

THE BLUE BANNER



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UNCA prepares for impending budget cut

SACS reevaluates UNCA

Stuart Gaines
News Reporter

UNCA presented a number of budget reduction scenarios for the 2002-2003 academic year to the state governor's office. The proposed cuts are the most recent step UNCA has taken to address the state's billion-dollar budget crisis.

"Statewide, it is serious," said Wayne McDevitt, vice chancellor for administration and financial affairs. "There is a budget deficit, and there are a lot of ways the state can deal with that. Budget cuts are one of those."

The projected state revenue shortfall is estimated to be between \$1.8 billion and \$2 billion, according to McDevitt.

The governor's office asked other state institutions for budget cut scenarios as high as 11 percent. The governor is committed to minimizing the effect of the budget crisis on classrooms at all levels, according to McDevitt.

"At three percent (budget cuts) and higher, there is more and more impact," said McDevitt.

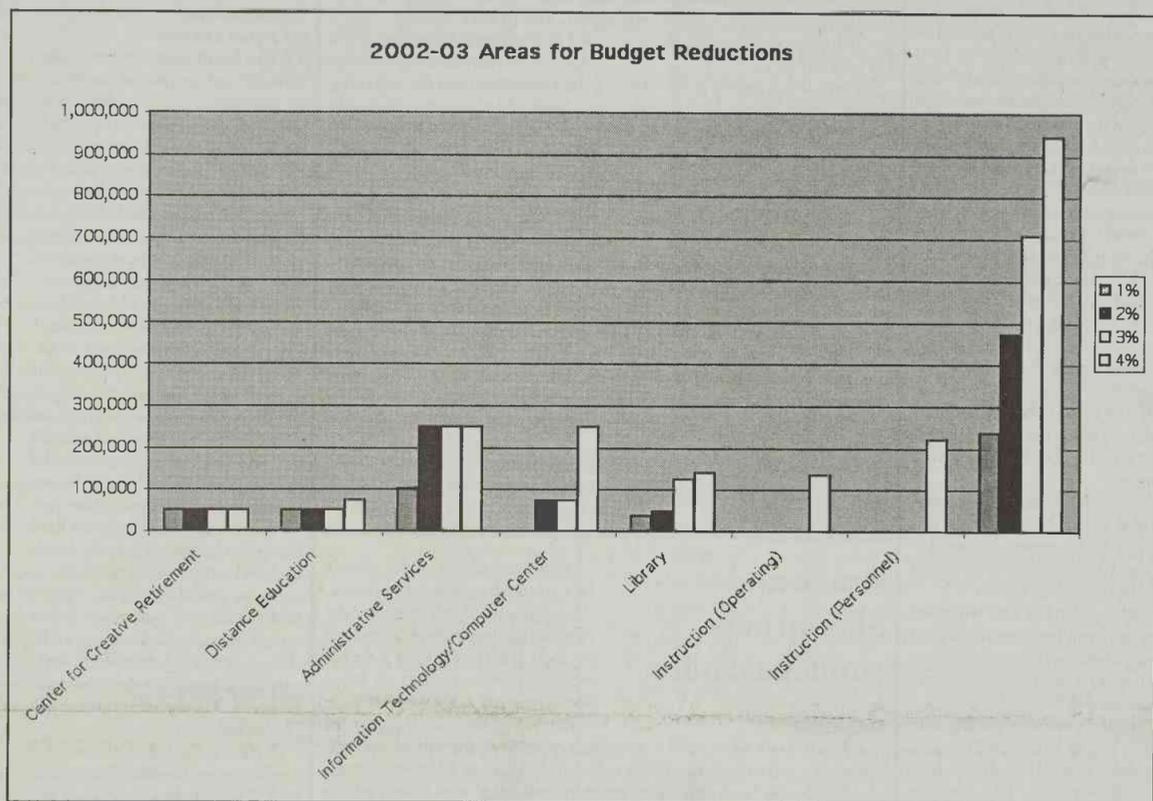
UNCA presented four scenarios, ranging from one percent to four percent permanent budget reductions, according to McDevitt.

The budget reductions will affect six areas: instruction, which includes operating and personnel costs, the Center for Creative Retirement, Ramsey Library, distance education, administrative services and information technology.

The combined cuts for these areas, a four percent reduction, total \$944,728, according to McDevitt. Instruction monies are spared in the one percent and two percent scenarios, but a four percent cut would result in \$220,000 in personnel cuts and \$135,000 in operating cuts.

While operating cuts will affect supply purchasing and travel budgets, personnel cuts will result in the elimination of several adjunct teaching positions next year at UNCA, according to Richard Maas, director of the environmental studies department.

"What we'll have to do is cut 75



GRAPH COURTESY OF J. P. AMMONS

UNCA presented possible budget reductions, ranging from one to four percent, for the 2002-2003 fiscal year to the state governor's office.

adjunct courses, and then, have regular faculty teach more to pick up those 75 courses," said Maas.

"The administration has to go through and find the adjunct courses that are expendable (or) can be taken over by regular faculty."

