Process, Principles, and Priorities for FY21 Expense Reduction

Academic Affairs
June 17, 2020
Academic Affairs Core Mission & Services

At the center of UTSA's mission as an HSI Research University, Academic Affairs is responsible to deliver high quality academic programs; inclusive teaching and engaged learning, an outstanding student experience; high impact faculty research, scholarship and creative activity; and dedicated service to benefit all students, our communities, Texas and the nation.

Academic Affairs is composed of three components: Academic Colleges, Academic Support Divisions, and an administrative support component that:

- Encourages and nurtures intellectual growth, individual development, career readiness and preparation for a bold future
- Fosters an inclusive institutional environment that is conducive to mastery and growth, scholarly inquiry and creativity, and impact through service, through valuing our unique culture and history to lead as an innovative exemplar for the nation.
- Advances university goals and outcomes through data-informed planning, systematic implementation, prudent fiscal management services and efficient administrative operations.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Overarching values in decision-making:
• We prioritize advancing the strategic plan, academic mission and research enterprise of the university
• We prioritize the academic success and well-being of our students
• We make fiscally sustainable decisions in support of organizational objectives
• We position ourselves to achieve our vision

Overarching values for participatory process:
• We communicate openly and transparently
• We make evidence-based and data-driven decisions
• We value respectful and productive dialogue
• We ask difficult questions, and are willing to change strategies to go where the answers lead us
APPROACH

- Each College/Division is an interdependent enterprise leveraging resources from each area to achieve our overall mission.
- Preserve competitive position - prioritize those with highest impact and scalability.
- Sustain our determined, dedicated people, a critical asset in reaching our destinations.
- Structure for FLEXIBILITY; Structure for RESPONSIVENESS; Structure for EXCELLENCE; Structure for SUCCESS; Structure to SERVE.
METHODS

Expense Exercise: Identify and understand expenses. Measure value of expense in regard to core functions. Re-evaluate commitments and priorities. Focus on fiscal stability and sustainability to protect to the extent possible support for the academic core.

Revenue Recovery: Identify alternative revenue sources to minimize impact on core areas. Utilize vacancies first.

Resource Recovery: Optimize remaining resources to recover inefficiencies. Streamline processes that may result in reorganization, assignment adjustments, or cost savings. Utilize technology to improve service and/or free up human capital for higher impact activities in high-touch/high-customer service environment.

Visioning and Strategic Collaboration: Deploy optimizations in line with a fully articulated mission and vision. Students are at the center of what we do - ensure the academic success of our students by prioritizing instructional costs and resources directed at teaching and preserving student aid, scholarships, and graduate scholarships. Advance growing our research enterprise, particularly for pretenure faculty and graduate students. Attend to Accreditation standards.
PARTICIPATORY PROCESS: Inclusive, Transparent, Data-Informed, Iterative

Framework set at College/Division level
  • Drafted principles, process, targets by college/division leadership

Tailored at department/unit level
  • Regular engagement with chairs/departments, directors/units
  • Local suggestions were incorporated into the larger plans

Gathered, utilized and shared data and guidance
  • Institutional Research dashboards and data
  • Financial information and ongoing guidance by Academic Affairs team
    – Some used Zero-based budgeting approach
  • JEQ results and other HR provided data
  • Benchmarking against similar universities

Iterative discussions, with ongoing, multiple opportunities for input and feedback
  • Townhalls, Websites, FAQs, emails
  • Engaged respective representative stakeholders
Academic Affairs met the budget reduction target.
EXPENSE REDUCTION TACTICS

✓ Reassignment to new funding source
✓ Removed duplicative service inefficiencies
✓ Reduced operational costs
✓ Reorganization/Service Improvements
✓ Unfilled vacancies
✓ Reduced budgeted reserves
IMPACT TO CORE MISSION/SERVICES

• Innovations and Efficiencies:
  – Consolidation and elimination of duplicative roles while leveraging functions and skills to support the entire enterprise
    • Business Services Centers
  – Improved/greater use of technology, software, digital infrastructure
  – Optimization of course schedules to reduce competition without affecting degree completion
  – Leveraging online pedagogy to accommodate increased enrollment

• Timeliness of services may be impacted
• Reductions in hours/access, and scale/number of events
• Greater engagement of graduate students in instructional mission
• Implementation of some university initiatives may be more protracted than originally planned.
• Overall, our academic mission and core services will continue with minimal interruption or diminished quality.