

## **USenate Feedback: 4/4-4/11**

### **Creative solutions instead of cuts**

**Comment:** I find it interesting that the only options provided were to cut. What if we had been asked to be creative instead? For example in the early 90's Manitoba faced a budget crisis and instead of fire people Gary Filmon instituted Filmon Fridays; a reduced work week once a month where all government employees took an unpaid day off. Guess what it worked. Or what if tenured faculty taught summer courses as they are being paid anyway and those courses were half off for students meaning pure revenue. Or what if students could pay extra for something a like an earlier registration date better dorm room or designated assigned parking for them alone? All of these have worked elsewhere but no one did the research. Instead of was slash and burn. And yes I did mention these to my supervisor and was fired for my trouble. Short sightedness this institution has been rampant for a decade. Does the administration realize that half my students are transferring rather than staying? No one is listening.

**Response:** Filmon Fridays – The idea of reducing costs by furloughs is problematic. Such actions place the cost of budget reductions on the backs of the employees. It is a form of salary reduction. The University has worked a long time to build up salaries so that they are regionally competitive. This would be a step backward. Furthermore, this type of budget reduction would be temporary. A guiding principle of the current process is to reduce base funding. When it comes to personnel, this can only be done through reduction in FTEs, which are permanent.

Summer tuition - Most faculty at UND are on nine month appointments. Those who teach in the summer are compensated for their effort. This plan would not therefore generate new revenue.

Student fees for perks – This model works well for airlines, but is not always well accepted by their customers. Parking, housing and food services are auxiliary services and must pay for themselves. The revenue for any additional fees like the ones you suggest would be used by the respective service to maintain and improve their product. For example, students can already buy special permits for the parking ramp. These revenues are used to pay off the building debt, though and do not help with the budget reduction. We are sorry to hear that you lost your job and sincerely hope that it was not because you voiced concerns to your supervisor.

### **Women's Hockey and national publicity**

**Comment:** Cutting an athletic program than constantly is a top program in the NATION not big sky not summit league and then saying we will support championship programs?! Women's hockey had in the WORLD Championship semifinals 12% of the players the most represented school in US with National broadcasting in North America and Europe The positive effects of spreading UND name and reputation can't not be bought in a cheaper and better and more efficient way With the Olympic Games coming up in February 2018 who would be broadcast all over the world UND would have had up to 13 present former and future players of the 168 UND was mentioned 494 times in the last Winter Olympics due to there women hockey players and in a positive note I'm sure it would be mentioned the same amount in February in a negative way and as a parent would I really send my son or daughter to that school It takes time to build a good reputation not you can destroy it very fast

**Response:** The SBRRC discussed the implications of the women's hockey program decision in the context of the larger budget reduction process. This is a visible, public loss, but by no means the only one that the university is experiencing. One must keep in perspective that there will be well over 100 fewer faculty and staff employed at UND come this summer outside of athletics. The departure of these individuals does not make headlines, but the collective loss puts parts of the university's academic mission at risk. Economics can be used to justify why a particular athletic program or academic major should be cut, but it cannot explain away the values people place in them. The loss of women's hockey has provoked strong reactions. This is in part because North Dakotans closely associate UND with hockey. But there is much more to UND than athletics. Defining UND's brand beyond hockey is one of the great challenges facing UND today.

### **Health insurance**

**Comment:** the comment made about opting out of UND's/state medical insurance. I did this as at the time I started UND my son would've needed to be one year w/o a doctor appointment (w/disabilities this wasn't going to happen). So this option has always been there.

**Response:** You are correct. It is possible to opt out of the UND health insurance benefit if you have coverage from another source. The previous post (4/4 USenate Feedback), however, was suggesting something a little different, which was to pay employees a small sum to incentivize them to choose a plan other than the one offered by UND. The SBRRC has learned that this type of transaction would be illegal.

### **Strategic planning**

**Comment:** I keep hearing about the "strategic Plan". What is that exactly?

**Comment:** How much money has been spent on strategic planning? Specifically how much money has been paid in fees/salary to the consultant? What is the total amount of travel and lodging and meal expenses that have been paid for the consultant? How much faculty and staff time has been invested and can one estimate the cost of this time in dollars? How much in total dollars have been spent on food and beverages for strategic planning events/ meetings?

**Response:** The April 19 and 26 budget forums, 3 pm in Education Room 7, will focus on strategic planning. President Kennedy will have a special meeting on the strategic plan in the Memorial Union Lecture Bowl on May 5 from 2:30 to 3:30. The SBRRC is looking into the costs of the strategic planning processes.

### **Follow-up on Ray Richards Golf Course (4/4 USenate Feedback)**

**Comment:** I feel UND is spending too much money of Vice this Vice that Asst this Asst that and especially the "consultants" and way to much money on the logo signs and flags that no one wanted any way. But more importantly selling a piece of DONATED LAND - that was making money !for a will-be a

traffic hazard on Demers is awful. Ray Richards was a business that worked many many UND Students as well as GFK residents went here...

**Comment:** What will happen to the golf course? I was told it self generated its own income so was not closed because of cuts. Is there another reason?

**Extended response:** The ethics and legality of the proposed repurposing of the Ray Richards Golf Course property was discussed in the 4/4 USenate Feedback response. More on this can be found in an April 11 UND Today story (<http://blogs.und.edu/und-today/2017/04/gifted-at-und/>). The Finance Office indicates that several issues factored into the closing of the golf course. The operation of the course was not considered to be part of the core mission of the university. The course was never fully costed. Revenue was usually sufficient to meet direct cost such as personnel, and equipment, but not total costs, including support services. The request for proposals issued last summer did not result in any business plans that would be an improvement of the existing operations. The Grand Forks Park District considered getting involved but chose not to pursue it. The value and appropriate uses of the land has not been determined yet. An independent real estate analysis needs to be done first. Any new funds that might be realized from the property would not affect the current budget reduction process, but would likely be used for deferred maintenance.

Follow-up on a 4/10 work-week (4/4 Usenate Feedback)

**Comment:** What's the impact if during the Summer months Fridays were eliminated 4/10's? Could provide moral boost as well as reduce Energy costs. Whats the impact to budgets if some admin staff worked from home could space be freed up to reduce operational costs and reducing costs for commuting for the employee(it would be like a raise for some).

**Extended response:** These suggestions deserve a deeper look into the complexities of building use as it relates to potential cost savings. According to the VP for Finance, most campus buildings are mixed use. It is easier to consolidate class room use than it is office space since the costs of temporarily displacing personnel can be significant, not only in terms of moving, but also productivity. This makes short term savings problematic. But with careful long-term planning such consolidations could be achieved. This is currently happening with Corwin-Larimore and Robertson-Sayers Halls. Units are gradually being reassigned to new space so that these buildings can eventually be taken off-line. This does not necessarily mean demolished, though since many factors must be weighed including historic significance and aesthetics.

A 4/10 work week may not necessarily save money either, since salaries are unchanged and building heating and cooling must still be maintained. As indicated previously, working from home is possible and does occur to a limited extent. These, however, are unit-specific decisions and may be constrained by the type of work, challenges associated with supervision and whether the employer or employee provides the off-campus office space.