Professors with special expertise teach some adjunct courses, and those courses would be spared first, according to Maas.

"Adjunct positions should not be eliminated because the full-time faculty already have enough work to do," said Chris Thuot, a senior literature major. "They (UNCA faculty) already have a bigger load than most professors in the university system. They can't publish and do other things that they want to do, and this is only going to keep

that process going."

Department heads were briefed on the budget cuts at a recent meeting with Tom Cochran, the acting vice chancellor for academic affairs.

A new position, which was going to be open to a new full-time instructor next year, would also be eliminated at the higher percentage cuts, said Maas.

"Departments will have scientific equipment budget cuts," said Maas. "That's pretty serious, given that it's on top of a lot of cuts that we already had. But, we'll function. We just won't be able to provide quite as good of a curricular expertise for the courses."

While UNCA has only provided budget reduction scenarios up to four percent, the governor's office

or the legislature could still ask to see scenarios up to six percent, according to McDevitt.

"In times of budget cuts, as in times of plenty, it is most important to remember who we are," said Ken Betsalel, chair of the political science department, in an e-mail. "What comes first is our students and making sure our courses are taught well. All the rest will follow."

The office of financial affairs prepared the budget reductions in conjunction with the chancellor's cabinet, the university planning council, academic department chairs and some students, according to McDevitt.

"If you're going to start taking away from faculty salaries, then

that's not going to be attractive to new faculty that may want to come and teach here," said Cat Canady, a former employee of the press, the board of directors decided to offer the position to DiCesare, according to DiCesare.

"We shouldn't penalize our faculty because they're doing a really good job, and we wouldn't be able to have the small class sizes where you can really work one-on-one with your professors," said Canady.

The Center for Creative Retirement will suffer a \$50,000 permanent reduction in all four scenarios, while Ramsey Library's budget will shrink between \$36,000 and \$139,000, according to the budget.

Administrative services, which includes monies for staff development, equipment and services, will be reduced by \$250,000 at four percent.

Representatives from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a regional accrediting agency for Southern schools, visited UNCA March 24-27 to evaluate the university for official re-accreditation, which takes place in December.

"One of the best parts was the degree that faculty, staff and students were willing to contribute," said Dr. Marcia Ghidina, chair and associate professor of sociology. "A lot will come out of the enhancement recommendations (from SACS). We received a lot of terrific insights."

The visiting SACS team was divided into two groups, each examining one of two self-studies conducted by UNCA over the past three years, according to Shirley Browning, co-director of the self-study executive committee.

The first self-study was a compliance study, which ensures the university is in compliance with the SACS criteria for continued accreditation. The second, conducted voluntarily, and in addition to the compliance study, focused on student development at UNCA.

"We did quite well. The most important thing is that the institution received commendation (from SACS)," said Browning. "That's the sign of a really strong under-



COURTESY OF SACS.ORG

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Former director to relocate and manage Pegasus Press



RACHEL CRUMPLER/NEWS EDITOR

Mario and Lee DiCesare bring their dog, Judith, to work with them at the press.

Lana Coffey
News Reporter

Mario DiCesare, former director of Pegasus Press, accepted an offer made to him March 8 by the Pegasus Press Board of Directors to take over the press for the second time, according to DiCesare.

"The morning after I met with the chairman of the board, he made it clear that I could make an offer, and I had five days to do it," said DiCesare. "I was agonizing over it, and Lee (his wife) came up. I told her what my inner conflict was and she (said) 'Nonsense, you did it once, you can do it again,'" said DiCesare.

The press will no longer have any affiliation with UNCA, according to Tom Cochran, acting vice chancellor of academic affairs and a member of the Pegasus Press board of directors.

"We're now separated from UNCA by the Chancellor's wish, at least that's my understanding," said DiCesare. "Pegasus Press was affiliated with UNCA loosely. The administration does not want to have any further connection. Maybe, eventually, it will go back to its academic roots. It will continue its academic character, I guarantee that."

Pegasus may still publish some books for UNCA, according to Cochran.

"If we deal with Pegasus, it will be

as we do with any outside vendor," said Cochran.

After listening to proposals from both DiCesare and Neil Evans, a former employee of the press, the board of directors decided to offer the position to DiCesare, according to DiCesare.

"What I also learned was that a businessman had made an offer to take over the problems," said DiCesare. "He intended to pay off the debt, sell off the inventory and then do something else with the press."

Both Evans and DiCesare agreed to assume the remaining debt owed to UNCA, according to Cochran. Both also agreed to disassociate the press from the university. These conditions were the same for both

proposals.

"The board decided to select Mario DiCesare's proposal," said Cochran. "The primary reason was because he is, in fact, the founder of this. It was his project, so we thought he had the most connection to the press and what it was about as a medieval and renaissance press," said Cochran.

The entire Pegasus staff, consisting of Evans, Dave Mahaffey and Steve Kerback, quit after DiCesare accepted the position as executive director of the press, according to DiCesare.

"Both of the young men that were working for the press quit the day I

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