



James E. Rogers
Chancellor

Nevada System of Higher Education

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 11, 2008
TO: Board of Regents
FROM: Chancellor Jim Rogers
RE: **BUDGET CUTS**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'James E. Rogers'. The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

On May 29, 2008 I sent you a memorandum giving you a broad overview of the disastrous consequences the eight institutions of the Nevada System of Higher Education would suffer if a 14% budget became a reality. I thought it might make the issues even clearer if I had one of the colleges at UNLV give you an in-depth analysis of the specific effects the budget cuts would cause. Therefore I asked Chris Hudgins, Dean of the Liberal Arts College at UNLV, to give you his analysis of the budget cuts. The following is what he sent me last night.

/j

College of Liberal Arts, UNLV
A 14% Budget Cut Snapshot

During our first round of budget cuts, early in the 2007/08 academic year, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, worked toward a 4% overall cut in our State-expenditure budgets. The College of Liberal Arts budget for such funds for 2006/07 was \$21,278,122. With considerable pain, we managed to achieve our share of those cuts, with some of our shortfall being provided for by "contributions" from other budgets, outside the College, given our extensive offering of the General Education, Core Curriculum courses necessary for our students to graduate. Most of the College's State budget expenditures, of course, are for salaries for our professors and instructional staff. Essentially, we cannot cut salaries for tenured and tenure track faculty without a declaration of financial exigency, which we wish to avoid at all costs. Thus, our primary target for this first round of reductions was our budget for part-time instruction.

A brief summary of College of Liberal Arts instructional staffing: the College of Liberal Arts is the largest College in the University, offering 26% of the University's courses last academic year (2007/08), in part because the College includes such a high percentage of the courses that satisfy our General Education Core Curriculum, in part because of the popularity of its large number of majors and interdisciplinary studies programs.

Departments housed in the College include: Anthropology, English, the English Language Center (English as a Second Language instruction, etc.), Foreign Languages, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Women's Studies.

Approximately 60% (!!) of College of Liberal Arts courses are taught by part-time instructors or graduate students on M.A. or Ph.D. assistantships, a shameful figure, far beyond what a good staffing profile should be for a research university.

For spring 2008, we had 214 part-time instructors on our College roster. That figure compares to the 156 full-time faculty on board as either tenured or tenure-track professors (111 and 45, respectively). In addition, we had 15 Visiting Assistant Professors on our rosters. These are full time but non-tenure track faculty who are paid as "temporary" employees.

There are, of course, huge savings involved in teaching our courses this way. The College of Liberal Arts "cost" per FTE is roughly 40% of the average cost per FTE university-wide. Thus, we are the "cash cow" for FTE in the University, again, in part, because of market forces which make hiring a tenure-track faculty member in English, for example, considerably cheaper than hiring a faculty member in the College of Business or the College of Engineering. Costs for a PTI teaching one course amount to about \$3300; a good estimate of the cost for one course of a typical Liberal Arts College tenured faculty member would be about \$15,000. That last figure is so high, of course, because we must take

into account our graduate teaching and research mission when assigning tenure-track and tenured faculty teaching loads.

I will note that during this first 4%-target budget reduction, we have made excellent progress in efficiency regarding our utilization of part-time instructors, reducing the spring 2008 PTI budgets by approximately 13% in comparison with the spring 2007 PTI budgets. That reduction, though, came at the expense of mounting a number of large lecture sections for our General Education Courses, and increasing enrollments by smaller increments in many of our other lower division classes. Our projections for fall 2008 suggest that we will have achieved a 20% reduction, overall, in our PTI budgets over the previous calendar year.

Other budgetary reductions during this first round for the 4% target included the termination of six non-tenure track faculty, the elimination of all save replacement positions for our fall round of faculty hiring, the closing of several searches even for replacement positions, and the denial of requests for much needed clerical and professional staff, including staff for our Advising Center, so essential for our retention and student-centered goals.

What would be the effect of additional 14% budget cut on the College of Liberal Arts? Nothing short of devastating. And that devastation would include the loss of many of our faculty with national reputations, individuals who can move at will on the academic job market. The College of Liberal Arts is one the most highly regarded in the University for its faculty's reputation in research and scholarly achievement. Several of our departments have national or international reputations as places where knowledge is created, or where cutting edge research contributes to our community's well being and advancement. Among other departments, those include the Department of English's nationally ranked, top five in the U.S., creative writing programs, other departments whose scholars have published books at Oxford, Cambridge, State University of New York Press, Norton, and on and on, in addition to those departments where "applied research" allows faculty, for example, to offer psychological counseling to the community on a sliding fee scale. These prominent faculty, if their research programs are endangered by draconian cuts, will leave; and it will take at least a decade for us to begin to recover from such an exodus.

