Budget Committee Meeting  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
September 22, 2020 @ 4pm

ATTENDEES:  

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:  
Budget Situation  
We are facing a short-term and long-term budget crisis in the State and at the university. The Governor intends to borrow $750 million from the federal reserve in the current fiscal year 2020-2021 (FY21) to address the State’s current budget shortfall; this loan must be repaid by the State within 3 years beginning July 1, 2021.

The State and unions are currently in discussions related to possible furloughs (two days per month = 9.23% pay cut) for State employees over the course of the next four years. All University E/M employees will receive a pay cut beginning November 1, 2020.

While the University has not yet received its budget allocation from the State, we are confident that we will be in a good budget position for FY21 due to the current freeze on hiring, travel freeze and strong restrictions on equipment and other expenditures. However, we must plan now to position the University to withstand the future budget cuts and move away from furloughs and the painful cuts currently in place.

Process  
The University cannot continue as a premiere R1 research university with four years of pay cuts and freezes; this is not sustainable. We must start now to identify cost-saving efficiencies and increase revenue, primarily through enrollment growth.

Cost savings measures will not come on the backs solely of the academic side of the University. On the administrative end, Phase 2 of the Mānoa reorg is currently under development and identifies for elimination approximately 12 E/M positions that will result in significant cost savings for the Mānoa campus. Additionally, a blue ribbon committee is currently reviewing the Athletics program to assess the current program and identify a sustainable future. We are also looking for efficiencies in other programs such as student housing, facilities, auxiliary services, and other areas of administration.

The Mānoa Budget Committee suggestions to academic units are not intended to be top-down mandates. The suggestions were based on external reports, information and data on hand, and
are intended to be provocative and provoke conversations. The Committee is committed to meeting with highly impacted departments, listening to their thoughts/feedback, and working collaboratively to best position programs, departments and the University for success.

Review, approval and consultation with unions and affected stakeholders will continue through Spring 2021. The aim is to be transparent and collaborative throughout the process as we continue to work to identify cost-saving efficiencies and increase enrollment revenue. Mānoa Staff Senate representatives will participate in these meetings as staff are also affected.

Details
The recommendations to stop-out the Dance degrees (BA/BFA/MA/MFA) while retaining the Dance minor, and stop-out the Theatre MA and PhD, were made because of the team’s assessment that the programs have low enrollment and are costly to deliver. The Department and dean countered that even a small dance program is relatively low cost and enriches the arts in Hawai‘i. Data was provided that indicated that enrollments and majors in Dance are presently higher than was noted in the Suggestions. Many of the offerings and programs in both theatre and dance are strongly rooted in our place. There are issues, including the time to degree in some cases, but these are programs unique to Hawai‘i, and many of the classes are very popular with students from across the campus, often filled to capacity. There was also discussion about the Department’s outreach activities and performances, which are highly-valued by the community.

The Department faculty spoke of the major effort underway (since early this year) to re-make their programs in order to reflect a commitment to becoming a Native Hawaiian place of learning, and to affirming and sustaining the Department’s commitment to diversity and inclusion as well as their unique focus on Oceania and the Asia Pacific region. These commitments were articulated in an Action Plan posted by the Department in June, 2020.

The Department also outlined several exciting initiatives related to the use of advanced technology in their instruction and their scholarship and performances. These initiatives are very collaborative, with partners in areas as diverse as Computer Science, Nursing, and Education.

Outcomes:  
The suggestion to stop out degree programs has been removed. There is agreement on the need to review the academic programs across Theatre and Dance. The Department is presently working towards a stronger integration of the Theatre and Dance programs at all degree levels. The Department anticipates that degree tracks will be re-titled, consolidated, or eliminated. Actions are also being taken to address the issues with respect to time to degree and enrollment.

The Department faculty will continue to explore the use of advanced technology in all aspects of their work, including instruction. For example, the use of online instruction can enable
students from neighbor islands and from out-of-state to pursue a doctorate degree via online
seminars, requiring a minimum amount of physical presence on the UHM campus.

Additional Items for Discussion
The Provost Office is committed to working with the Department faculty to ensure the success
of the exciting and formative initiatives described here, including by assisting with the
development of collaborations with units across campus.