to contradict the stated academic mission of the University and the on-going vision renewal process. Which takes precedence (the budget or the vision) and why?
2. What are the procedures for deciding the budget?
3. What analysis has been done on how cuts to the instructional staff may undermine revenues by eroding instructional quality and, therefore, student recruitment and retention?

3. Strategic Operating Budget

1. After several years of cuts to staffing, and a freeze on tenure track hiring, what is the budgetary perspective for maintaining and advancing the academic mission of the university? What has changed from the negotiating table only weeks ago in respect of tenure track hiring and LTA assurances? What has changed since the promises made to Oshawa about tenure track hiring?
2. Have you considered the adverse impact of reducing or eliminating LTAs and not hiring tenure track faculty on the ability individual departments to meet their academic goals?
3. Why is the University not able to run a deficit in operating costs at this time?
4. Why are operating budgets shrinking while financial budgets seem to be expanding (as reflected in financial statements)?
5. What is the impact on the University's operating costs of financing capital projects?
6. What other sources of revenue are available to Trent in the future? For example, what are the projected revenues from the Hydro generation project(s)?

The answers to these and other questions are urgent in order to allow TUFA to adequately respond to what appears to be a most serious erosion of faculty rights and the mission of the university.

Respectfully,

Susan Wurtele,
President, TUFA

cc. President Steven Franklin

