



**Notes from Executive Committee Meeting with SVP Pignatello  
September 14, 2015 3:00 PM**

Present for the HEO Council: Sandrine Dikambi, Michele Doney, Nikki Hancock-Nicholson

VP Pignatello welcomed us and Ms. Dikambi reiterated her reasons for setting up the meeting. She wishes to keep the lines of communication open between the administration and the HEO Council during the budgeting process, and in particular, in today's meeting she wanted to discuss some ways in which HEOs and HEO ideas can help with the current budget situation.

SVP Pignatello gave us an overview of the current situation. About 90% of John Jay's budget goes to personnel services. The college has already reduced spending in significant ways on other types of expenses, such as energy, printing, and supplies, so reducing personnel costs is unavoidable in the current budget situation. He noted that in his time here, John Jay has never had to resort to laying off employees, opting instead to use vacancy control as a means to save money. He acknowledged that holding vacancies open and cutting College Assistant budgets can be very difficult on the remaining staff members, who are called upon to pick up the slack. Recent vacancy control efforts have shrunk the full time staff by 46 people, more than half of whom were HEOs. Moreover, the CA budget has already been cut by \$2 million before now, so he knows further cuts will be difficult to bear. On a more positive note, he drew our attention to all the full time conversions that have taken place in recent years: Of 66 College Assistants converted to full time lines, 41 were made HEOs.

The projected deficit is \$4.8 million. Among the reasons for this deficit are the 3% cut made to the budgets of all the senior colleges in the system, which for us amounts to \$2.8 million, and the funds the college has been compelled to set aside to plan for anticipated bargaining costs. The administration anticipates having to cover a 2% salary increase when CUNY and the PSC finalize a new collective bargaining agreement, which would take up another \$1.8 million.

The three HEO Council officers present each contributed some HEO ideas to the discussion. We began by emphasizing that whatever the college does to address budget shortfalls, it needs to be done in a way that does not result in excessive workload for HEOs. The HEOs are mindful that faculty have just received a significant reduction in workload, and we want to make sure our own workload doesn't move in the opposite direction. We shared a number of ideas to save money, such as:

- Improve the deployment of Federal Work Study students so that they are assigned to the places that need them most, and redeploy among offices as peak demand shifts from office to office throughout the year. SVP Pignatello agreed wholeheartedly with this suggestion and has made it himself in the past. Because the funds are not part of the college's budget, however, it is not within the purview of his division to control how those student workers are deployed.
- Improve budget processes on campus to be more transparent and timely. Budget managers need to know their annual budgets early enough to plan their spending effectively. An informed team is an empowered team. Moreover, sometimes budget information managers receive from the budget office does not match what they receive from their supervisors, which causes confusion. It was not clear that this is an issue in every division or what may be causing it, but it is a cause for concern.
- Reward responsible budget managers. The current culture on campus does not reward managers who stay within their budgets nor penalize managers who overspend. To the contrary, our budget culture tells us that the way to get a larger budget is to chronically overspend. Formal recognition for responsible managers and incentives to encourage reduced spending should be put in place. SVP Pignatello likes this idea and will bring it to the President. He will suggest that in the next round of Bravo awards, responsible budget management be set as one of the selection criteria.
- Buy nonperishable items in bulk. SVP Pignatello indicated that when we have tried to do this in the past, we did not realize the anticipated savings, in part because a large stockroom requires full time management.
- Reuse and redistribute items that are no longer needed by one department for use by other departments. Create a mechanism similar to Freecycle to redistribute unneeded items to departments that can use them. Encourage thrifty behaviors such as not throwing away items that can still be used and getting as many uses as possible out of reusable items, such as interoffice envelopes. SVP Pignatello described the considerable lengths the college already goes to for reducing waste and noted that very little that is still usable is actually thrown away.
- Negotiate discounts for early payment: SVP Pignatello acknowledged that this is a good idea but is doubtful that we could achieve this consistently enough to realize the discounts.
- Rethink print jobs. Don't print unless it's absolutely necessary. SVP Pignatello noted that many items that were distributed in hard copy in the past are now distributed via email as PDFs, such as the John Jay newsletter and many departmental and divisional newsletters. However, there is room for improvement. For example, the fall and spring faculty and staff meetings are always advertised using print fliers, and Ms. Hancock-Nicholson brought with her an example of a postcard being distributed to internal John Jay audiences that could have been promoted via email.
- Provide all staff with tips and training for simple ways they can reduce costs. The HEO Council could hold an event to brainstorm and share ideas.

Ms. Dikambi shared that the HEO Council, in collaboration with Institutional Research, recently administered a quality of life survey to HEOs that is similar in many respects to the COACHE survey of the faculty. When the data are ready, we will share them with the college. It was noted that several of the questions related to workload issues, such as how often HEOs work through their lunch hours, and that the response rate has been very high so far. It is likely the data will show that HEOs are working well in excess of their 35 hour workweeks, and that will need to be addressed. SVP Pignatello

acknowledged that HEOs are working very hard, and emphasized that he believed HEOs should be properly compensated for the work they do. We shared with him that many HEOs are fearful to speak up about their workloads for fear of being perceived in a certain way, and he acknowledge that this is a problem.

Ms. Dikambi thanked SVP Pignatello for his time and noted that while today's ideas were primarily the result of brainstorming among just the HEO Executive Committee, she plans to bring the HEOs together for additional brainstorming to gather additional ideas.