

From: Sullivan, Margaret
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2009 12:05 PM
Subject: USFSP Institutional Update

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome that I have received from so many remarkable people. During the last four weeks I have had the opportunity to work with many individuals dedicated to the success of this extraordinary institution. I am privileged to join their number.

My St. Petersburg education has been intense. What have I learned about the University of South Florida St. Petersburg? First and foremost, I have seen the pride in and commitment to the university by the students, faculty, staff and community. The quality of the students and faculty is extraordinary. The interaction between faculty and students should be envied by many institutions.

The institution is changing in function as well as beauty. The addition of the residence hall has and will change the character of this institution while the new Science and Technology Building will be a jewel in the crown. The landscaping and the Central Lawn Project will certainly enhance an already beautiful campus and city.

Yet USFSP is faced with significant issues related to accreditation and funding. Many on campus are working diligently to prepare for the visit of the accreditors on May 5, 2009. This work is directed toward the evaluation of the General Education program. Also USFSP will face a full reaffirmation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in 2010 and 2011. This review is part of the normal reaffirmation process of the Commission. The accreditation review is required five years after an institution's initial accreditation.

It is time for us to continue our planning to anticipate additional budget reductions. You will recall that we have reduced spending by 15% since July 2007. We have accomplished this without layoffs despite eliminating 42 positions and reducing operating expenses in areas such as travel, equipment and supply purchases and contractual services. We began this fiscal year with a 10.6% cut, and now the Legislative Special Session has made an additional 4% cut permanent adding up to approximately the 15% predicted by USF system.

In order to prepare for additional cuts, I am directing our vice chancellors and deans to plan for an additional 10% reduction for 2009. This estimate reflects the best information that we have at this time as reflected in the September 2008 *Monthly Revenue Report* of the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. For your information, a copy of the report can be viewed at <http://edr.state.fl.us/reports/newsletters/nldec08.pdf>.

To assist the vice chancellors and deans in their reduction plans, all officers with budget authority will review the status of their budgets with me in the next few weeks. [The Budget Council](#) has been [reconvened](#) and asked to review our institutional [Guiding Principles for Budgeting and Guiding Practices for Budget Implementation](#) to ensure that we continue to safeguard the quality of our student academic experience.

I have been working with the Strategic Planning Committee in updating our Strategic Plan 2008-2013. Overarching assumptions that reflect the state's budget and our accreditation status will influence the plan. We will ask the Budget Council members to provide guidance and insight.

The regular legislative session that begins in March will provide us with more direction regarding the 2009-2010 budget reduction. As these events take place I will keep you updated on our plans and activities. I will continue to communicate news about the system's budget and other institutional issues. This letter will be posted to the Chancellor's Web site. I have included a [communications form](#) for you to submit questions, raise issues, share good news or just say hello. Please note that in order for you to receive a response from me or a member of my team, you will need to include your email address.

As a separately accredited institution in the USF system, we have implemented the hiring and spending freeze. I know that you have already been monitoring expenditures, and I expect purchasing requisitions to be restricted even more to items critical to our operations. Please review the new advisory for [2009 non-salary spending](#).

Only the most critical instructional or leadership positions have active searches underway. Any requests for [exceptions](#) will continue to require multi-level review by vice chancellors and the budget director prior to any consideration in my office. The [forms](#) required for that review are available. I expect additional approvals to the exception process for hiring to require both permission to advertise and permission to hire. Critical updates that contain [frequently asked questions](#) are available from the Office of Human Resources and can be found on my Web site with all of these documents.

A focus of the Office of the Interim Regional Chancellor will be to increase revenue to the institution. We are examining ways to increase revenue while decreasing costs. We have added many members to the leadership discussions which occur on a weekly basis. Workgroups are examining the administrative structure and functions of external relations and the development of USF St. Petersburg's Student Center. The Institutional Research and General Education committees are working diligently to comply with accreditation expectations. The College of Education is preparing for its NCATE review in the fall. Faculty members are doing exceptional teaching and research, and in May we will graduate gifted students well prepared to meet the difficult challenges ahead.

While these are serious times with serious decisions to be made, my comments are made to inform you and solicit your creativity and service. Working together, we can support each other and protect the institution so revered by our students, faculty, staff, alumni and community.

Sincerely,

Margaret Sullivan
Interim Regional Chancellor