

BUFA

BROCK UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION
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BUFA Budget Update January 2010

In the upcoming weeks academic departments and centers will be asked to reduce their investment in program delivery to address what the University has portrayed as a budgetary crisis. This is notwithstanding President Lightstone's position at last October's Town Hall meetings when he stated that we must use our creativity to grow our way out of the budgetary crunch since four years of cuts, he said, would cause irreparable damage to the University. Since those meetings in October 2009, substantial new financial data became available. These data – published in the mid-year budget review in November -- tell us that that the University administration underestimated the revenue available for Brock's academic programs. The data also show that the marketing and fundraising expenditures continue to exceed the projections of the administration. Though BUFA is well-aware of the financial pressures currently being placed on all government supported institutions, BUFA does not accept the administration's view on the degree of financial stress at our University.

There has already been a radical reorganizing of courses solely on budgetary reasons. In a tight vote at the Senate meeting held on January 20th, the Senate approved the cancellation of seminars in 15 nursing courses in the Faculty of Applied Health. There was no academic or pedagogical rationale for eliminating these seminars. "Budget cuts" were the only reason stated.

As Chairs and Directors schedule their courses for 2010-2011, we counsel them to refuse to make any changes that will affect the academic integrity of their programs. Cuts to our academic programs are unnecessary and imprudent.

Highlights from the mid-year budget review:

1. Marketing and fundraising over budget

The budget line for the Vice-President Advancement, Marketing and Communication is on pace to spend \$5.4 million instead of the \$4.6 million budgeted for 2009-10, an increase of about 20%. The budget for this line in 2007-2008, only two years ago was

2.2 million. Incidentally, there is additional marketing and fundraising spending that is not included in this budget line. ITS, for instance, is spending \$450,000 to install software to track donors. BUFA wonders why this segment of the University is growing at the same time that faculty retirements and resignations are not being replaced and vital support staff are losing their jobs.

2. The University received \$3.4 million more than they forecasted.

The University President displayed a number of graphs during his Town Hall meeting in October showing a growing gap between University revenue and expenditures. In November we learned that our tuition revenue was \$2 million greater than projected. During the Town Hall, President Lightstone was unequivocal in his view that we would not receive an “Accessibility Grant” from the Provincial Government based on enrollment increases. As it turns out, we are eligible and will receive at least \$1.4 million this year. BUFA cannot fault the Administration for not always accurately forecasting our revenue, but we do expect that the money be immediately re-invested in the University’s core mission.

The University is now putting aside a reserve of \$1.5 million in the case that the operating grants that we receive for 2010-2011 are less than expected. Normally we would consider this prudent. But based on the recent past we have no faith in this projection and no confidence that this money will go to the University’s academic programs.

In earlier communications, BUFA raised serious concerns about the University’s budgetary priorities. We have questioned the full-colour ads in the Globe and Mail and costly capital expansion. Our message today is more pointed: Money allocated to Brock’s operating budget should not be directed elsewhere.