For the sake of argument, let's assume, in round numbers, that the State budget for the College of Liberal Arts is \$21 million. A 14% cut target would amount to almost \$3 million. Two obvious but totally unacceptable "solutions" would be 1) to increase the teaching load for our tenured and tenure-track faculty. Let's assume that we add two courses per year to the tenured/tenure-track faculty's teaching load. Given our 156 tenured/tenure track faculty, replacing the part-time instructors with tenured/tenure track faculty member under the current staffing situation, at @ \$3300 per PTI course, would save us only about \$500,000, leaving a balance of \$2.5 million, in round numbers, still to cut, after having devastated our research mission by eliminating the time available for faculty to do their scholarship, publish their books, do work in the community on the basis of applied research. And 2), or our second

"solution," would be to reduce the numbers of classes we offer to our student population. Eliminating another 10% from our PTI budgets would save us about \$300,000, on the basis of a round-figure \$3 million dollar expenditure in that arena. We're still only at the \$800,000 savings mark, still \$2.2 million shy of that 14% target of \$3 million, and now we've devastated both the research mission of the University AND our ability to offer enough of those General Education Core Curriculum courses for our students to graduate in a timely fashion. In addition, such cutting of courses would have a hugely negative impact on our FTE funding formula that provides our budgets in the first place, a truly vicious circle.

What's left to cut?? We're already at bare-bones minimum in terms of support staff, clerical and professional in the College. Those positions simply are not viable targets. The only possibility left, as I see it, would be to eliminate programs, which requires the declaration of financial exigency, and, a corollary, which requires one-year notice of tenured faculty members such that they can be terminated. For an example, let's take an unspecified department with a tenured/tenure-track faculty of say 13. Let's assume an average salary of \$75,000. Firing those faculty, for financial exigency, would produce savings of about \$1 million. We've just eliminated a central discipline in the College of Liberal Arts, and produced a hugely negative impact on our General Education curriculum, with the concurrent loss of opportunity for Nevada students to study an essential discipline, for a savings that still falls \$1.2 million short of our \$3 million target. Where in the world will the rest of those targeted savings come from? And, note here, again, that these savings from eliminating a Department could not come until one year AFTER the declaration of financial exigency, given tenure regulations.

I see only two other possibilities, were funding to be cut across the board, for all colleges, at this 14% level: 1) the elimination of several of our most expensive programs, that is, graduate programs, where student-teacher ratios are lower and where we cannot use part-time instructors. Again, that's a devastating alternative for a research University, and for our carrying out our mission, for the advancement of the State and local communities. Elimination of several graduate programs would allow us to eliminate the expense of graduate assistantships, but that would reduce further our offering of the lower division courses typically taught by these graduate students as a condition for their assistantships. And 2), our second "solution" in this last stage, the firing of our Visiting Assistant Professors, again, essential teaching personnel, but instructors not protected by tenure. This year we have 15 visiting assistant professors on our rosters, for a total salary figure of about \$610,000. Not counting any savings from the elimination of graduate programs, which would be relatively small, we're still about \$600,000 shy of our target cut, and with this draconian move, given our visiting assistant professors' important roles in a number of departments, we would have to eliminate a good many of our course offerings in Foreign Languages, in English as a Second Language, and in Philosophy.

At this stage, if we'd already carried out all of those horrific cuts and the corresponding reductions in course offerings, my best guess is that

the University administration would provide the College of Liberal Arts with the \$600,000 in its deficit balance from other sources, since we offer such a huge percentage of the University's General Education Core Requirement courses and since we do it so inexpensively, given our reliance on part-time instructors. This snap shot, of the impact of that additional 14% budget reductions on this one college, in short, is the portrait of a disaster area.

As several individuals have suggested, again with the codicil that the requirements of financial exigency and tenure/tenure-track faculty termination would delay the "savings" by at least one year, one other devastating solution to such a draconian budget cut target, would be to eliminate one or two or three entire colleges.

In sum, the College of Liberal Arts, like the University as a whole, has dealt with the first round of cuts, the 4% mandate, with extraordinary responsibility and thoughtfulness. Prior to that 4% cut, we were already operating as a College funded at a second class rate but achieving often first-class goals. We are already down to a very lean and efficient budget in the College, though we have suffered hugely because of those initial cuts. There is no blood left, only the pound of flesh, taking which, as Jim Rogers has mentioned in his open letter to the governor, will amount to the amputation of programs, departments, colleges, graduate study opportunities, essential to the health of the organism - and to the future of our community and our State.

Christopher C. Hudgins, Dean
College of Liberal Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas