

Response to Budget Optimization Suggestions – Spring 2018

Members of the campus community recently were surveyed for their thoughts on how to maximize the campus budget by identifying ideas that potentially could save money and/or offer efficiencies. We received more than twenty pages of ideas and suggestions. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns.

CATEGORIES OF BUDGET OPTIMIZATION SUGGESTIONS

Most of the submissions fell into four main categories:

- 1) longer term strategies and tactics that require additional evaluation and/or planning
- 2) strategies and tactics that are already being implemented in some form
- 3) strategies and tactics that are either not viable or do not meet best practices
- 4) viable action items

This report is comprised of an executive summary (pages 1-3) followed by an in-depth response to the suggestions organized by recurring themes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF VIABLE ACTION ITEMS

The vast majority of suggestions and ideas offered to maximize the campus budget dealt with recurring themes that fell into the following categories (listed roughly in order of frequency of suggestion). The viable action items identified in each category are listed below the heading. A more comprehensive discussion—an effort to summarize the ideas received—is available in the Overview by Category section (pages 4-11).

Recruitment and Admissions

Action Items:

- Create a strategic recruitment team, reflecting membership from a cross-section of the campus community and building upon the work underway in Admissions, in order to:
 - further develop the various strategies, marketing tactics, and best practices for recruitment
 - focus on recruitment for student success, retention, and graduation
 - communicate efforts to the larger campus community
- Continue nurturing a campus culture where recruitment and retention are viewed as *everyone's* job

Academic Affairs, Teaching Appointments, and Degree Programs

Action Items:

- Continue to prioritize student success and retention
- Evaluate opportunities to strategically change the mix of academic programs we offer
- Analyze options for teaching blocks, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Actively and strategically build relationships with faculty at high schools and two-year colleges
- Continue to look for efficiencies in operations (e.g., programming into TES the common transfer courses that are equivalent to a UMC course, meeting management)

Management, Staffing, Human Resources, and Benefits

Action Items:

- Continue to reexamine all staffing levels and supervisory needs campus-wide on an ongoing basis in consultation with department heads and directors taking into consideration and prioritizing what is absolutely required to achieve strategic goals; and for safety, compliance, and/or regulatory considerations
- Address confidential personnel issues raised in this report through the appropriate University grievance and internal investigation processes

Athletics

Action Items:

- Provide the suggestions and ideas from this budget survey to the current athletics strategic planning group for broad-based consideration (target date for completion is mid-May 2018)
- Consult with Jill Willson, former DII head coach and athletic director who has worked with other NSIC schools, about our athletics programs

Student Affairs Programming and Staffing

Action Items:

- Conduct a collaborative, systematic, campus-wide review of outside-of-classroom learning and entertainment opportunities, including a comprehensive review of the number, type, participation rates, and cost of the programs currently offered
- Increase meeting frequency of programmers across campus to more closely coordinate efforts
- Develop a plan to:
 - Right-size the number of programs and activities that take place on campus, taking student retention and both fiscal and time resources into consideration
 - Reduce redundancy in programs offered
 - Identify the most effective means of communication for planning and promoting events and activities
 - Ensure the overall quality of programs offered with renewed emphasis on strategic alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the University

Facilities & Operations

Action Items:

- Continue to pursue alternative energy options and overall energy efficiency where possible, working collaboratively among Facilities & Operations, the Center for Sustainability, and Otter Tail Power Company
- Install additional motion sensor lighting in offices and classrooms as resources allow
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to turn off lights in empty rooms across campus
- Create a taskforce to explore options and make recommendations regarding the coordination of faculty and staff travel, carpooling, and airline fare efficiencies

Marketing

Action Items:

- Assemble a campus-wide marketing coordination team with representation from a cross-section of campus units by summer of 2018 in order to:
 - Better inform the campus about current marketing efforts
 - Identify ways to pool marketing dollars and coordinate and/or reinforce strategies and tactics
- Continue work by University Relations staff systemwide among the five campuses in order to:
 - Increase awareness of all five campuses in systemwide advertising across the state
 - Promote the entire U of M system at the Minnesota State Fair beginning in fall 2018, modifying significantly to be more inclusive of all five campuses and their distinctiveness while, simultaneously highlighting the University of Minnesota system brand of excellence
 - Provide content and feedback for the planned development of a website that focuses on the University of Minnesota System and systemwide resources, responsibilities, and communication
- Develop additional campus promotional videos as resources and student and staff expertise allow

Specific Budget Issues

Action Items:

- Propose a potential increase in the online course fee from \$45 per credit to \$50 per credit in FY19

Technology Support Services

Action Items:

- Evaluate the possibility of integrating service calls for Media Services needs and telephone system issues with the Help Desk

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Action Items:

- Convene a task force to explore ways to promote the use of UMC's facilities when capacity is available and to discuss pricing issues, considering specific ideas and suggestions from the budget survey
- Secure additional or reallocate existing resources to assist faculty and staff with grant writing and external funding of research and scholarship

OVERVIEW BY CATEGORY

Recruitment and Admissions

A majority of respondents recognized recruitment and enrollment growth as the most impactful ways to positively and quickly influence the budget. Numerous suggestions, ideas, and tactics related to recruitment and admissions were offered. These ranged from where UMC should be recruiting (location), to the type of student we should bring to campus (ability, good fit, international, regional, UMC's "back yard," etc.), to unique programs and activities that would enhance and contribute to on-campus enrollment. Because there are so many ways to approach this work and limited resources to do it, these ideas and a more systematic, collaborative way of recruiting students need to be explored further.

To accomplish this, we will create a strategic recruitment team whose membership reflects a cross-section of the campus community. This group will complement the work of the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee (SEMC) and build upon the work underway in Admissions. The strategic recruitment team, while focusing on recruitment for student success and retention, will refine and develop various strategies, marketing tactics, and best practices for recruitment on a more "front-line" or day-to-day basis.

Aiding in this effort will be knowledge gained in the last several months by the predictive enrollment tools developed by Institutional Effectiveness and others. Additional tools will be developed to aid in optimizing recruitment efforts. Additionally, we need to continue to communicate what is being done with regard to recruitment to our entire campus community. Admissions now provides information in the UMC E-Update about the various high schools, 2-year colleges, and recruiting fairs and events that staff members are scheduled to attend.

Action Items:

- Create a strategic recruitment team, reflecting membership from a cross-section of the campus community and building upon the work underway in Admissions, in order to:
 - further develop the various strategies, marketing tactics, and best practices for recruitment
 - focus on recruitment for student success, retention, and graduation
 - communicate efforts to the larger campus community
- Continue nurturing a campus culture where recruitment and retention are viewed as *everyone's* job

Academic Affairs, Teaching Appointments & Degree Programs

Several suggestions focused on academic programs and departments, types of teaching positions, degrees offered, and Thursday Commons. Suggestions that are not viable include offering the associate's degree again (prohibited by U of M System policy) or having senior-level students overseeing labs (prohibited by the Higher Learning Commission). Reducing the number of academic departments is also not a viable option because of the heavy workload already carried by the four department heads, each of whom also has campus-wide leadership roles (e.g., CIHS, leadership development, research oversight) and the even-greater disciplinary complexity that would occur if we combined faculty into two or three departments. Whether doing away with Thursday Commons would result in cost savings or additional revenue is arguable. As recently as 2012-2013, this recurring suggestion was reviewed and rejected because of the high value placed by many on common programing and meeting times for academic departments and student government.

Some respondents suggested a moratorium on new academic programs, while others suggested we need to add *more* academic programs (including master's degree programs) to attract more students. Adding academic programs that are distinctive, yet build on current programs and courses while requiring few additional resources is a long-term solution. Some also suggested closing some academic programs to achieve salary savings. The process for closing programs is generally lengthy, students in those programs need to be "taught out," and UMC would continue to have employment obligations to the faculty for some time. Ultimately, closing academic programs in which declining enrollments cannot be reversed may be necessary, but any cost savings would not be realized in the short term. The bottom line is that we need to be strategic about adding new programs or closing current programs. As one respondent put it, "We need high-quality academic programs in order to attract and retain excellent students and distinguish ourselves in a competitive market."

