

Question & Answer Session

Q: What does this mean for me?

A: While each of us may ask how these decisions will affect each one of us personally, the truth is that we do not know yet. We do not anticipate that this process will be easy, but we hope that the process will be as transparent as possible. It is likely that this undertaking will reduce the number of positions at Naropa University and may mean consolidation or closure of academic programs and administrative services. Our goal is to improve the way we operate Naropa University in the pursuit of our mission.

Q: It sounds like this is going to take more than small things—more than pens and paper clips—it's going to take big things. And so, is there any consideration for restructuring or some reorganizing—some things on a much larger level?

A: (President Lord) You are right. This is more than paper clips and pens. This allows us to ask those deeper questions and to revisit the organization for right sizing and consolidation. To get there, those larger questions have to be on the table. We don't have all the answers. There is lots of wisdom in our community and a lot of people are saying why don't we do things this way or that way and so we hope to cultivate those things and ask ourselves, how do we want to look and what's going to get us to that point in the future?

Q: I have concerns about the use of the word dialogue. Especially in that it seems that the information flow and suggestions are moving sort of from this large broad base of our community of staff and faculty and students and then they move into smaller groups for discussion. I see the issues move back and forth between senior staff, President Lord and the board of trustees but I don't see a process where proposals are taken back to a forum for dialogue and I'm not sure where in the process proposals get submitted for consideration.

A: (President Lord) The UBC has begun to have that discussion today about how they want to communicate back to the community about different proposals. I know there are discussions about having community meetings where we can share what we have received and our thinking. The UBC is going to figure that out. They are going to communicate their principles by which they do their work, their goals and then how they'll communicate back to the community about their thinking and about the proposals. And again, they will be asking for those proposals. Some proposals may be published on the web to generate discussion and also to illustrate what kind of thinking makes an impact. We want your ideas and any proposal or suggestion can be submitted on the website.

Q: Does the \$1.2 million cut already factor in the reinstatement of retirement benefits?

A: (Sue Evans) The budget model we have right now for 2010-11 put back everything that was reduced to be considered in the balancing issues including retirement. So yes, everything is back in the budget that we took out to balance it this year.

Q: Do we know yet how priorities will be set?

A: (President Lord) One thing to note, reorganization is important and looking at everything is important—we're not practicing the model of just cutting straight across—because there are certain things that we have to grow and certain things we have to maintain. So we're not saying that we are going to have this cut across everything. That 5, 10 and 15 percent that was mentioned—we can't just do that if we want to be deliberate about our strategic goals and objectives. One of the things I invite people to do is to, as we begin this process, is to revisit the strategic plan and academic plan. Because when you read those things, you get the whole view of this institution that we are trying to make sure at the end of the day that we deliver that plus. This gets us in the plus factor so that's why we are not saying we will just make blanket cuts across. We all know the danger of that; you can't really ask yourself, what do we do real well and how can we do more of that—how can we grow that?

The academic plan gives a view of this institution that will help you to see how this type of transformation will help us reach the goals of that plan. Our commitment is to the core of what we do. The core of what we do is academic. The core of what we do is the classroom. When we think about reductions or of growth we need to hold that view. And, at the same time, I can't say to you we that we won't have some reductions in the academic mission and the core of what we do. Our business is education. We are not IBM, we're not General Motors, we don't make cars, we don't make computers—our business is education.

What we must examine is how to make decisions that ensure our core thrives and grows because if we do not invest in our core, then we lose our opportunity to take our seat at the table of higher education.

Q: In the past we've used a hiring freeze to eliminate positions and this can have the effect of damaging the school. Wouldn't it be better to target certain positions for elimination that the school can afford to lose rather than lose positions whose loss would hurt the school—simply because the position is vacant?

A: (President Lord) Yes. I think the answer to that is very clear. Strategic thinking is what we need here. We plan to be much more thoughtful and capitalize on vacancies created by turn over to do what is best for the institution. We won't get this opportunity again—this is our opportunity now.

