

From: [University Governance](#)
To: [Lejuez, Carl Wilborne](#); [Girod, Doug](#)
Cc: [Flores, Ruben](#)
Subject: Comments and Questions from Dec. 6 2018 University Senate Open Forum
Date: Tuesday, January 15, 2019 9:25:45 AM
Attachments: [20181206RecapQuestions20191014.docx](#)



Chancellor Douglas Girod
Interim Provost Carl Lejuez

Dear Chancellor Girod and Interim Provost Lejuez:

Subject: Comments and Questions from December 6, 2018, University Senate Open Forum

As you're aware, the University Senate hosted an Open Forum, on December 6, 2018. The purpose of the forum was to discuss the university budget cuts and any concerns faculty, staff and students might have.

As a result of the forum, we have gathered the attached comments and questions that were asked before, during and after the forum. We are asking for the administration's thoughts and responses to these comments and questions.

If you could provide this information by January 25, 2019, it will be added to our web page, as was stated during the forum.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Ruben Flores, flores@ku.edu.

Sincerely

Ruben Flores
University Senate President

C: University Senate Executive Committee

University Senate would like to give the administration the opportunity to review and response to the comments and questions asked during the University Senate, December 6, 2018, Open Forum.

- 1) I'm concerned that there seems to be administrative group think that they and athletics deserve market competitive wages more than the faculty staff even though the administration is the department that has made up the very costly and avoidable mistakes that have caused our budget problems.
Would the administration care to comment?
- 2) In order to look at a budget at the beginning of the year to determine what money will be spent on what items, it is imperative to know what the accurate amount is. How will you be able to assure that we will have accurate budget information that we can rely on? In the past, those who are typically sharing budget information are vague and you are never really sure what the budget situation is. How will this be changed so that this lack of budget transparency is no longer the case?
- 3) Will any pay increase for faculty/staff, whenever they do start again, keep up with the rate of inflation? Have some administration officials been given pay raises this year even though most staff/faculty have had their pay frozen?
- 4) I would like to know very much what the plan is going forward to start making up for the real pay cuts that we've experienced up to this point, after inflation certainly, they represent significant pay cuts. So the question I think we have to ask ourselves is five years from now-- and I think many faculty members are asking themselves-- five years from now, what does KU look like. Is this a place where I'm going to get paid in a way that resembles the market? Is there a plan to increase the amount of revenues available so that this bad moment that we're in doesn't become the new normal? I think that universities have to plan ahead.
Would the administration care to comment?
- 5) Has the administration decided on which positions will be let go or is it still up in the air? Any insight given on how they will be making those decisions?
- 6) The problem with administrators is that they come in from elsewhere and leave for another institution after a short period. There's absolutely no loyalty to or long-term commitment to the institution. They're willing to sacrifice it to build their resumes and move on to the next victim.

Maybe administrators should come from the ranks of KU faculty who have been here for a while. Maybe there should be a requirement for administrators to return full-time

teaching for at least two years after their administrative term. Maybe administrative stipends should be a fixed amount.

Would the administration care to comment?

- 7) I am worried more about faculty and staff positions losing their jobs eventually and eliminating good programs in this university. Our rank has dropped significantly. Can you comment on how we can prevent this?
- 8) What is the latest with employee spouse/dependent tuition benefits? Robert Waller said it had been presented to the Provost. Does the Provost have any further details?
- 9) Why is the Administration considering tuition benefits when people are losing their income and jobs?
- 10) I think that we need to spend some time and really think about some of the language that we use and when we talk about the university as if it were a corporation. This is a large organization, but it's not a business corporation. And what we're doing and what is happening in a lot of these conversations-- I am a professor of, among other things, corporate law-- so when we're having these conversations, we are picking and choosing which parts of the responsibilities, obligations, and privileges are associated with corporate functioning. And we are not a for-profit corporation. As a not-for-profit, public instruction (not a corporation), what are the transparency obligations? Who are the constituents? And what interests are we serving, who are we serving? Isn't that what we have to answer?
- 11) I don't think that the negative impacts of this particular situation have really been made public as much as they should be. When I hear the interim provost making a comment that there will be no impacts to education-- to student education, I was just surprised that that's a way of just negating the whole idea that none of this is really going to affect the mission that the university is trying to accomplish at this particular point. I think we may need to make all of the negative impacts public as much as we can because not only do we have to have a job persuading the administration about how or what the best practices might be in terms of meeting the current budget situation but we also have a state legislature who is listening in and has probably heard that the current administration or past previous administrations have made serious mistakes in investing public funds.

