

Budget Review Open Forum on March 9, 2010 – 9:00 a.m.
Dempster Hall Glenn Auditorium

“Not a question, not a suggestion, merely a comment”.. the cafeteria plan was given to employees as part of a negotiation in budget review for a lower salary increase. To cut back on the cafeteria plan is to effectively give a salary decrease to employees. It will hurt lower paid employees. **(Employee Benefits)**

The University should band with other universities to take advantage of purchasing power to get better rates on insurance: **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- Southeast used to be with the MSU consortium, but that consortium has disbanded. We have done better with our rates since leaving the consortium than we did as a member.
- There may be other consortiums that can be looked at, so this is a viable opportunity to be explored.

There has to be a way to reduce premiums since other employers are able to offer family coverage at a lower rate: **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- One way that other employers are able to do this is that the employees pay a portion of their coverage. The University does not currently do that, and it is a good recruiting tool; however, we may have to look at a way for all employees to supplement family coverage.

Athletics should consider having promotions at their sporting events, like a half-time shootout to win a car. This would get more people in the seats and the promotion prize could be donated from outside. Also Athletes should make an attempt to reach out to the community, perhaps to solicit donations.

(Intercollegiate Athletics)

Response:

- Both viable ideas that should be looked at.

How does the elimination of a holiday result in cost savings? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- The holiday would still exist; it would be an unpaid holiday. In effect, it is a one-day salary reduction in pay for employees.

The elimination of the holiday is similar to the unpaid furlough days the university offered back in 2002-2003. Is there a consideration for offering the unpaid furlough days again? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- That program was never discontinued. We still have people occasionally taking unpaid furlough time on a voluntary basis.

There used to be energy conservation days in the summer, where employees worked a 4 day work week. Since offices aren't very busy in the summer, is that being considered again? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- From another audience member: That was not a very good program, it was confusing to the students. They didn't know when an office would be open and when it wouldn't.

The University has a few high demand programs offered, like nursing, is there thought to opening these programs up to more students and having larger class sizes? **(Academic Activities)**

Response:

- Many times class size is limited by an accreditation body.
- Clinical sites are limited for the student to do their clinical work.
- Accelerated programs have been developed to address the high demand.
- There are safety standards that must be met.
- Nursing is one of the high cost departments that is being looked at for an additional fee to be implemented.
- Because of the required faculty/student ratio, the addition of students would mean addition of more faculty.

Have we ever looked at employee/dependent fee waivers benefit to be included as part of the cafeteria plan benefits (ie, employee can pay their waivers from cafeteria plan \$). **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- That has not been looked at, but is a viable suggestion

Since we are already in a partnership with Southeast Hospital, could we do an in-house clinic that serves the whole family (not just the employee) at a discounted rate? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- Health care in Cape is expensive compared to St Louis. It is a cost shifting for people who can't go to St Louis. HMO's limit where you can go.

Have we considered early retirement offerings for individuals that have been at the University a long time (an incentive package)? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- Employee would have to be replaced, so there would be little if any savings.
- Other companies are eliminating the retiree's position to make this savings (we would probably not be able to do that).
- VRIP was offered a few years back that provided health insurance for the retirees for up to 5 years at a cost of \$800+ per month – very expensive.

Could FM custodial staff clean rooms and bathrooms in the student's suites for a fee to the student? The students have indicated an interest in this. **(Other Common Fees)**

Response:

- That is certainly something that can be discussed with facilities personnel.

Comment from audience member: Regarding health care costs, there was a concern a few years back that we did not want to keep our health care providers limited to only local providers. Our employees wanted to be sure they could go to centers of excellence, so we needed a wide network to get the specialized care. Staying local may not be the best for patient outcomes. And spreading the network may tend to increase our premium costs. **(Employee Benefits)**

Is there a way that we could offset some of the premium costs by being more involved in wellness, such as offering recreation center passes to employees. **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- We probably do want to step up wellness plans, so that we have a healthier campus population. The reduction in claims from having a healthier campus would help to lower premiums

Concern about having setpoints in buildings; could be too cold at times (cold in the auditorium now). **(Utilities/Sustainability)**

Response:

- It would be hard to adjust for every one, some would find it comfortable; others would not be. Those who tend to be colder may have to dress in layers.

Could the University get in with other state agencies in Missouri to take advantage of lower insurance rates (like MoDot or Cottonwood)? **(Employee Benefits)**

Response:

- There is no state-wide plan in MO. We could certainly try to partner in with another agency, but since higher education tends to have one of the highest utilization rates of insurance, we may not be welcomed into a group.