The tenured, tenure-track, term, P&A, and adjunct faculty who teach our courses are the single biggest factor in ensuring high quality in our academic programs. Full-time faculty receive overload pay for teaching loads that exceed established levels. Adjunct faculty, some of whom are full-time UMC employees whose jobs are not primarily instructional, meet Higher Learning Commission expectations for academic credentials. They are paid on a per-credit basis. The flexibility and affordability of overload and adjunct teaching is crucial to our ability to adjust quickly to changes in student demand.

Managing course schedules, class sizes, and teaching loads to ensure we make good use of the teaching resources we have and cancelling low enrollment courses when we can do so without extending students' time to graduation are routine—though challenging—work the department heads and administrative assistants do every semester.

Action Items:

- Continue to prioritize student success and retention
- Evaluate opportunities to strategically change the mix of academic programs we offer
- Analyze options for teaching blocks, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Actively and strategically build relationships with faculty at high schools and two-year colleges
- Continue to look for efficiencies in operations (e.g., programming into TES the common transfer courses that are equivalent to a UMC course, meeting management)

Management, Staffing, Human Resources and Benefits

It was suggested that we look at the length of faculty and staff appointments (i.e. 9-, 10-, and 12-month) and not extend some of the appointments beyond their allocated time periods. There were also a number of suggestions regarding elimination of 12-month appointments, including buildings and grounds workers, clerical staff, and administrative staff. While UMC currently offers on-campus academic instruction for only nine months, there is considerable planning, maintenance, online instruction, and student/staff recruitment that continues during the summer months. If UMC had only 9-month appointments and closed the campus for the summer, the campus would not be adequately prepared when students returned to classes in August.

We heard from you that some positions should not be filled when vacated. Someone also suggested "eliminate what we have done in the past and reinvent." As positions are vacated, we are analyzing the critical needs of the campus and if the position needs to be filled or redesigned. We are exploring whether some positions can be combined and/or merged with another position. We are trying to ensure that we aren't adding excessive job

functions to an existing team member. We know most people's plates are full, and they may not always be able to take on additional responsibilities. As with all positions, we are ensuring these positions and time allocations are adequate to get the work done. Beyond that we are allocating time (money) for projects that need to be completed to enhance our efficiencies or investing in areas that will help our growth. As we continue to critically analyze existing resources, we may have to stop doing some things and do other tasks more efficiently.

There were a number of suggestions related to supervision, particularly in Facilities Management. Some comments centered on why lead and supervisory positions were needed. Many buildings and grounds workers have worked at UMC for many years and are dedicated to the buildings they serve. The decision has been made that an operations supervisor and lead workers help the unit better achieve its mission. Supervisors perform a valuable role beyond ensuring maintenance over a few buildings. Supervisors are aware of campus-wide priorities and help plan, organize, and reassign work as needed to meet immediate and long-term needs of the campus. Lead workers help train employees, maintain quality, and redirect work during peak demand and emergencies.

Other suggestions included early retirement incentives, working from home, moving staff to a four-day work week, etc. Some of these require UM System action (early retirement, etc.) that do not allow us to implement at this time. Others (e.g., not funding professional development) might save a small amount of costs in the short term, but hold us back on other goals, such as retention, or they harm us in the long run. Professional development is important because it not only adds value by enhancing and strengthening employee skills, but it also is a positive motivational benefit since people truly do want to learn and grow. This leads to optimized performance, better decision-making, and improved morale.

A number of suggestions involved discussion of the UMC Printing & Design Unit on campus and whether it could be eliminated to achieve savings. Some respondents were under the false impression that staff salaries in this unit are funded by state or O&M funding, but this service is set up as a self-sustaining unit with salaries covered by the income it generates. UMC Printing & Design is intended to provide a valuable service and convenience for other units. It also helps with the maintenance of University graphics and marketing standards. Pricing at UMC Printing & Design is generally competitive locally with the added value of on-campus convenience, which saves faculty and staff time. Some printers may offer volume discounts, but their frequent use undermines the ability to sustain the Printing & Design Unit and offer its services to the campus.

