

Frequently Asked Questions

June 14, 2011

How did you decide which programs to cut?

The college did a program sustainability analysis of every program, looking at enrollment, cost per student and completion rates. The President's Cabinet invited programs, students, and community members to submit additional information if they felt the data on their program was incomplete. Most programs did submit large binders full of additional information, which each member of the President's Cabinet reviewed carefully. The President's Cabinet also reviewed hundreds of email messages regarding the various programs. President Killpatrick also held a community forum to give community members and program advocates the opportunity to submit possible solutions.

How will students be affected by program cuts?

The college is making every effort to ensure that students currently enrolled in the designated programs will be able to complete their program of study. We will do a "teach out", which means classes will continue until currently enrolled, full-time students complete their program. However, no new students will be enrolled in these programs. Also, students that are within the "teach out" group, must remain enrolled in the program to maintain their eligibility in the "teach out" (i.e., student's can't pause and return to the program in a future quarter).

Seattle Central is communicating with other colleges and universities to increase our partnership and transfer of our students to those schools if similar programs exist. Also, the college is negotiating for new transfer agreements that could further enhance student program options.

Students who are concerned about their academic plan should speak to an advisor.

Why is it necessary to cut programs? We haven't done that in the past.

First, we are in unprecedented budget times. This is particularly true for Washington State Higher Education – where the recently passed State budget cuts over a half-a-billion dollars from Higher Education. In the past few years, we have been able to avoid program cuts by using increased tuition revenue and making cuts in staff and administration in other areas of the College. But our required reduction is much larger this year than in years past.

Second, Seattle Central has been deferring cuts for many years. We have been subsidizing our instructional programs and general operations with various local funds, including revenue from International Programs, Food Service, and Parking. In short, we have been living beyond our financial means, and this is not sustainable for the long-term, particularly when Seattle Central must make a permanent State budget cut of \$4 million beginning in 2011-2012 and going forward. This amounts to about a 10 percent cut in our current operating budget. It is not expected that the lost State revenue (which amounts to about two-thirds of our operating costs)

will return. Tuition alone only covers about one-third of the operating costs of the college – so any cut from state funds dramatically affects the college.

What about next year? Are there more cuts coming?

The current biennium State budget proposal for FY2011-2013 also calls for cuts of up to 12.6 percent in the next fiscal year 2013. As of this moment, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has not distributed these reductions to the colleges. As such, we do not know the exact amount of the cuts as related to Seattle Central. However, it is expected any new budget cuts will be additional to the reduction taken in this next fiscal year.

Will tuition go up?

Unlike Washington State four-year institutions, which now set their own tuition rates, community college tuition is set by the State Legislature (not locally by Seattle Community Colleges.) The State Legislature has voted to allow tuition increase by 12 percent for community colleges for the 2012 academic year and another 12 percent in the 2013 academic year. The tuition rate increases are currently pending the approval of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges on June 23, 2011.

How else may students be affected by the budget?

Since State funds amount to a bit over two-thirds of the college's budget – any reductions in State funding also affects the number of courses that we offer. It is typical that courses fill fast however, with decreasing State resources and increased student demand for courses – classes are filling even faster. As such, the college recommends that students register for classes as soon as possible. Work with an advisor or counselor to put together a degree plan and look at alternative courses to fit within your degree plan.

Where can I get more information on the budget situation?

[State Board for Community and Technical Colleges](#) operating budget

seattlecentral.edu/president

[Office of Financial Management](#)