

## Budget Principles Task Force Report

The Budget Principles Task Force has met five times since its formation in late April/early May 2020. Through these meetings and through consultation with faculty and staff via two surveys, a town hall meeting and numerous individual conversations, the task force has developed the following recommendations for principles to be used in making decisions about any budget cuts necessary for the College of Journalism & Communications due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee's work is recorded on the [CJC governance web page](#). The table below presents seven principles, divided into two sections and ranked from highest to lowest according to their importance based on faculty and staff feedback. The first four principles relate to shared CJC values, while the last three are decision-making process principles. The numbers in the second column reflect the mean of faculty/staff ratings of the principle's importance, on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high). There were 85 responses to this survey.

All budget decisions should be human-centered, preserving our valuable human capital and acknowledging the service and sacrifice of the staff and faculty whose lives are being affected by these decisions. To the greatest extent possible, reductions in spending on personnel should come from voluntary attrition rather than layoffs and should prioritize redistribution of work to existing faculty and staff over new hires.	6.50
The CJC shall prioritize undergraduate and graduate students' needs for skills development, immersive experience, career preparedness, and job placement, realizing that some of these opportunities depend on internal and external factors such as partnerships that fall outside of our budgetary purview.	5.53
CJC should do all necessary to defend the principles of diversity, inclusion and equity as defined in its mission and by the University of Florida. To all extents possible, the CJC will preserve the advances that have been made in the past few years to increase the percentage of under-represented groups among faculty, staff and students. We also affirm that inclusion, diversity and equity should include equal weights of priority to position types, education level, abilities and backgrounds.	5.00
Budget decisions should preserve the CJC's investment in producing preeminent scholarship, research, and creative works, with the goal of maintaining and enhancing CJC's reputation for academic excellence.	4.86
Budget decisions, and the process by which they are reached, should be as transparent as possible through consistent communication, including valid and reliable data related to fiscal and academic performance that informs budget decisions.	6.12
Budget decisions should be innovative and proactive rather than reactive, ensuring that continued funding preserves the essence of the CJC brand, its people and its service to the college's public service missions.	5.16
Budget decisions should be strategic and data-driven, recognizing the efficacy and efficiency of faculty/staff, units or programs.	5.15

In addition to these principles, the task force would like to emphasize two points drawn from the feedback we received, in multiple forms, from faculty and staff throughout CJC.

- First, that feedback clearly affirmed the principle that budget decisions should focus on people first, recognizing that any budget decisions will affect people's jobs and livelihood.
- Second, the feedback revealed a desire for faculty and staff to have continued involvement in the budget process as decision-making proceeds.

Many faculty and staff members offered additional feedback on the principles themselves and on approaches the CJC administration might take in making budget decisions. The task force felt that it would be helpful to the administration to see that feedback, which is included verbatim below.

**Feedback on principles (from the final survey):**

- I think there should be a discussion about not focusing on college rankings during this time if that means having to keep our enrollment in courses small. I would promote more team teaching and larger courses to be able to possibly reduce the cost of adjuncts if necessary and keep the full time faculty protected as much as possible.
- Ensure that data-based decisions use accurate and supportable data.
- Budget decisions should consider the fundamental and unique role of our collective fields in a functional democracy, including public accountability and a well-informed citizenry. (7)
- Consider reallocation of financial resources to preserve positions and provide the best education for students.
- Our immersion opportunities set us apart from other colleges. Staff and faculty that play a key role in those were not represented enough in the principles.

**Additional feedback from the final survey:**

- Thank you! I hope the people who make the final decisions do take into consideration the hard work you have put into this.
- To XXXX's point on the call today, I believe it would be beneficial for all departments to critically review their spending and identify cuts that they are willing to make for the greater good, while still maintaining the principles as set forth above.
- We are mixing college priorities (the first four bullets), with budget process guidelines (last three bullets). The last three should be inherent in the process and not ranked.
- Faculty and staff should be asked to volunteer wage give backs, furloughing, and part time employment and job sharing and for suggestions for reducing expenses such as giving up UF phones for personal cell phones, giving back monies from grant indirects, and for donations to the college. Administrators should be asked to volunteer temporary wage cuts.