Action Items:

- Continue to reexamine all staffing levels and supervisory needs campus-wide on an ongoing basis in consultation with department heads and directors taking into consideration and prioritizing what is absolutely required to achieve strategic goals; and for safety, compliance, and/or regulatory considerations
- Address confidential personnel issues raised in this report through the appropriate University grievance and internal investigation processes

Athletics

Suggestions for cutting costs and increasing revenue in the Athletics Department included moving to Division III, recruiting students who will stay and graduate, reducing recruiting costs by focusing on local and regional recruitment, dropping a sport (e.g., football), adding sports (e.g., track and field, wrestling, cross country, swimming and diving), and increasing attendance at athletic events. In early 2018 a core group was formed to conduct strategic planning for UMC's Athletics Department. All of these suggestions have been forwarded to this group for consideration in the strategic planning process currently underway. The group includes the athletic director, assistant athletic directors, four coaches, the vice chancellor, the faculty athletic representative, the chief development officer, students, members of the Campus Advisory and Advancement Board, a representative from the Crookston School District, and a Crookston community resident. Areas of focus for the strategic plan come from the NCAA DII, NSIC, and UMC's mission, vision, and values.

Action Items:

- Provide the suggestions and ideas from this budget survey to the current athletics strategic planning group for broad-based consideration (target date for completion is mid-May 2018)
- Consult with Jill Willson, former DII head coach and athletic director who has worked with other NSIC schools, about our athletics programs

Student Affairs Programming and Staffing

UMC offers a diverse array of programming designed to meet the needs of campus constituents, provide outside-of-classroom or co-curricular learning opportunities, and aid student retention. While this programming is vital to student growth, development, and entertainment, several respondents noted a decline in attendance at and participation in campus events and activities. Some respondents also indicated that improved coordination and combined efforts of programmers across campus would be worthwhile. Student Affairs staff and other campus programmers do meet regularly to coordinate efforts. Even so, both scheduling issues and low participation numbers have prevailed.

Some respondents suggested the number of personnel in Student Affairs has been increasing while enrollment has been decreasing. Evolving federal and University mandates, such as Title IX, the Clery Act, and the Campus SaVE act, as well as student population needs have impacted Student Affairs significantly in recent years with a resulting increased demand to meet compliance and role separation, regardless of decreased enrollment.

Action Items:

- Conduct a collaborative systematic, campus-wide review of outside-of-classroom learning and entertainment opportunities, including a comprehensive review of the number, type, participation rates, and cost of the programs currently offered
- Increase meeting frequency of programmers across campus to more closely coordinate efforts
- Develop a plan to:
 - Right-size the number of programs and activities that take place on campus, taking student retention and both fiscal and time resources into consideration
 - Reduce redundancy in programs offered
 - Identify the most effective means of communication for planning and promoting events and activities
 - Ensure the overall quality of programs offered with renewed emphasis on strategic alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the University

Facilities & Operations

There were a number of suggestions regarding campus facilities. Some dealt with human resources (covered in the previous section, Management, Staffing, Human Resources and Benefits). One of the ideas suggested was the use of larger 12- or 15-passenger vans for field trips or team travel. This item has been eliminated from consideration as it is prohibited by a policy decision by the University of Minnesota's Department of Risk Management.

Other ideas merit additional exploration and possible implementation, such as pursuing alternative energy sources ("Wind power like Morris") and conserving energy. Due to the proximity of our campus to the Crookston Airport, we are limited to "small wind" projects. Currently, the Office of Sustainability and Facilities & Operations are looking at solar and "small wind" hybrid systems with Otter Tail Power Company that may be more appropriate for use on campus.

As for conserving energy, UMC's Center for Sustainability has already implemented a "Hit the Lights" campaign as noted by the stickers on the light switches around campus. The success of this campaign falls to each of us to take it upon ourselves to turn off lights we see in empty classrooms. To aid in that effort, Facilities & Operations will also be installing additional motion sensor lighting in offices and classrooms over the next year. Facilities & Operations will also work with the Center for Sustainability and Otter Tail Power Company to have our campus buildings commissioned. This is a process that brings in an engineering firm to look at all the systems that use energy on campus—primarily our HVAC, lighting, and building management software and controls. Additional suggestions raise the possibility of faculty and staff coordinating travel to and from the Twin Cities and carpooling and/or working with airlines to get the best rates.

