

Statement to the Board of Trustees on April 29



Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning. My name is Marty Kich, and for the past five years, I have served as the president of the Wright State chapter of the American Association of University Professors, or AAUP. The chapter represents all full-time instructional faculty within the university. I and the other members of our executive committee have a fiduciary responsibility to maintain, if not to improve, the working conditions and the opportunities for professional development of our members. In this instance, as in many others, our reason for being is completely aligned with the core mission of the university—namely, to provide high-quality educations to our students.

In the two open letters that we have sent to you on the current budgetary issues, we have, I think, very clearly defined our concerns. In particular, we are concerned

about the opaque way in which the budgetary issues have been presented, starting with the fact that no one has been at all clear on exactly how large the needed budget cuts actually are. Likewise, we are concerned about the decision to address these issues at the very end of the academic year. In combination, these two circumstances have very much limited any opportunity for truly meaningful shared governance.

In the two open letters, we have also recommended a fairly large number of alternatives to making substantial reductions to the instructional budgets of the colleges. This past week, the faculty senate's budget priority committee met to review suggestions received from about 60 faculty. The committee reduced that list to several pages of more coherently organized and succinctly expressed recommendations. Those recommendations largely reinforce the recommendations that the AAUP has made.

In essence, we believe that it is a self-defeating strategy to make reductions to the instructional budgets because doing so will certainly impact the delivery of existing academic programs and the development of new academic programs. It is a contradiction to claim to be asking for targeted cuts and to be aiming for targeted investments when the deans are essentially being given cleavers with which to do the cutting and are being told to decide what cuts to make right now.

If the increased allocations to public services, student services, and institutional support, all cost centers within the university, had been equivalent to the increases in instructional spending, the savings over the last 14 years would have amounted to \$9.2 million. Moreover, beyond the \$86.4 million in budget subsidy that has gone to intercollegiate athletics, over the same time period, intercollegiate athletics has had expenses in excess of revenues totaling \$6.3 million with \$4.3 million occurring since 2009. It is, of course, much more difficult to make cuts after the fact than to prevent such increases to begin with. But the idea that making cuts to the instructional budgets of the colleges will somehow be less painful than reducing the allocations to the other cost centers seems a very skewed perspective. It is certainly not a faculty perspective. And it certainly will not be a student perspective when students are faced with fewer courses, fewer sections of

high-demand courses, larger head counts in the courses that are offered, and less personal access to the faculty teaching those courses.

We hope that the administration and the board will take the faculty recommendations seriously enough to significantly mitigate if not eliminate the impact of any cuts on instructional budgets. But if those recommendations are largely ignored in this year's budget, we will direct our resources over this summer and over the next academic year toward making the case for better choices to be made in next year's budget. We simply don't know enough to be sure whether the budgetary problems are more short-term or long-term, but we are convinced that much more attention needs to be paid to the potential long-term damage that might be caused by how the problems seem to be being addressed."



Author: martinkich

I am a Professor of English at Wright State University, where I have been a faculty member for almost 25 years. I serve as the president of the WSU chapter of AAUP, which now includes two bargaining units, as the vice-president of the Ohio Conference of AAUP, and as a member of the executive committee of AAUP's Collective Bargaining Congress. 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. [View all posts by martinkich](#)



martinkich / May 2, 2016 / Budget Issues