

Questions from Budget Town Hall – October 20 & 21, 2020

1. Has any provision been made in the budget plan for anti-racism or EDI expenses?

[Dr. Bertha Garcia and Dr. Nicole Kaniki](#) have been appointed as special advisors to the President to advise on the preparations for the new office of the Associate Vice-President of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The budget plan will include plans for the future office, including support for the recommended actions in response to the anti-racism working group report, which can be found at: <https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf>

2. Are there any further specifics available for the 2021-22 budget plan?

Budget planning guidelines have been circulated to all the faculties and support units with preliminary budget allocations based on current information. Faculties and support units will provide the plans for expenses and strategic priorities during consultations in November and December. More detailed information will be available in March 2021 when all the plans are integrated into the University's budget plan.

3. Would you please explain the extension of the 1 year plan and 2.5% cut? What do you expect the impact of those to be?

Due to the uncertainties in 2018 outlined in the presentation, the University decided to use a two-year budget plan for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years. The Province's decision to reduce domestic tuition by 10% for the 2019-20 fiscal year was followed by a freeze in the 2020-21 fiscal year. This resulted in a reduction of \$43M in revenue to the University over the two fiscal years, which was shared equally between centrally-funded expenses and the faculties and support units, which saw a reduction of an additional 2.5% beyond the annual 3% Inflationary Budget Adjustment (IBA) in each of the two fiscal years (the latter is a pooling of funds to cover inflationary costs – including negotiated compensation increases).

The Province has yet to announce the 2020-21 tuition framework, but we are planning for a one-year budget extension based on the planning assumptions from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years. That said, the faculties and support units will see the 3% IBA only (i.e. the additional 2.5% reduction will not be applied for the coming year).

4. With respect to international students, has any provision been made for additional scholarships or recruiting?

We are planning new recruiting incremental resources to international student recruitment through Western International, which works closely with the Registrar's Office recruiting staff. We plan to engage agents in other countries to support our goals of increasing international undergraduate enrolment, with the objective of realizing a broader diversity of student home countries and developing more programs of choice for those students. We are also reviewing our needs-based bursaries for international students.

5. Is there any concern about full-time students dropping to part-time status because of the online classes?

We are monitoring the changes in course registrations – and at this time, we are not observing any trends for full-time students converting to part-time status. We will continue to monitor the trends over the coming months.

6. Are we anticipating any budget impacts directly related to COVID research and testing that Western is involved in?

The Office of the Vice-President Research did allocate funds to support COVID-related research projects, in addition to funds made available by CIHR and other government agencies. Expenses for on-campus test swabbing centres for students, staff, and faculty are paid for centrally in this fiscal year and will continue as long as required and supported by Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU) guidance and approvals.

7. How will you approach new funding initiatives in the next year?

We are continuing to invest in strategic priorities including:

- The Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- Western's Long-Range Space Plan
- Continuation of Western Research Chairs Program (WRCs) and Interdisciplinary Initiatives Program (IDIs)
- The Western Academy for Advanced Research
- The University-wide Data Strategy

8. Will there be any changes to building renovations or infrastructure planning?

We continue to invest in renovations, renewal, and required new infrastructure. Below is a brief overview:

- Modernization of Thames Hall: Construction is underway. Expected completion date is end of October 2021.
- Weldon Library Modernization: Design and Tender documents will be ready in November 2020 / Property & Finance Committee submittal in January 2021 / – and construction is expected to start in March 2021.
- Biomedical Research Facility: Construction is underway. Expected, with an expected completion date of August 2022.
- Western Centre for Public Health & Family Medicine – 3rd floor fit-out. Construction is underway and the expected completion date is end of November 2020. Relocating groups from Kresge Building by end of February. This is the first stage of larger Medical Capital Project.
- Creation of Indigenous Learning Spaces: Design is underway with a plan to tender in January 2021.

- Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre Renewal and Expansion: On hold. Under review by Ivey.
- Entrepreneurship and innovation Centre: Design development underway, with plans to tender in April 2021.
- University-wide sustainability and infrastructure projects: Ongoing multi-stage projects, with phased approach.
- Pedestrian-friendly campus initiatives: friendly campus initiatives: Part of the [open space strategy](#)
- Ongoing multi-stage projects: Space Strategy, with multiple stages using a phased approach. Next phase includes Kent Drive and University College Hill, with construction expected to start in April 2021.

9. Are there any indications that the dropout rate or student leave requests have increased this year? How does that compare to other universities?

We closely monitor changes in student enrolments and are not seeing any trends in this regard. We continue to provide academic and wellness supports for students.

10. Will there be an additional 2.5% cut as a result of tuition cuts to the model in the Faculty budgets or is central administration absorbing it all?

The effects of the 10% domestic tuition reduction and freeze were incorporated in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years. In the upcoming 2021-22 fiscal year, only the 3% IBA will be required.

11. How will the need for additional faculty hiring be handled for years 2, 3 and 4?

The development of the University Strategic Plan will inform the enrolment growth opportunities for faculties with high-demand programs, international students, and professional master's programs. The enrolment plans will inform the resourcing requirements, including faculty and staff complement levels.

12. Will there be staff layoffs as a result of COVID or any other reason?

Units are evaluating their staffing needs in the context of the delivery of academic programs and services in this fiscal year, with our hybrid delivery model. With the reduction of the on-campus presence of students/staff/faculty, there are changes to staffing needs for supporting our Faculties, support units, residences, and ancillary units. The regular full-time staff complement as of April 2019 and April 2020 has remained stable (2,465 and 2,492 respectively). Last year we offered a voluntary staff retirement incentive program – and approximately 70 members accepted for May 2020. Planning for and replacement of these positions is currently underway.