



TO: Dr. Laurie Geller, VPAA, Minot State and SPBC chair
FROM: Dr. Steve Shirley, President, Minot State *SSS*
DATE: February 14, 2020
RE: President's Staff Decisions – December 2019 Budget Presentations

This Memo is formal notification of the decisions made based on the MSU Strategic Planning and Budget Council's (SPBC) recommendations (forwarded to me on January 7, 2020) following the December 2019 campus budget presentations. The final decisions outlined herein followed deliberations by the MSU President's Staff during its meetings on January 8 & 21, and February 7, 2020. The items below represent decisions made on the ten highest-priority issues identified by SPBC; the remaining requests that were presented are not being funded at this time. Additionally, please note there will be a campus-wide budget forum on Thursday, February 27 (and repeated Feb. 28) to share these details and current budget information with the campus. Finally, the SPBC also made nine other recommendations in addition to the ten items referenced in this Memo, and I will look forward to receiving further thoughts/ideas from SPBC on those items in Spring 2020.

1. *New FTE position – the MSU website*

This was ranked the highest priority by the SPBC, and the President's Staff (PS) concurred this is an important position critical for MSU to stabilize overall student enrollment. Much of the PS discussion focused on the type of position needed at this time: a content specialist tasked with maintaining currency of the website (as requested in the budget proposal); or a position with broader responsibilities focused on transforming the MSU website into a tool more geared toward serving prospective students and helping drive recruitment and enrollment initiatives. A follow-up conversation was held with Darren Olson and VP Winiger, and it was determined further deliberations are needed by the new task force focused on Strategic Enrollment Management, co-chaired by Gary Rabe and Kevin Harmon, with ultimate recommendations from that group regarding the potential role for a new web position.

2. *Relationship with DCB and sharing of costs*

MSU has had multiple conversations during the past month with DCB regarding the cost-sharing arrangement and tuition remuneration of ASTEP. It has been agreed that DCB will pick up a larger share of the ASTEP expenses, proportional and commensurate to the credits and tuition generated through the program. Further conversations have also occurred with ASTEP leadership and VP Winiger during the past few weeks to significantly reduce costs and expand revenues of the program compared to the original budget presentation. It was agreed that ASTEP will be funded for one more year (the 2020-21 academic year), with the understanding if it is to continue after that, new sources of private support and/or other state/federal grants must be secured. ASTEP leadership has already begun conversations with the MSU Foundation to seek external support. A final note, the comments made by the SPBC regarding the expenses between MSU and DCB within ASTEP are all appreciated, but it should also be noted that MSU does generate auxiliary revenues from ASTEP students living in the residence halls, eating in dining services, etc. As for the broader points about shared services between MSU and DCB, the SPBC members may not be aware that DCB *pays* MSU for services related to Human Resources, Institutional Research, and Title IX. Discussion regarding the number of transfer articulations is a valid concern and should be taken as a priority subject for the Chair's Council to offer recommendations.

3. *Recruiting and Marketing funds*

Approximately \$55,000 was requested from various units to support an array of marketing initiatives aimed at driving student enrollment. These requests, for now, will not be funded. Rather, the Strategic Enrollment Management task force will provide recommendations that will likely lead to re-consideration of marketing/recruiting initiatives. The possibility of a new web position (Item #1 above) could also potentially help with some of these marketing/enrollment needs.

4. *DocuSign*

Core Technology Services is working on a system-wide contract for DocuSign, and MSU will participate once that is ready (thereby reducing our projected costs to fund this project).

5. *Business Office – additional operating*

This request is being funded as these are mandatory increases that must be covered. The shortfall will be covered through internal shifting of budgets within Administration & Finance to cover the shortage, and so there will not be any new funding required.

6. *Transfer Admission Counselor – new FTE position*

This request for a new position focused on recruiting and serving prospective transfer students is not being funded at this time. PS did agree the need for such a position might be necessary, but we will await recommendations later from the Strategic Enrollment task force for further evidence. Also, a new position in this area would have to wait until the current budget situation is more positive.

7. *Inflationary Library Subscription increases*

PS agreed to increase the Library's operational budget by \$10,000 to offset the continued increases in various database subscriptions. These subscriptions are an important component to Strategic Goal #1, Academic Excellence, and is important for students and faculty alike.

8.

Steam Line Repair in Pioneer Hall

This approximately \$100,000 repair is a mandatory facilities issue that must be resolved. Further, the Housing facilities budget request led to a broader conversation about residence halls at MSU and whether all of them should continue being occupied. PS has subsequently had preliminary conversations with Residence Life Director Karina Stander, and the outcome of those discussions included several policy changes to make MSU Housing more flexible and a more viable option for future students. Additionally, a directive has been given to VP Winiger to gather specific data regarding the cost savings of taking a Residence Hall building offline. We will review that data and make a decision in Spring 2020 on campus housing availability for the 2020-21 academic year.

9. *Credit Card readers in the Administration Building*

This is a decision best made by the Business Office. The total request is relatively small, and the decision is left to the discretion of the Business Office.

10. *Undergraduate Research Pilot Program*

This is a commendable and laudable request that could have a major impact on the overall experience of MSU students. However, the funding is simply not available at the current time to support this request (approximately \$60,000-\$120,000). There is a new research committee established by the SBHE in 2019 with representation of the nine "smaller" campuses in the NDUS. It was suggested that Dr. Webster reach out to our representative on the committee and suggest this idea as there will likely be specific SBHE research funding requests made during the 2021 Legislative Session.