Q: If most educational institutions are at 60% with wages and benefits and we are at 80%—the question is where are we spending more than other institutions? And, I suppose we could also ask the reverse, where are we spending less?

A: (President Lord) That is a very good question, and we don't have an answer at this time. But again, this is the sort of thing the Budget Resource Group will look at and that is information we can provide back to you on the web. I think it's clear where we've had a lot of growth and I think if we ask people of the community, people know where the growth at Naropa has taken place at the institution and whether that has been on the academic side or the administrative side. I think that's NOT a mystery and so we have to look at that.

Q: Has there been a consideration of a staff union as part of the university reorganization?

A: (President Lord) No

Q: Will academic departments be closed and/or merged prior to the April UBC recommendations?

A: (Stuart Sigman) Academic Affairs occupies a unique place within the university not only in the sense that academic programs are our core mission, but also in the ways in which we provide services for students is such that we cannot always turn on a dime. It's not at all likely that between now and June ANY program would be cut.

Should it bubble up during the consultative process that programs need to be reorganized, downsized or even eliminated, those are not things that can easily be done for budget savings for the following year. Those are multi-year commitments for students to be able to finish their degrees. Departmental reorganization as opposed to program elimination is something that can be done in a more rapid time frame.

So, the short answer is, while we will certainly look at everything, there is a reality that given that we have commitments to students we cannot easily just shut down a program mid stream.

Q: So then this cut is roughly four times larger than the 10% cut in sections that apparently saved about three hundred thousand dollars?

A: (Stuart Sigman) Just as a point of information the 10% efficiency cuts that Academic Affairs worked out with departments last spring saved or rather freed up one hundred and forty five thousand not three hundred thousand.

Q: I am concerned that both Cauldron members on the UBC are from the same graduate department. How will the UBC understand the complexity of the undergraduate college?

A: (President Lord) I've only just met with the UBC earlier today so we don't have an answer at this time. They were asked to evaluate whether we have the right members and should we be thinking of adding additional members where there might be gaps. So, it's a question on the table as we work to be inclusive. Again, that committee's work is definitely different today than it was yesterday. They will be meeting before Christmas.

Q: Why are we hiring a chief administrative officer in the midst of these cuts and are senior staff members taking salary cuts?

A: (President Lord) We haven't asked anyone to take any pay cuts and we have to make the right long-term investments for the future of the institution. So, as I said earlier, there will be some growth as well as some reductions and right sizing includes how we do business. And, the verdict is not out on what will be cut and what will grow so as we add things to consider we are also making space to rethink how we do business. So there will be some investments, there will be some growth, as we move forward; a chief administrative officer will assist us in how we do business as a university and in setting our priorities as we move forward.

Q: How do you suggest that students become involved in the process? Morale also decreases in the student body based on past increase in tuition and decrease in services.

A: (President Lord) There are several ways that students are going to be involved. The dean of students will be meeting with students on December 8, that announcement will be going out I think this evening. There is a meeting at 5:30, at the United Naropa, engaging their thoughts, again, we are committed to delivering a quality academic product and for those individuals who are afraid – fear is a reality. So when fear kicks in, we want you to realize that we are committed to your academic program. We are committed to delivering a high quality product and to enhance that product delivery. So, when someone asks a question—are my classes going to be available in the spring—we are committed to delivering what we promised you when you showed up this year and that is a commitment that has not changed.

We expect to engage students through the web, through community meetings, and the UBC will be determining how students can be a part of their process. We can all look to the UBC for some leadership in how to think through the reorganization. We all want many voices at the table and for contributors to feel empowered when they gather together their collective thoughts and experiences.

Q: When you list on the website the names of who is involved will you also include their title so we can easily tell who is faculty and who is staff or a student?

A: (Stuart Sigman) That is a great suggestion. At this time, there are three faculty, three staff, and three students, and I believe there has been a request for more students.

Q: Why are the same people on both committees?

A: (President Lord) The Budget Resource Group is not voting members of the UBC. So, some people may sit on both committees to be available as a resource. For example, Stuart, Sue and Gary are there to help with communication and facilitation of the work but they are nonvoting members of that committee.