

May 1, 2009

To colleagues at the Seattle Community Colleges –

The state budget is now a reality, and if there is anything positive about the current situation, the cuts that were announced this week for community and technical colleges were not a surprise. For our district, the net reduction will be approximately \$6.5 million, even after the 7% tuition increase is added back in.

The budget takes effect in just 60 days, so we need to make decisions very quickly. The District-wide and College Budget Committees have been discussing both long-term and short-term recommendations such as maximizing revenue generation, consolidating departments, cutting programs, reducing services, voluntary salary reductions, retirement incentive packages, and a one-time use of reserve funds.

Although these ideas may result in some short-term savings, the reality is that more than 85% of our expenditures are in salaries and benefits. Unfortunately, this means that we have to consider staff reductions in order to balance our budgets in the short term, even beyond the hiring freeze that is already being felt in many departments across the district.

A proposal for early retirement and voluntary leave without pay for exempt employees was distributed last week, with a deadline of May 15. However, the minimal response will not help to reduce our budgets by a significant amount. Proposals for faculty and classified employees are still being bargained.

In order to achieve a balanced budget for the coming year, we are discussing the reduction of 80-100 exempt, classified and full-time faculty positions throughout the district. About half of these positions are currently vacant. These reductions will have a major impact on the lives of our colleagues and they will also greatly affect our ability to provide the quality services our students and communities expect from us.

As an alternative to layoffs, we are considering district-wide furloughs. The state budget includes language encouraging higher education institutions and other state agencies to implement this type of measure and to also do it in ways that will provide for the retention of health benefits, retirement service credit and living wages.

Using these guidelines, we have determined that implementing a district-wide 5-day furlough would allow us to significantly minimize layoffs of currently employed full-time personnel during the next year because of operating budget reductions. **I would like to hear your thoughts on this proposal by the end of the day on Monday, May 4.** Please send them to me at the Chancellor's Office email address: CO@sccd.ctc.edu.

Keeping the furlough information and the other proposed reductions in mind, the presidents and I will continue working with our budget committees, staff and faculty to reach a decision about what is best for our colleges and the communities we serve.

Jill

Dr. Jill A. Wakefield

Chancellor

Seattle Community Colleges

1500 Harvard Avenue

Seattle WA 98122

(206) 587-3872

(206) 587-3894 (fax)

jwakefield@sccd.ctc.edu