Murrow College faculty and Staff:

By now I’m sure you’ve read the note from President Schulz concerning WSU’s budgetary challenges and are wondering how this relates to Murrow College.  I am writing to confirm that Murrow’s budgetary concerns are serious but not debilitating, as we discussed in late September.  From my perspective, we have some serious issues to address as a college but we’ve been taking steps to address these concerns for at least the past year.  As a result, I believe we’ll be able to weather the 2.5 percent expenditure reduction (this is not a budget cut, the money stays in Murrow College) and related challenges.  I’ve already discussed Murrow’s budget with you in detail so I’m going to address some general questions and concerns in this letter.  I can address specific questions you have in a follow-up e-mail or in another faculty meeting, as needs dictate.

In a letter to chancellors, deans and vice presidents, President Schulz asked all units to hold vacant positions open as long as possible.  As you know, we already are doing this and, even though it will cause some temporary complications, it will benefit Murrow College faculty and staff over time.  We will have to adapt to some temporary changes and, as we do this, I will do my best to ensure that we meet the needs of all faculty and staff members.  Here are some specifics to keep in mind regarding Murrow’s budgetary challenges and please reach out to me directly if you have questions or concerns.

1. While I am unable to provide any guarantees, my top priority is to protect Murrow College faculty and staff positions.  I am certain this is a concern for many of you and I want to do my best to allay your concerns.  Murrow College finances, while less than optimal, are not beyond repair and I believe we will be able to protect all faculty and staff positions in Murrow College.  I have been working carefully with Murrow’s area finance officer, Denise Blacker, to do everything we can in this regard.
2. We must have enough instructors to cover our courses and will make adjustments to do this, as necessary.  I have been in regular contact with Associate Dean Jeff Peterson and he is working very hard to address changes in our spring teaching schedule.  It appears as if we are in relatively good shape at this point but the spring and fall schedules will continue to evolve.
3. In the short term, it cannot be business as usual and we will have to make sacrifices.  President Schulz has asked units to consider deferring travel and other nonessential operating expenses, for example, and has strongly recommended that we not award salary increases outside of the planned increases awarded by WSU.  At this point, I believe I will be able to protect faculty travel allowances.  Having said this, I do not anticipate providing unplanned travel support for faculty or being able to supplement faculty travel allowances as I did when ICA met in Fukuoka, Japan.  As you might expect, I will be unable to support unplanned faculty raises or related financial requests at this point.  I will do my best to let you know of meaningful budgetary changes that are likely to affect these and related issues.
4. During this downturn, we will develop a hiring plan.  As our financial difficulties ease, we will put this hiring plan into practice.

As I close, I want you to know that I believe WSU administrators are doing everything in their power to require fiscal responsibility among WSU’s units (including Athletics) and to reasonably address WSU’s financial challenges.  This is unpleasant for all of us.  Addressing these challenges now, however, will help WSU prepare for sound future growth.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns and thank you.

Bruce

Bruce Pinkleton, Ph.D.

Interim Dean

Edward R. Murrow College of Communication

Washington State University

Pullman, WA  99164-2520

office: 509-335-2795