Open Letter on Athletics Spending

Friday, June 2, 2017

To the WSU Board of Trustees, Interim President Curtis McCray, and incoming President Cheryl Schrader:

We, the undersigned faculty, are writing to express our objection to the proposed FY18 budget announced on May 19. It calls for a $1.6 million increase in budgeted spending for intercollegiate athletics but cuts to every other major spending unit, including $9.5 million in cuts to the seven core colleges and $1 million in cuts to the library (not to mention $3.9 million additional cuts to BSoM and SoPP).
Indeed, when the Board of Trustees hired Dr. McCray as interim President, “maintaining [WSU’s] core athletics programs at a NCAA Division I level” appeared in the first sentence of the first item in the list of his duties specified in his contract.

Putting athletics on a par with academics and thus before the needs of our students is disgraceful and a gross strategic blunder! It continues the misplaced priorities that have characterized WSU spending in recent years and, along with gross mismanagement, led to the present fiscal crisis.

Under normal circumstances, it would be rational to give intercollegiate athletics a realistic budget, in line with the overspending that annually has occurred. But, in this fiscal crisis, it is inexplicable—even absurd. Spending on intercollegiate athletics has typically totaled about $10 million per year; in contrast, ticket sales have generated about $300 thousand per year. Even if one includes donations and other sources, the revenue generated by athletics has been about $2 million per year—most of which is offset by the subsidies that the university must provide to the Nutter Center because athletic events generate such little revenue.

There is no evidence that intercollegiate athletics is of much interest to most of our students. After all, through their fees, they pay for two “free” tickets to each basketball game, but student attendance is chronically and woefully low. Likewise, all the empty seats at athletic events and the minuscule revenue generated by athletics demonstrate that there is little community support for our teams either.

Students come to Wright State looking for a quality education at an affordable price so that they can have rewarding careers rather than McJobs. Taxpayers expect and need the research of our faculty and students to benefit our communities and foster economic development. None of these objectives are advanced by increasing spending on intercollegiate athletics.

In closing, then, we call upon you to totally eliminate the increase budgeted for intercollegiate athletics. Instead, we propose that this $1.6 million be devoted to
scholarships. That change in the proposed budget would help to stabilize enrollments and to restore our badly tarnished reputation in the community.

Martin Kich

Aaron Wolpert

Abinash Agrawal

Adrian Corbett

Alan Chesen

Allen Hunt

Alpana Sharma

Amelia Hubbard

Amir Zadeh

Amit Sharma

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Barbara Hopkins
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Bruce Laforse
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Carlos Costa
Carol Herringer
Carol Mejia-Laperle
Carol Morgan
Caroline Cao
Caroline Hillard
Carolyn Stoermer
Catherine Crowley
Chad Campbell
Charis Elliott
Charles Gulas
Chinonye Chukwu

Chris Barton

Christine Sitko

Christine Wilson

Christopher Beck

Christopher Deweese

Christopher Oldstone-Moore

Chuck Ciampaglio

Cynthia Marshall

D Miyasaki

Damaris Serrano

Dan Halm

Daniel Slilaty

Daniel Zehringer

Danielle Rante

Dave Benson

Dave Hochstein
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Gina Oswald
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Gretchen Mcnamara
Guozhu Dong
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J Bernstein
J Weinzimmer
Jackson Leung

James Carter

James Menart

James Schwartz

James Tipps

Jeannette Marchand

Jennifer Kaminski

Jerry Clark

Jerry Nelms

Jessica Barnett

Jill Lindsey

Jim Adamitis

John Conteh

John Dickinson

John Gallagher

John Haught

John Kurokawa
Kevin Duffy

Kim Vito

Kimberly Warrick

Kristine Scordo

Kuppuswamy Arumugam

Kwang-Jin Cho

Labib Rouhana

Lafleur Small

Lance Greene

Larry Weinstein

Lary Sanders

Laurel Monnig

Len Kenyon

Leslie Neyland

Liam Anderson

Linda Farmer

Lindsey Martin
Lisa Kenyon
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Marian Kazimierczuk
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Mary Coyle
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Theresa Myadze
Thomas Lukowicz
Thomas Rooney
Thomas Wischgoll
I am a Professor of English at Wright State University's Lake Campus, where I have been a faculty member for more than 25 years. I have now served multiple terms as the President of the WSU chapter of AAUP, which now includes all full-time instructional faculty, and as the Vice-President of the Ohio Conference of AAUP. I have also served several terms as an at-large member of the Executive Committee of AAUP's Collective Bargaining Congress. In addition to serving as co-editor of the Academe blog, I am also a member of the editorial board of Academe and have been a guest editor for an issue of the magazine on collective bargaining strategies. As co-chair of the Ohio Conference's Communication Committee, I began to do much more overtly political writing during the campaign to repeal Ohio's Senate Bill 5, which would have eliminated the right of faculty to be unionized. I have sustained that activism, and at the risk of stating the obvious, I have very much enjoyed contributing to the Academe Blog and to our chapter blog. I also maintain several other blogs to which I have re-posted, by topic, my posts to the Academe blog, as well as some other items. View all posts by martinkich