 Directive Memo on Academic Affairs Budget Realignment

This memo follows from Academic Affairs’ “Portfolio of Imperfect Options,” with thanks to the Academic Senate Executive Committee, the Academic Affairs Council, and all who contributed by sharing feedback over the fall 2020 semester. It sets out the specific directions that Academic Affairs will take in order to address its current budget shortfall. These efforts are not only directed at short-term adjustments: in order to create long-term sustainability, we need to repair a structural deficit that challenges us to reduce and reorient our operations through purposeful, collaborative planning. The goal of this memo and the actions it describes is to align Academic Affairs’ spending with its base budget, and to establish a direction that will allow us to remain strong and mission-directed now and into the future.

The following is provided for colleges, academic support units, programs, directors and chairs, faculty, staff, and administrators within Academic Affairs. Guidance for the implementation of specific directions will be provided in separate documents, which will be shared with those responsible and archived at this link. Contextual information can also be found at this link, which includes presentations on Academic Affairs’ budget as well as Frequently Asked Questions; there is also a link for providing feedback and asking questions. In order to monitor our progress, an assessment and accountability framework is provided at the end of this memo; communications and updates will be shared regularly and archived at this link.

**Goal 1: Reduce Instructional Costs**

As might be expected and is appropriate, Academic Affairs’ largest investment is its tenured, tenure-track, and lecturer faculty, whose core work is building and delivering the university’s curriculum. It is therefore imperative that we 1. effectively design curriculum that delivers our educational goals; 2. align tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching with areas where students will receive the greatest direct benefit; 3. enlist lecturer faculty to meet areas of high curricular need that cannot be met by tenured or tenure-track faculty, following the order of work and limiting non-contract or new lecturer faculty hiring.

**Short-term (beginning winter 2021)**

1. **Reduction targets.** In their budget proposals for 2021-22, the colleges, library, and academic support units will plan to meet specific budget reduction targets in line with the university’s overall budget goals, which will be shared at February’s University Budget Council meeting. Where appropriate, planned reductions are expected to include a mix of instructional and operational cost savings, using scenario-planning templates, enrollment estimates, and guidelines that will be provided during the February/March 2021 budget planning period. The resulting scenarios will inform Academic Affairs’ budget proposal in April/May 2021.

2. **Schedule building.** As chairs plan their programs’ Fall 2021 schedules, they are expected to manage instructional costs by placing tenured and tenure-track faculty in areas of high student need and impact, reducing the number of sections for multi-
section courses, and minimizing non-required courses and electives. To support their decision-making, in February and March 2021 chairs and AOCs will receive training in the uses of instructional cost estimates, enrollment data and projections, and policies related to faculty teaching assignments. Fall 2021 schedules will be due April 16, allowing additional time for planning.

3. **Minimum enrollments.** Beginning Fall 2021, lectures or seminars that fall below the following minimum class size will be cancelled: Lower division: 18 seats; Upper division: 14 seats; Graduate: 7 seats. Some exceptions may be approved by the dean. Anticipating these minimum enrollments, programs should place tenured and tenure-track faculty in high-demand areas and build schedules that take into account both historical and projected enrollments in order to minimize the likelihood of cancellation, rather than expecting to cancel classes that are already scheduled (see 1.2 above).

4. **Increasing section enrollment capacity.** The above minimum enrollments do not affect enrollment caps. Caps will be raised wherever possible, especially when doing so will allow us to offer fewer, but larger, sections of the same course. Deans will determine appropriate enrollment caps for their colleges before submitting their 2020-21 budget proposals, which may include TAs for larger classes.

5. **Assigned time.** Regardless of the funding source, all assigned time requests, including those carried over from previous semesters, must be approved by the dean. Following approval, assigned time must be reported using consistent codes and accountability measures. In line with recommendations from the Equity in Faculty Work Assignment Task Force, guidelines around assigned time will be developed that establish equitable and consistent practices, following the expectation that 1 WTU represents the equivalent of 45 hours of work a semester.

6. **Program development and revision.** New proposals for any General Fund-supported programs (including program revisions and new degree programs, certificates, and minors) must include data-informed estimates of likely resource requirements (including costs of instruction and impact on existing program costs).

7. **Tenure-track hiring freeze.** The current tenure-track faculty hiring freeze will remain in effect for 2021-2. Some exceptions may be considered, based on exceptional enrollment demand, in June 2021. Proposals for future tenure-track hiring are expected to align with long-term academic program plans (see 1.9 below).

---

**Long-term (start planning toward implementation beginning or after fall 2021)**

8. **Low-enrolled programs.** Programs that experience low enrollments in required courses (that consistently fall below the minimum enrollments in 1.3) are expected to undertake curriculum revision in order to establish viability. Curriculum revisions should reduce the number of sections offered, minimize the use of lecturer faculty, and establish realistic expectations for measurable improvement. As well as reviewing course enrollments in the major (graduate as well as undergraduate), they should reconsider their offerings in GE; those that are consistently under-enrolled or duplicative should be reduced or eliminated. Programs whose low enrollment trends are unlikely to be addressed through curriculum redesign may be combined, discontinued, or encouraged to move into self-support.