They aren't responsible stewards of the public moneys, and they would use this as an opportunity to further reduce the state aid to the higher education budget. So I think we need to tell the public in Kansas as much as possible. We have some mismanagement as part of the previous administration, but we also have failure for the state legislature to adequately fund education to all levels. And this is having serious negative impacts on the education of your children, Kansas.

Would the administration care to comment?

12) I asked the Interim Provost yesterday at his budget town hall if he could give us a list of the department specifically that are losing faculty. He completely dodged that question and instead did say that losing this many faculty is not going to affect students in any way. I just want to say that that was very disheartening to me, and as a student, I'm sure-- and as previous students-- that we all know that losing faculty, especially of this caliber, is going to affect students. And I just want to thank everyone that has been saying that and agreeing with saying that losing this amount is going to affect the students' education because as said earlier, we are an academic institution first. Would the administration care to comment?

13) I haven't heard any talk of research really being taken into account at all in the new budget model. And education is obviously very important and central to our mission at KU, but we're also Research University. And I would encourage administration to find a budget model that also takes research into account as part of the main budget. The reasons for this are important: KU's at a pivotal time right now as a university as a whole but also with respect to research. So those of you who might not be aware, we're near the bottom of the AAU list of universities. I've heard that we're on the AAU probation list right now and that we've been there for about four years. And the only way that we're going to maintain our AAU status and not lose it is to raise our research profile.

And so it concerns me when I hear that the budget model being considered isn't really taking research into account in any major way or maybe not-- potentially not at all. So I think that needs to be looked at. We had an engineering dean candidate last week come and talk, and somebody asked him about what his thoughts were on this new budget model. And this was a candidate from University of Florida-- and I mention this because I just had somebody talk from Florida State, Paul Outka, who had moved from Florida and they had some budget crises there.

And this particular candidate had mentioned that the University of Florida had considered this same model, and it had adopted it six or seven years ago and it wasn't working well at all. And three years ago, they tossed it out because they felt it wasn't incentivizing the right things, at least the right things according to that institution. I realize that they're a different institution and they're different state than we are. But at least some other institutions are realizing it doesn't work for them.

And so I'd like them again just to consider models that are going to take a lot of things into account-- education, research, but also things like operations facilities. We have to find ways to fund all of these things. And I don't think it's good to ignore something like research for a research university.

Would the administration care to comment?

14) People should realize that most KU staff will not speak out on the subject because they have no tenure and they're afraid of retaliation.

Would the administration care to comment?

15) These cuts are affecting students in student success, perception of the university, and their worth as people. I had a student tell me the other day that they believed KU does not care about students. Instead, they perceive that KU cares about making money for administrators and athletics, and that KU uses students for their money while those students go into debt. Our administration is teaching students not to care about others or the larger world.

Would the administration care to comment?

16) I wanted to reiterate that cutting staff, losing faculty, the lack of a living wage for GTAs, and the questionable future funding of essential but understaffed resources like CAPS does impact student experience and retention.

Would the administration care to comment?

17) If we are suffering so much financially and facing so much budget cuts, how are we going to support our students, sometimes those who come from underprivileged families, and provide the financial support they deserve and apply for? Are we really an academic institute or a moneymaking institute focusing only on the athletic achievements and successes?

18) As a staff member, I feel frustrated on the undue burden we're (staff) being asked to bear on behalf of the University population. While I am empathetic to their (faculty members) lagging salaries compared to their peers, they have more flexibility in making their job work for them compared to staff, such as working from home, schedule flexibility, University paid lunches, professional development, etc. Many staff have to complete their work at their desks, at their maintenance assignments, etc. I don't necessarily have any solutions, but think this point needs to continue to be part of the conversation.

Would the administration care to comment?

19) How can we prevent situations like this from happening again?

20) Why has the administration not made any progress on the search for a new Provost? It has been over half a year and there is still no word.

21) How did it get so bad, we are losing staff members, and the Interim Provost acts like it's OK?

22) We have had changes in administration, but where is the accountability for positions that support those offices, we were told we were saving millions from Huron, what is the truth? Did we lose millions because of these choices? So once again the faculty and staff pay the price of bad decisions of administrators who are still at KU?

23) Why don't they cut a couple of the higher paid administration positions?

24) Do the Chancellor and Provost clean their own office and take out their own trash?