

# Questions Submitted to President Fuller

August 2020

1. There is no small amount of anxiety with regards to returning to campus this fall. There are still many questions around measures such as required plexiglass barriers, employee testing, PPE and new safety policies or guidelines. When and how can staff expect to receive more detailed information regarding our fall plans, such as specific safety measures that are to be taken in their personal workspaces, and who to contact with questions or concerns.
2. Why are student services being impacted at a higher proportional rate compared to academic program cuts?
3. As positions are eliminated and departmental functionality is being reduced, when can we expect a high-level overview detailing these organizational changes, including where workloads are being shifted to?
4. What method or factors were used to determine where to implement layoffs instead of continuing LWOP?
5. To many, it appears that the staff have taken the larger brunt of the necessary cuts to weather this crisis. Can you please respond to this perceived lack of shared sacrifice between classified, un-classified and faculty?
6. Many people are concerned that demand for services will not decline, even as we continue to reduce staff and departmental capacity. This will result in more work being spread across smaller teams, leading to reduced availability of critical services for students, while increasing the potential for employee burnout. How will Western respond to this obstacle?
7. There has been very little direct communication to individuals regarding their employment status as we near the end of the original furloughs months. This lack of certainty and transparency is very demoralizing for some staff. How will communication about similar topics be improved in the future?
8. There are many plans being enacted to survive the crisis that we are currently in. What are the long-term plans? Specifically, what changes can we expect to

see with our funding models or fee structures to reflect the changes caused by, and lessons learned from, the pandemic? How do we plan to repair the damage that the personnel cuts will cause to the quality of our services?

9. How have issues of equity, social justice, inclusion, and diversity been a factor in furlough and layoff decisions? For example, due to the differences in demographics between senior faculty and junior faculty and the procedures for faculty reduction outlined by Article 15, there is a risk of WOU moving backwards on these issues. How will these issues be addressed during Article 15 and other future staffing decisions?
10. The remote-work policy/agreement is not appropriate for the current situation, especially in relation to employees who are parents of younger children. How will upper administration ensure that all employees in these situations, regardless of unit or supervisor, be provided with appropriate flexibility? When and how will the policy be modified to reflect the needed changes, and how will that be communicated to employees?
11. Recent cuts, and the lack of communication about those cuts, has significantly impacted the emotional energy and morale of staff. How is the administration owning and acknowledging this emotional impact on their staff and planning to make strides towards improving this situation?
12. Staff is aware that the pandemic is not the sole reason for the current financial difficulties, and that there are additional pre-existing factors that are contributing to the situation. If these factors existed for many years prior to the pandemic, why were measures not taken to course correct earlier, before such drastic measures became necessary?

*These questions are a consolidation/summary of the 33 submissions that Staff Senate received August 20–27, 2020. They were submitted to President Fuller at the end of August, along with the original submissions (with any identifying information redacted).*