9. **Long-term Academic Program Planning.** Long-term academic program planning will help San Francisco State build enrollment and establish sustainability by aligning its
academic program mix with the needs of students and their future employers and communities. Beginning in the Academic Year 2021-22, colleges will develop long-term academic program plans in light of student enrollment projections, program review findings, and regional workforce needs as determined by data and market analyses. Plans for future tenure-track hiring and program development, revision, or discontinuance should be integrated with these plans. As well as focusing at the college level, long-term academic program plans should involve and inform university-level academic planning in collaboration with the Academic Senate.

10. **Faculty Work Assignment (1): fourth course equivalent.** San Francisco State's normative 3/3 (9/9 WTU) teaching distribution is exceptional in the CSU (for which a 4/4 [12/12 WTU] teaching distribution is standard); it is founded on the expectation that faculty will apply the fourth course equivalent (3 WTUs) toward a mission-directed program of research, scholarship, and/or creative activity. We are required to account for this fourth course equivalent through a reporting process to the Chancellor's Office. To establish accountability, clear expectations for achievement will be developed in line with program RTP criteria through a process that will be determined by Academic Senate policy and is expected to involve college deans, Faculty Affairs, and the programs themselves. Post-tenure faculty members may teach a fourth course in lieu of research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.

11. **Faculty Work Assignment (2): supervision courses.** Collaborating with college deans, Faculty Affairs will establish consistent measures to account for supervision courses within faculty work assignments. Colleges may need to limit the assignment of supervision courses (including graduate, research, clinical and fieldwork supervision) in order to balance curricular offerings and instructional costs.

**Goal 2: Reduce Operational and Administrative Costs**

Administrative and operational spending must support our educational mission. It should be managed and reduced where possible within a holistic reconsideration of the structures, processes, and outcomes of the work it is designed to support. As well as managing and reducing these costs within Academic Affairs, we need to consider how our work aligns with that of other cabinet areas—and might, in collaboration with them, be redesigned in order to create both division- and institution-wide savings.

**Short-term (beginning winter 2021)**

1. **Reorganization of Offices.** Academic Affairs administrative units and colleges are currently reorganizing offices in order to recover from staff layoffs and MPP reductions without adding costs. In a collaboration led by Academic Resources, some offices will be reorganized across colleges and units in order to share resources and increase efficiency overall.

2. **Research and Service Organizations.** In line with recommendations from the University Budget Council and following policy to be developed by the Academic Senate, RSOs receiving General Fund allocations should consult with their deans and prepare to reduce their General Fund costs in alignment with the university's budget reduction targets (see 1.1 above), as well as preparing plans toward becoming self-sustainable (see 2.5 below).

3. **Additional one-time cost savings.** General Fund spending on travel and hospitality will be suspended, with few exceptions, through the end of Academic Year 2021-22.
Long-term (start planning toward implementation beginning fall 2021)

4. **Re-engineer/eliminate costly processes.** To identify work processes that can be reduced or redesigned to cut costs and save staff time, we will enlist the experienced perspectives of staff who are most directly involved in these processes. Starting in winter 2021, a collaborative team drawing staff from across Academic Affairs, as well as from Administration and Finance, will identify opportunities to reorganize our work and meet our goals with reduced resources.

5. **Research and Service Organizations.** In line with recommendations from the UBC and forthcoming Academic Senate policy, RSOs receiving General Fund allocations will prepare to become self-sustainable by spring 2024. In summer 2021, a task force will consider how resources, including staff, might be shared across RSOs in order to support their sustainability.

**Goal 3: Establish Assessment Measures and Accountability Framework**

Achieving fiscal sustainability in line with our educational mission requires a collaborative effort, supported by budget transparency and accountability. Toward this end, Academic Affairs commits to the following:

1. **Regular communications.** The Academic Affairs website will be kept current with regular updates about budget processes and timelines, as well as budget-related FAQs following from this memo. The Provost will deliver regular presentations on Academic Affairs’ budget to the Academic Senate and University Chairs’ Council, with follow-up email communications to all faculty. The Vice Provost for Academic Resources will continue to meet monthly with all deans and College Business Officers, which will be followed up with minutes and archived communications.

2. **Budget Realignment Assessment Council.** This memo sets out actions that are meant to address significant fiscal challenges, but we must continuously assess them to determine their effectiveness. Starting in winter 2021, a Budget Realignment Assessment Council will be co-convened by the Provost and the Vice Provost for Academic Resources, with the Academic Senate Chair serving as an ex-officio member, and charged with 1. monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of actions detailed in this memo; 2. tracking Academic Affairs’ overall progress towards meeting our savings targets; 3. in consultation with the Academic Affairs Council and the Academic Senate Executive Committee, recommending revisions to any of the above actions that will increase their effectiveness.

3. **Support Chairs’ financial decision-making.** Department chairs and program directors play a critical role in managing instructional costs and promoting budget transparency. To support them, we commit to providing enhanced training in the use of relevant policies and financial data, including enrollments, instructional costs, and academic resources (such as room capacity) (see 1.2 above), developing instruments that support transparent financial management and planning around instructional costs, and reviewing campus-wide norms around chair time base and compensation structures in line with clear and equitable work expectations.