

Temple Posts Profits, Yet Proposes More Budget Cuts

By Jesse Bunch
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At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Temple University slashed its budget, anticipating a once-in-a-generation economic downturn.

Now one year into the crisis, the university is proposing a second round of budget cuts for the 2021-2022 academic year. This time, union members say the impact could devastate the livelihoods of non-tenure track professors and increase already bloated class sizes.

“Massive investment returns”

These cuts are particularly painful, according to the Temple Association of University Professionals, because they're simply not necessary.

“They have plenty of money to make up that gap,” said Donald Wargo, a union member and economics professor who analyzed the budget. Wargo says Temple's massive investment returns, as well as the recently-passed government stimulus, could easily cover lost income — and then some.

Budget cut by 5%

According to Temple spokesperson Ray Betzner, the cut amounts to a five-percent expense reduction within each university division,

though the figure isn't final and could decrease depending on fall enrollment numbers.

“The university's undergraduate enrollment is down more than 1,900 this year and we don't yet know what enrollment will be like for the fall,” said Betzner over email. “This is a real and serious issue that can only be addressed with a budget cut.”

Betzner added that enhanced COVID-19 prevention measures, such as testing and physically-distanced classroom configurations, caused a reduction in revenue.

Union members first learned of the cuts in a faculty senate meeting, when Temple Chief Financial Officer Ken Kaiser said he anticipates a \$30 million dollar profit loss due to a drop in student attendance amidst the pandemic, as well as an increase in four-year graduation rates.

\$163 million in profit

A profit loss, however, does not mean Temple is losing money.

TAUP recently launched a media campaign called #TempleMadeMillions, which highlights the fact that the university has still generated large amounts of profit. According to Temple's consolidated financial statement for the 2019-2020 academic year, the university earned \$163 million in excess revenues.

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TEACHING BEYOND CRISES

By Dr. Linda Hasunuma
Assistant Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching

We pivoted to emergency remote teaching three months after I joined the team at the CAT, and now that it has been a year, I have a moment to reflect on what I learned about our Center and Temple's campus community. Our collective time and energy were focused on online learning because that was what was needed at the moment, but the effects of the ongoing pandemic on communities of color, and the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor brought to the fore our country's deep struggle for racial equality and justice, and the role educators have in addressing systemic racism. With increasing disinformation, misinformation, and political polarization in our country, we were also dealing with threats to our society, economy, and democracy. Faculty had to pivot in multiple ways and the CAT had to be one step ahead.

While the CAT has always engaged faculty in important discussions about equity and inclusion in our classrooms, especially in partnership with IDEAL through our Can We Really Talk? Series, our team received requests from departments and schools for custom workshops on inclusive and equitable teaching, managing challenging discussions and hot moments, and student and faculty mental health.

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Proposed Budget Cuts, continued

TAUP's campaign also cites Temple's \$1.6 billion dollar investment portfolio that, according to estimated returns, will yield around \$170 million dollars this year. Temple typically directs 4.25 percent of their investment returns back into the university.

The union's analysis found that if the university forgoes budget cuts, Temple would still make around \$60 million in operational profit next year — plus additional investment returns.

"When someone says we have a budget deficit, it usually means you're losing money, and you have to at least make that up so you break even," said Wargo. "But this is not a break-even thing. They're saying they're not going to make enough in comparison to last year."

Non-tenure track faculty

The pain of last year's budget cut was felt heavily by non-tenure track employees, many of them adjuncts and part-time professors.

The union says a second cut could be much worse.

In 2020, TAUP found that twice the average amount of non-tenure track professors lost their contracts from the university. In a recent testimony made in front of Pennsylvania state legislators, Temple President Richard M. Englert noted that the university was not laying off employees.

Still, contracts were not renewed.

"If that's not layoffs, I don't know what is," said Deborah Lemieur, an adjunct professor in the Intellectual Heritage department. "It's unfair to say they're not laying off faculty, because they are."

Between last fall and this spring,

Lemieur says 10 adjuncts in the Intellectual Heritage department lost all of their courses, while 21 lost half. Some of these educators had been teaching at the university for decades.

"Budget reductions impact everyone, not just a single segment of our population," said Betzner on behalf of the university. "The one group we try to protect from feeling the impact of budget cuts is students."

