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FSU prepared to eliminate 21 programs

BY DOUG BLACKBURN • DEMOCRAT SENIOR WRITER • APRIL 14, 2009

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Florida State administrators on Monday afternoon released a draft of proposed sweeping cutbacks at the university, based on current reductions in state revenue.

If enacted, they would dramatically alter the university as we know it.

Twenty-one degree programs at FSU would be eliminated, including anthropology, German, oceanography, physical education and hospitality and golf management.

Numerous other programs would be reduced, merged or restructured. The Panama City campus would close effective Jan. 1, 2010. And approximately 350 faculty members would be laid off.

"It's almost unbearable to consider," FSU President T.K. Wetherell said. "This is going to have a lot of ramifications."

The draft of cutbacks came out of the university's budget crisis committee, which met earlier Monday. It was the first time specific programs were targeted for elimination.

Wetherell has scheduled a town hall meeting for next Tuesday to discuss the university's plan for addressing the massive reductions in state aid. He's expecting members of the Faculty Senate to have a counter-proposal to the draft released on Monday.

Music professor Jayne Standley, president of FSU's Faculty Senate, believes the Legislature holds the power to change the budget forecasts.

"These (cutbacks) don't have to happen," she said. "The Legislature could solve this problem by solving the revenue problem in Florida."

"The size of the cuts that may be necessary are devastating," Standley added. "I think the sum total is overwhelming and really will damage the university that Florida State has become."

The state Senate and House will begin debating their respective higher education budgets this week.

FSU stands to receive \$28.2 million less for the 2009-10 school year than it did in 2008-09 based on the Senate version, and \$72.8 million less in the current House budget.

Senator Don Gaetz, a Republican from Niceville, said he sympathizes with Wetherell and FSU.

"In the toughest economy since the Great Depression, when nobody in my district is telling me the answer to their problems is for government to get a bigger slice of the pie, I've cast some pretty tough votes to increase fees up and down the line," Gaetz said.

"We looked in the basement of the Capitol to see if there was some Confederate gold buried there," he added. "There wasn't. There's no magic money."

Programs targeted for elimination:

- Anthropology
- Apparel Design
- Geophysical Fluid Dynamics
- Geological Sciences
- Molecular Biophysics
- Oceanography
- Hospitality & Golf Management
- Physical Education



PHIL SEARS/Democrat
 FSU President T. K. Wetherell expresses his frustration at funding estimates at a meeting with Tallahassee Democrat editors and writers Monday. (PHIL SEARS/Democrat)

TALLAHASSEE.COM: See a list of all 21 programs slated to be eliminated, according to the draft proposal.

FSU prepared to eliminate 21 programs

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Contact Doug Blackburn at (850) 599-2323 or dblackburn@tallahassee.com

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