



Whitman works to close \$2 million gap

The college plans to cut jobs and defer some projects, among other measures.

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By **MARIA P. GONZALEZ** of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA -- Whitman College plans to close an estimated \$2 million budget shortfall through a series of cost reductions that include cuts to salaries, positions and a tuition increase.

In a letter posted on its Web site to students, staff and alumni, Whitman President George Bridges outlined the process that led to the Board of Trustees' decision on the budget.

The bulk of the budget cuts will come through suspending salary increases for faculty and staff; reducing salaries of budget officers; deferring eight of 13 tenure-track faculty searches; and reducing staffing by five full-time equivalent positions.

The reduction in staffing will come through a combination of attrition, reorganization and reductions, Bridges explained.

Additionally, the college will wait to replace or acquire equipment and technology; scale back administrative and operating costs in all departments and programs; and also postpone some facilities and grounds projects valued at \$500,000.

Students will see an increase of tuition starting in 2009-10, making it \$36,620 a year to attend. Bridges said the tuition increase is meant to offset costs for health benefits for faculty and staff, utility costs, and long-term service contracts.

Bridges said he will make himself available to students, faculty, staff and local alumni through a series of non-public meetings to discuss the college's reaction to the economic downturn. Those are scheduled to begin today and run through next week.

on the net

Whitman College President George Bridges' statement on the college budgetary situation: www.whitman.edu/content/president/speeches/09-10budget

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