

	10/16/25		
Faculty/Staff Questions			
Question	Submitted by	Assigned to	Answer
Heard you might eliminate the \$50 per pay period if you do not elect benefits. This should not happen since it only affects a percentage of diversified individuals. In the past it was \$112.50, dropped to \$50. With individuals making less than \$50,000 a year this is a big pay cut and only affects some individuals, no savings here	Theresa Rule - Staff	Joe Housenick	Given the projected large increase to medical insurance expenses for next benefit year, we are actively examining many aspects of our existing benefits program, including eligibility rules, cost sharing and the discontinuing the medical opt out payment. We understanding that some changes may impact some employees more greatly than others. However, the continued upward trend of our medical insurance expense cannot be supported by the university's existing revenue streams. We must make the difficult decisions overall that will ensure our employees continue to receive quality and reasonably affordable access to medical insurance.
Are the major variances (of ~\$6 million) in expenses spread evenly across all budget areas and lines or are there any identifiable "hotspots" that stand out amongst the areas of budget overspend?	Don Mencer - Faculty	Art Glass	Some budget lines are underspent and others are overspent. They are not spread evenly across the budget lines and we are reviewing the major over spent lines. The goal is to set all the budgeted expense lines equitably and realistically so the departments can manage their needs but also within the limitation of the revenues and financial resources available to Wilkes University.
The Barnes & Noble bookstore contract is supposed to return revenue to Wilkes U each year. Do we have numbers on how our contract with B&N is shaking out under the "Colonels are Covered" paradigm?	Don Mencer - Faculty	Art Glass	We are analyzing the data now and should have something within the next several weeks.
Will every department (including academics/faculty) be assessed for right-sizing?			We are currently reviewing budget lines to determine spending needs and for ways to reduce spending in those lines specifically and adjust accordingly for future years. The spending reduction target is \$3-\$5 million this year or more if possible with any remainder adjusted for Budget 2026-27. All of our expenditure needs are limited by our financial resources and we need to stay within balance.
What approach will senior leadership suggest for determining where and how much to reduce expenses - the same goal for every department or different goals based on certain criteria?			
Is there a target % of expense reduction overall, based on the 6% of operating budget deficit?			
How are you assessing the "major variance in expenses" that came as a surprise to ensure avoiding a similar situation again? And how might people be held accountable for these miscalculations, miscommunications, etc. that led to the current situation?	Anonymous	Art Glass	
Thus is the 2nd time we are in this position under University leadership. What will be done about leadership incompetency? For years faculty have said that shared governance is broken, why listen now?	Anonymous	Kelli McCullough	We recognize that there is frustration and concern given the recurrence of these challenges. The President and Board have acknowledged past shortcomings and are taking clear, corrective action to strengthen oversight, rebuild confidence, and ensure accountability at every level. This process is intended not only to address financial practices but also to rebuild trust and reinforce meaningful shared governance moving forward.
What are you going to tell the students now that the information is out in the papers because the students are all talking and nervous.	Anonymous	Kelli McCullough	Students are aware of the situation and some are understandably anxious given the media coverage. At this point, it's most important that we continue reinforcing confidence through consistency by reminding them that information has been shared transparently and that leadership is taking deliberate steps to address the issues. Our steady, unified approach will help keep the focus on stability and student success.
I see a lot of waste on campus, especially for events. Balloons, decorations, t-shirts. I also see a lot of food leftovers at events. So much single-use plastic and styrofoam and things that end up in the trash after. For example, Taste of Wilkes...many people eat there in the ballroom. I don't see why those people can't use plates and silverware that is washed instead of wasting all of those single use plastic containers. I'm sure this isn't a huge cost savings in the scheme of things, but I think any excessive waste is unnecessary.	Anonymous	Kelli McCullough	Sustainability and responsible use of resources are important to both our values and our financial stewardship. We are reviewing event practices across campus to identify opportunities to reduce waste, improve efficiency, and align with our sustainability goals.
Can you share how much of a raise the President received when his contract was recently renewed?			The President's compensation is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and determined based on relevant benchmark and market data.
How does the VP of Admissions/Aid plan to take responsibility for not hitting the 624 goal that was set and he agreed to?	Anonymous	Kelli McCullough Jared Menghini	The Vice President of Admissions and Financial Aid takes full responsibility for not meeting the 624 goal that was established and agreed upon. In response, he has ended the partnership with Human Capital Research Corporation and engaged with a new leveraging company to enhance data analysis and strategic decision-making. Additionally, he continues to work closely with the Faculty Lead Committee on Admission and Financial Aid to carefully review data and enrollment trends to ensure continuous improvement in meeting future goals.
I am concerned that the negative press associated with the budget issue has the potential to reduce are ability to recruit students and this may make the budget issue worse.	Anonymous	Jared Menghini	Typically, negative press can lead to challenges in student recruitment. However, Wilkes University's reputation and brand remain strong within our local market and continue to grow in key regions. Our dedicated Marketing and Communications team actively engages with local media to highlight the strength of Wilkes and reinforce the values that have made our institution special for so many years.
In the spirit of transparency, there is a rumor around campus that the furniture in Art Glass' office was not good enough and new furniture was purchased, is that true? If this is true, do you think this is a fiscally responsible decision for a consultant who was hired to help us out of a financially distressed situation?	Ellen Lohr- Staff	Kelli McCullough	It is important to clarify that no unnecessary or extravagant purchases have been made. The original desk was broken and required replacement to maintain a safe and functional workspace. Any office updates or equipment adjustments were standard, minimal, and consistent with University policy to ensure a functional workspace, not a reflection of personal preference. We remain committed to fiscal responsibility in every decision, particularly as we work through this financial recovery process.
Is the projected 500k savings mentioned on credit card transactions before or after 7 million deficit. So were we 7.5 million now 7 million or is that number now down to 6.5 million?	Anonymous	Art Glass	The credit card fees are included in the \$7 million projected gap. This budget year we are planning to implement the fee for credit card payments for tuition beginning in the spring which will add about \$250,000 to this year's revenues and for 2026-27 add approximately \$500,000 to the revenues.
Ultimately, we have a cultural challenge that needs to be addressed throughout this crisis. In listening to conversations with colleagues and in the open forums, it has become clear that there is a toxic culture within the university concerning resources. I'm hearing a lot of "this one gets this while this one doesn't get that" or "this department doesn't deserve the resources they have" or similar sentiments. We're behaving like hungry animals. Employees will freely scrutinize expenditures of one department or another without understanding the reasons behind those expenses or choices. It is critical that budget managers have input into the cuts that may affect them or policies that may keep them from being effective and we must not fall victim to perceptions dictating budget decisions (i.e. we react to what people say rather than the reality of the situation). Let budget managers be more involved in this process because someone looking in without context may not understand why resources are being spent in a certain way and making cuts out of desperation can lead to disaster.	Anonymous	Kelli McCullough	Culture plays a critical role in how we navigate challenges like this. Leadership recognizes the need to rebuild trust and transparency around resource allocation and is committed to fostering a culture of respect, accountability, and collaboration. As we move forward, budget managers and key stakeholders will be meaningfully engaged to ensure decisions are informed by data and context rather than perception, allowing us to make thoughtful, equitable choices that strengthen the institution.