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FSU prepares to eliminate 21 programs and close Panama City campus

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Florida State administrators this afternoon released a draft of proposed wide-sweeping cutbacks at the university, based on current reductions in state revenue.

If enacted, they would dramatically alter the university as we know it.

Twenty-one degree programs at FSU would be eliminated, including anthropology, German, oceanography, physical education and hospitality and golf management.

Numerous other programs would be reduced, merged or restructured. The Panama City campus would close effective Jan. 1, 2010. And approximately 350 faculty members would be laid off.

"It's almost unbearable to consider," FSU President T.K. Wetherell said. "This is going to have a lot of ramifications."

The draft of cutbacks came out of the university's budget crisis committee, which met earlier today. It was the first time specific programs were targeted for elimination.

Wetherell has scheduled a town hall meeting for next Tuesday to discuss the university's plan for addressing the massive reductions in state aid. He's expecting members of the Faculty Senate to have a counter-proposal to the draft released on Monday.

Music professor Jayne Standley, president of FSU's Faculty Senate, believes the Legislature holds the power to change the budget forecasts.

"These (cutbacks) don't have to happen," she said. "The Legislature could solve this problem by solving the revenue problem in Florida."

"The size of the cuts that may be necessary are devastating," Standley added. "I think the sum total is overwhelming and really will damage the university that Florida State has become."

The state Senate and House will begin debating their respective higher education budgets this week.

FSU stands to receive \$28.2 million less for the 2009-10 school year than it did in 2008-09 based on the Senate version, and \$78.2 million less in the current House budget.

Senator Don Gaetz, a Republican from Niceville, said he sympathizes with Wetherell and FSU.

"In the toughest economy since the Great Depression, when nobody in my district is telling me the answer to their problems is for government to get a bigger slice of the pie, I've cast some pretty tough votes to increase fees up and down the line," Gaetz said.

"We looked in the basement of the Capitol to see if there was some Confederate gold buried there," he added. "There wasn't. There's no magic money."

Programs targeted for elimination:

Anthropology
Apparel Design
Geophysical Fluid Dynamics
Geological Sciences
Molecular Biophysics
Oceanography
Hospitality & Golf Management
Physical Education
Science Education (College of Education)
Geography
Behavioral Psychology
Software Engineering
Art Education
Ceramics
Sculpture
Studio Art
Recreational Management
German
Slavic Languages
Demography
Art Administration

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