- Is it appropriate to indicate a willingness to accept an across the board cut in pay instead of laying off anyone? I would be in favor of a pay cut over layoffs. Is it appropriate to ask the college to stop hiring for positions that will use state appropriated funds (as this is exacerbating the bottom line)? I would be in favor of suspending all searches- even ones that have been approved (it is fiscally irresponsible).
- Savings: The CJC will recognize a huge cost saving alone with AEJMC this year since no travel costs will be paid (\$2000+ per person!). This total cost has to hover around 30-50k. Cut or scale back all non-essential events and celebrations. Also, in the event of any layoff- would this take place before the start of the Fall 2020 semester? Thanks for all you have done.
- any effort to identify and spend "rainy day" money?
- Decisions regarding budgetary cuts should be made with genuine concern for what information is verifiable from multiple sources. It is not time for popularity contests and "pay-back" for previous support. It is time to preserve the quality of faculty, staff and programs that have been built over the last decade and are recognized for their value both inside and outside UF.
- if possible, there should be a stringent review of whether work can be redistributed prior to offering a new position that presents a recurring cost.
- If we can pause renovations and furniture purchases that aren't urgent or are for cosmetic purposes only, until the budget is more stable and jobs are secure.
- Creative works from faculty are not mentioned.
- Ways to cut cost for the college: Eliminate excessive academic marginal research; promote dual degree programs; offer three-year bachelor degrees;
- I have two suggestions for budget cuts in the hopes of mitigating harm to our CJC family: 1) Yes, research is important and so is our reputation. But our reputation is well-established. I suggest that for the short term, perhaps two years (or until a coronavirus-19 vaccine is available), that there be a moratorium on the use of the budget to fund travel/hotel expenses to attend conferences (and other type of travel/hotel expenses as well, such as for speakers to come to campus), while the budget can still support registration to virtually attend conferences online if the registration takes place during the early-bird phase. This will allow faculty to take part in workshops online and present papers and be on panels via Zoom. 2) There are at least four searches going on at CJC at the moment, and I propose that a moratorium on hires for at least a year be put in place and that the teaching responsibilities for those positions be shared among our current faculty for the time being. One more thing: I think it's short-sighted for Diversity and Inclusion to be considered anything other than of the highest importance. We have worked hard to create an atmosphere of inclusiveness at CJC and any step backward would damage the image and reputation of CJC.
- All are important. Thank you for leading a very challenging conversation.
- I agree with the point made during the town hall meeting. Each of these is equally important. I don't think you can rank the importance of being transparent vs. the importance of being human-centered.

- Great job putting these together. They are an excellent reflection of our principles and how we can maintain the culture and what we value while going through these tough times.
- Budget cuts should be used to also jettison laggard faculty members and staff members.
- It could be that the last principle covers this in "public service missions" ... if others are also interested in strengthening I wonder if it could be "to the college's public service missions and the role of our collective fields in a functioning democracy." Thanks!
- We should examine possibilities that some units at other universities are exploring such as: offer faculty a reduced pay option for the same classes (or even a slightly increased load) with the possibility of time away. The lockdown has shown that, if and when it comes to it, employees can (have to) work remotely so the time away would not be a leave—so, the faculty member (say) would still perform his/her other duties such as serving on committees and the like, except that there would be no teaching involved. This may not work for everyone but I suspect that there will be enough people who would be interested. And, in these challenging times, every bit of saving will matter.
- Thank you to the committee for their work on this important matter! It is much appreciated.
- Salary equity between staff and senior managers should be a major consideration especially for the media properties. The stations are understaffed yet still making it happen everyday.
- Thank you for all the work you have done and the way the communication has been handled throughout the process.
- "I think these are all important. I actually think ranking them would be problematic. The reason I say that is because that process creates winners and losers. From a collaborative framework, this will mean one group feels they lost while another feels like they won. If the consensus is that all of these are equally important, then they should all suffer (at least the things that involve money will suffer). In essence, a process where no one is likely happy seems like the outcome that will likely make everyone feel equally happy. In the end, none of these should be untouchable. We don't want any to suffer, but if cuts are coming it seems that they should be applied across the board.
- If the goal is to keep everyone we currently have in the college and do our best to maintain our principles, it would seem like a furlough/temporary pay cut approach would be something to look into. In this situation, in theory, no one gets laid off and we can minimize the cuts to research, teaching, and diversity. I know other universities have already taken this sort of approach. I've actually seen a tiered approach where different groups take different levels of pay cuts. That is, the people who make the most take the biggest pay cut, while those making less take a smaller cut to their salary. Clearly, no one wants to take a pay cut. However, it's something to look into if we're facing a serious short fall in the budget.

### **Additional feedback from staff, sent via email to the task force**

- I think that saving jobs should be THE top priority. Everyone in CJC makes valuable contributions to the mission. Some universities have asked senior management, and even university presidents, to take the lead by taking a 10 percent salary reduction so funds can be directed to help students, faculty and staff. If this was the plan across UF it could make a big difference. Penn State, George Washington, Stanford and many other schools have taken this step. This would also not be a major inconvenience for those making large salaries.
- All units and projects should be evaluated for their contributions, redundancy and ability to stay afloat. The hiring freeze is a good step for now and searches should be discontinued if cuts are positions will be cut. We should not start any new initiatives or building projects that require large funding – including those in the media properties. The broadcast stations have limited staff right now and it would be difficult to do more without available additional resources.
- A reassurance that all staff are important would also be helpful. Stressful times call for empathetic measures.
- I think something about working across teams to maximize our resources should be at the heart of this. We could eliminate a lot of inefficient processes and costs just by adding more collaboration and communication.
- I encourage you to promote retaining employees as a top priority. It is the effort of staff and faculty that make all the other aspects of CJC grow.

Respectfully submitted May 15, 2020

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