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President Edwards announced to the University community last Wednesday that we need to “buckle up.” Meanwhile, Chairs and Deans have been called into Emergency meetings, full of dire news about the latest budget crisis. Suddenly, our COO has discovered that we will lose money in *dorm and Nutter Center sales* during the current academic year! (Apparently he could not have foreseen that in July.) Clearly, we should prepare for some unpleasant announcement.

Let’s examine together the source of this latest ***projected*** budget emergency.

In May, COO Greg Sample projected a \$30 million loss for FY21. Given this projection, the employees of the university should supposedly share in the sacrifice and concede wages or future raises. Some conceded, but the faculty union declared we would await actual numbers. Soon after we refused, the projections were adjusted to -\$12.5 million.

Should we trust their numbers now?

Also in May, Sample claimed that the FY20 budget was 11 million dollars in the red. This, months after we had closed for the pandemic. The Trustees insisted financial concessions from the faculty were crucial to stave off the downfall of the university. About two weeks later, Sample declared the actual statement showed WSU to have made \$1.9 million profit for FY20, despite COVID and a “structural deficit.” Our SB6 score will be higher than it has been in years.

Should we trust their numbers now?

Let’s go back another few months, to January of this year, when the President promoted Sample, without any job posting, to COO with a salary of over \$300,000 paid, of course, from student tuition funds. In April, the President told the Faculty Senate of a “structural deficit” in the budget of the prior administration; this would lead to serious problems, apparently. The President said this had been covered from “one-time savings” and under questioning from a faculty union officer, claimed that referred to faculty positions left open. The AAUP President pointed out that BUFGM numbers had fallen some 150 positions and that there were no signs the University planned to hire 150 new faculty; thus, the savings were not one-time. That explanation about unfilled faculty positions was never offered again. Instead we later heard that the deficit was in part disguised by Walt Branson not budgeting for building repairs, and Sample admitted, under questioning from a faculty union officer, that because he served as Chief Facilities Officer, he knew of the absurdities in Branson’s budget. He did not inform the Faculty Budget Priority Committee; he did not inform then-Provost Edwards, we were told.

Should we trust their numbers now?

Let's go back a little further. Sample's first projections came in his role as COO of Double Bowler, the University's real estate company. Supposedly the purchases of Trustee Fecher's company building and so many others would be a major gain for WSU. As the faculty union investigated and disclosed the losses of Double Bowler, the Trustees moved Sample into the direct payroll of WSU, as head of Facilities, again with no listing of the position. Years of losses piled upon losses followed for Double Bowler, losses covered by many millions of dollars students had paid to be taught by faculty. These reckless acquisitions did not just create financial troubles for the university—they created legal troubles, as well. Just last year, the Ohio Inspector General declared Double Bowler had violated state law. Mr. Sample, with a salary of \$270,000 because of his supposed expertise, announced he was not aware of OH real estate law. Now the Foundation has to buy these buildings from the university, making less money available for student scholarships, in order to cover Sample's ineptitude.

Should we trust their numbers now?

The President and Trustees promote Greg Sample because he has repeatedly demonstrated his willingness to fudge financial projections to suit their goals. It is important to remember that the Trustees hired him illegally, according to the Administration's own external attorney, George Crisci. Crisci wrote in a brief to an arbitrator, "Posting for Sample's position came through with fictitious grant paperwork ... [so] the posting cannot be for continuous employment. ... The selection process allowed the Trustees to bypass the normal competitive job application process. ... the named-in-grant process bypassed equity and inclusion. ... There were no minority recruiting efforts, no advertising, no position posting, and no collecting applications. This was considered a major violation of WSU's equal employment opportunity policy." Sample did not resign. And despite the Trustees and President Edwards' full knowledge and understanding of the illegality of Sample's position, Edwards promoted him, instead of firing him. All in power know that he stands as a glaring example of their hypocrisy in their declarations of devotion to equity. They retain him, because he makes their numbers dance whatever dance they ask.

Our FY21 budget is not in good shape, but given the emergency facing the nation, it is something we can manage. Governor DeWine has announced more money for the public universities, and with the election polls indicating a likely win for the Democratic Party, COVID relief dollars may soon come from the federal government. Surely the \$5 million the administration are investing in marketing will improve enrollment, too.

Should *anyone* trust any financial figures the administration presents? Certainly, no major decisions affecting the central mission, the very reason and purpose, of the University – academics – should be based on any projection by the Trustees and the current administration.

AAUP-WSU Executive Committee