Action Items:

- Continue to pursue alternative energy options and overall energy efficiency where possible, working collaboratively among Facilities & Operations, the Center for Sustainability, and Otter Tail Power Company
- Install additional motion sensor lighting in offices and classrooms as resources allow
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to turn off lights in empty rooms across campus
- Create a taskforce to explore options and make recommendations regarding the coordination of faculty and staff travel, carpooling, and airline fare efficiencies

Marketing

Several suggestions were submitted regarding marketing strategies and tactics, such as spending more on marketing in general, hiring marketing consultants, launching a billboard marketing campaign, providing tangible incentives to students to apply to UMC, beefing up social media marketing, sharing more student stories, and encouraging students to make videos about their campus experience. Several respondents suggested greater coordination and communication of marketing efforts across the campus in order to better inform the campus community of and reinforce those efforts.

Some suggestions are already being implemented. For example, in 2016 University Relations made a commitment in staff time to tell more student stories with some initial positive results (14 in 2016-2017, 25 in 2017-2018). These are shared with appropriate media outlets, throughout the U of M system, and with legislators.

The modest budgets available to Admissions and University Relations—even when pooled—prohibit many of the strategies and tactics suggested. Another factor is today’s prospective students spend a majority of their time online, making more traditional marketing like billboards, print ads, terrestrial radio and TV less effective than they once were. Both Admissions and University Relations have embarked in online marketing campaigns and additional resources to supplement marketing efforts are being sought.

A number of suggestions involved University of Minnesota System efforts to promote and market all five of the campuses that comprise the U of M—Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and the Twin Cities. Strides are being made within the U of M System to better showcase and market all five campuses.

Action Items:

- Assemble a campus-wide marketing coordination team with representation from a cross-section of campus units by summer of 2018 in order to:
 - Better inform the campus about current marketing efforts
 - Identify ways to pool marketing dollars and coordinate and/or reinforce strategies and tactics
- Continue work by University Relations staff systemwide among the five campuses in order to:
 - Increase awareness of all five campuses in systemwide advertising across the state
 - Promote the entire U of M system at the Minnesota State Fair beginning in fall 2018, modifying significantly to be more inclusive of all five campuses and their distinctiveness while, simultaneously highlighting the University of Minnesota system brand of excellence
 - Provide content and feedback for the planned development of a website that focuses on the University of Minnesota System and systemwide resources, responsibilities, and communication
- Develop additional campus promotional videos as resources and student and staff expertise allow

Various Specific Budget Suggestions and Issues

There were several suggestions regarding specific budget issues, fees, and charges as well as overall budget information and transparency. Some called for charging students for printing on the various laser printers across campus. Students are already charged a \$250 per semester technology fee to cover the costs associated with their technology use, including printing and printing supplies. Another suggestion called for offering free tuition for employees and families “like UMD [does].” Fortunately, that is not necessary, as the Regents Scholarship program is consistent across the U of M System.

Another suggestion called for UMC to discontinue the Dining Services affiliation with Sodexo and return to self-operational management. That suggestion incorrectly stated that there are significant financial losses with that arrangement. UMC entered into the contract with Sodexo approximately ten years ago as our self-managed operation wasn’t sustainable. With Sodexo, we now receive a monthly commission from our partnership with additional funding for capital improvements per our contractual agreement.

Regarding budget transparency, the Business Affairs Office has offered budget training to all units on campus, and UMC’s director of finance is available to attend staff meetings as requested. Individual budget information is available to unit leaders. Concerned individuals may discuss budget issues and transparency with unit heads or directors. Additionally, the chancellor provides the campus community with general budget updates, and the

Business Affairs Office has conducted a budget review of each department on campus to identify opportunities for one-time and recurring budget reductions for FY18 and FY19.