Students' class sizes

While lower enrollment numbers means less need for professors, it can also lead to more students being squeezed into single courses — a trend TAUP said was made worse by the pandemic.

"If you have 50 students in a class that used to have 40, then those students are going to get that much less attention from that professor," said Lemieur. "Even raising by two to five students per class quickly adds up. And fewer professors are hired as a result."

Alternatives to budget cuts

While the second round of budget cuts has yet to be announced publicly, TAUP members have already begun sounding the alarm — and offering up solutions that don't involve cuts.

According to Wargo, the first one is obvious. A portion of Temple's profits or investment returns could reasonably fund the retention of professors.

The second solution comes in the form of the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package recently signed by President Joe Biden. The plan ear-

marks aid for public universities, and TAUP anticipates Temple will receive around \$44 million — the amount they received last year from the CARES Act.

According to the plan, some of that money needs to go towards financial aid for students. If Temple uses the money as they did last year, \$14 million would go towards student aid, said Wargo. That would leave millions left for economic shortfall.

Looking forward, TAUP plans to amp up their #TempleMadeMillions campaign, with messaging targeting the state legislators that help finance Temple as well as students and parents.

"We need to make public that the university does have other options. There is a large endowment fund, the university is raking in profits — still," said Lemieur. "The austerity line that the university is playing is a false one."

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IN OTHER NEWS

- Enrollment of U.S.-born students has fallen, and international student enrollment does not make up the gap. Temple plans to recruit international students heavily, including expanding recruitment to new countries.
- At a recent Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting, Provost Epps stated that "we will never see another semester like fall 2019" in terms of in-person course offerings. Who will decide the future?

Teaching Beyond Crises, continued

As a new CAT member, I saw that we are at the heart of teaching at Temple because across disciplines, colleges, and schools—from teaching assistants to Chairs—people were looking to us for support in making their courses more representative and inclusive of the diversity in our society and world.

As we wanted to provide resources for inclusive teaching beyond crises, we developed new permanent resources as well, including an Equity and Justice Blog Series. We are also developing a Teaching for Equity Institute to help faculty reflect on their own teaching practice and create more equitable and inclusive learning experiences.

In our roles at the CAT, we are constantly learning, growing, and creating every day as we respond to the world around us—just as faculty have been doing. That openness and flexibility are what prepared us as a team and university to effectively

ly respond to all these challenges. Our Center, under the leadership of our director, Stephanie Fiore, helped thousands of Temple faculty make the pivot to online learning and learn ways to develop more equitable learning experiences for students. We were a vital space for human connection, community, and support across disciplines through these crises.

The pandemic, our summer of protests for social and racial justice, and the upheaval in our democracy, challenged our community in immeasurable ways. For many educators, it also renewed our sense of purpose and gave us an opportunity to reflect on our teaching practices. The past year reminded us even more about the importance of our connections to one another in and out of the classroom, and how to contextualize world and national events with our students. We hope you will join us at the Center so that

we can continue our work together and support one another not only through times of crises, but at any time. We welcome your input and look forward to creating more resources and programs with and for our faculty.

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The Professor is Dead

By Dr. Anna Peak

Associate Professor of Instruction, Intellectual Heritage Program

A student at Concordia University recently googled his professor, only to discover that [his professor was dead](#). The University, enterprisingly, had simply saved all the lectures and other online course materials and hired a TA to do the grading.

Nor is this [the only time](#).

Online courses -- and all courses are online to some extent these days -- raise serious concerns about who gets hired, who deserves to get paid, and who is qualified to do the intellectual labor of course design. All this goes double for standardized

courses developed by or in consultation with committees, and for asynchronous classes.

Synchronous classes, too, that must be recorded raise [their own intellectual property and privacy issues](#) that have yet to be fully addressed.

Many, perhaps most, professors are unaware of the ins and outs of copyright law as it pertains to their own work. In some places, for example, the same lecture can be either the professor's property or the University's, depending on whether

it was recorded using third-party software and then uploaded to an LMS, or recorded directly with an LMS.

Other universities, such as Purdue, have simply introduced clauses into their contracts to the effect that they own all online course materials.

Online teaching is necessary for health and safety. But it lacks the transference and counter-transference, and thus learning, possibilities of the 3D classroom. We must recognize that to recognize professors as living experts.

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