Action Items:

- Propose a potential increase in the online course fee from \$45 per credit to \$50 per credit in FY19

Technology Support Services

Some respondents asked why UMC needs a local computer Help Desk and if services could be addressed at a distance using U of M System Office of Information Technology (OIT) resources. A local Help Desk presence is essential to support UMC's laptop program. It is unlikely the Twin Cities campus OIT could or would support a laptop program remotely. A significant need exists on campus to support day-to-day technology operations. Staff members are utilized at full capacity in providing end user support for all sorts of issues. Additionally, faculty, staff, and students expect face-to-face, walk-in, onsite support, not just a phone call to Twin Cities.

UMC partners with OIT to coordinate and support IT services. A few years ago UMC leveraged OIT's 1-Help for after hours phone-in support. This is a service of OIT's Service Desk for general support of primarily "central" IT services (i.e. Canvas/Moodle, password changes, MyU, PeopleSoft, etc.). Anything they cannot resolve (including most local systems and services) is entered into a ticket in ServiceNow and assigned to the UMC Help Desk for resolution. In January 2017, UMC Technology Support Services moved our Incident Management from a locally developed application (ServiceONE) to a centrally hosted solution (ServiceNow). We are currently in the process of doing the same for our asset management system. The daily data entry process is not eliminated, but it does move the hosting and support of the backend application and database to OIT.

A common user support model has been developed between Academic Technology Services and the Help Desk to support academic and administrative IT, allowing either unit to provide support for the other. The same could be done with Media Services and the telephone system, where all service calls would be reported to the Help Desk and assigned to respective service areas from there.

Action Items:

- Evaluate the possibility of integrating service calls for Media Services needs and telephone system issues with the Help Desk

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Many respondents commented that the campus is too quiet many times of the year—especially in summer months. A number of people suggested ideas for events, camps, activities, and other ways to utilize the wonderful facilities we have on our campus when classes are not in session. Some of you thought we need to be better at recouping actual expenses from outside groups. Others suggested UMC bring in more contracts, grants and resources.

Action Items:

- Convene a task force to explore ways to promote the use of UMC's facilities when capacity is available and to discuss pricing issues, considering specific ideas and suggestions from the budget survey
- Secure additional or reallocate existing resources to assist faculty and staff with grant writing and external funding of research and scholarship

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Thanks for all the work everyone has done over the past several years. The Crookston campus operates in an extremely lean, efficient, *and* effective manner. There are many one- and two-person units. Many of you wear multiple hats and are doing a great deal of work with very limited resources. We know budgets and resources are spread thin. Because budget issues are not new, you may be growing a little weary of having to make do with less. Still, we need to live within our means. Thank you for your efforts to do the best with what we have. We want to assure you that we continue to advocate for this campus to receive additional resources from the University of Minnesota System, the state, and philanthropic donors.

We've built upon a strong agricultural legacy to add majors in business, liberal arts and education, natural resources, and math, science and technology, including many online degree programs. Athletics, student services, and all our other units also contribute to our success. Each one adds value to what we, as a campus, offer. This diversity in offerings allows us to appeal to the widest number of students possible. This diversity—in majors, in faculty and staff, and especially in students—makes us stronger.

We need to build on the legacy of the past, but we have to be careful to avoid getting caught up in the concept of the “good old days.” We've adapted and changed to grow and thrive. Each iteration of our past has made our campus into the treasure it is today. While we won't go back to offering two-year degrees, we will explore new viable majors and modes of education where they make sense and build on our strengths.

Times have changed. It is not as easy to recruit students as in the past. Economic and workforce needs have changed. Student and family expectations have changed. And the demographics of our state and region have changed. We will continue to innovate and adapt our educational offerings to meet the changing needs of our students, the region, the state, and beyond.

We need to look forward and work together, sharing our perspectives, knowledge, and expertise in order to succeed in today's competitive market. We must be personally accountable to ourselves and to our colleagues for bringing our best work to UMC and our students every day. Each of us adds value and furthers the mission, vision, and values of this campus. It takes all of us working together to be the best University of Minnesota Crookston we can be.

--Chancellor Mary Holz-Clause