

Recommendations of the Academic Committee for Savings in the Academic Program

March 1, 2021

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Staffing

The Committee recommends a plan that will create savings over the next 4 academic years between \$2 million and \$2.1 million as a result of faculty staffing changes.

- These savings will result from not replacing positions vacated due to faculty retirements in History, Japanese, Mathematics and Statistics, and Philosophy.
- The Committee determined that efforts should be made to continue a Classics major at Whitman with the hiring of a non-tenure track (NTT) faculty member for the foreseeable future. The Committee also believes a program in Environmental Humanities should be sustained beyond the 2021-22 Academic Year. The Committee recommends a thorough internal review of both programs during the next 6 months. This review should evaluate both programmatic elements and staffing most likely to allow the programs to succeed in the long term.
- Whitman has several faculty members currently receiving payments under the College's Salary Continuation Plan; no new expenses will be incurred as these faculty phase out of the program. Additional savings can accrue as faculty members' eligibility for these payments expires or as other faculty who go on SCP may not be replaced.
- Savings will result from the elimination or reduction of between 7.4 and 8.6 FTE within non-tenure track staffing in Studio Art, Art History and Visual Culture Studies, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Biology, Chinese, French, Japanese, Music, Chemistry, Politics, and Theater and Dance. There was disagreement on the extent of the reductions (between 0.2 and 0.4 FTE) in Japanese and Chinese, which became standalone majors last year, as well as a potential future reduction in Dance (between 0.2 and 0.4). The committee also did not reach consensus on whether to recommend 0.6 FTE in Religion.
- Non Tenure-Track staffing of the First Year Seminar program was also discussed as a potential area for savings. The committee recognizes the need for the overwhelming predominance of courses in the first-year program to be taught by the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the College.
- The committee also notes that non-tenure track faculty currently under contract with the college will not have those positions reduced or eliminated before the expiration of their contract.

Rationale: This proposal brings substantial savings that can allow for consideration of future investments in the academic program. It does not result in the removal of tenured or tenure-track

faculty, nor does it result in the removal of an academic program (both of which were considered, but ultimately rejected, by the committee). It also brings Whitman nearer to a 10:1 student-faculty ratio. Breadth of program offerings remain intact, which is helpful for recruiting prospective students. The First Year Seminar program retains its status as being central to the work of tenured and tenure-track faculty while also recognizing the contribution of non-tenure track faculty in the program to meet staffing and pedagogical needs. In this proposal, no current contracts with non-tenure track faculty would be reduced or eliminated before the expiration of their contract.

Overloads

The Committee recommends revising Whitman's policy for compensating tenured and tenure-track faculty who teach more than 5 courses in a year.

Rationale: The revisions will create a more uniform, equitable system and will save the college roughly \$40,000 per year.

Course Releases

The Committee considered eliminating standing course releases for certain department chairs, program directors and committees. While direct savings might not be immediately realized by these changes, certain resources may be realized, particularly for departments and programs impacted by other reductions. The Committee encourages the Provost and Dean of the Faculty to look for possible savings in this area; granting of these course releases is and ultimately remains under the purview of the PDF.

Rationale: This retains discretion for course releases with the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, which can allow for flexibility. Reductions in course releases do not necessarily create direct cost savings (not all are replaced). This should be omitted from the Financial Sustainability Review process.

Language Assistant Program

The Committee recommends either the elimination of Whitman's Language Assistant program which will create savings of \$159,000 annually, or the reduction of the Language Assistant Program's annual budget by 50% (with accompanying reconfiguration of staffing and/or pursuit of external funding).

Rationale: The removal of the program creates substantial savings and prioritizes funding for language instruction by faculty members. Contributions to language instruction programs may

also be fulfilled by students who are native speakers and funded through work-study. Reduction of the budget can maintain a program that can facilitate student learning across several languages, can create efficiencies within it via staffing reconfigurations, and can create opportunity for seeking external funding (which aligns with processes at other institutions).

Faculty Professional Development Funding

The Committee recommends a reduction in the annual budget for PDA/ASID to \$300,000 starting with the 21-22 academic year. The details are up to implementation by the Provost and the CDC, but the model is based on an annual funding level of \$2000 for tenured and tenure-track faculty, and \$1500 for Senior Non-Tenure Track Faculty. This change will produce savings between \$40,000 and \$120,000 on an annual basis. The committee also recommended that funding for SSRA (Coaches) PDA's be transferred to the Athletics budget. This funding has averaged \$22,000 over the last 4 years. Whitman has historically provided funding for Visiting Assistant Professors (VAPs) in the form of contract travel. This funding has averaged \$32,000 per year over the last 4 years. Given that such funding is relatively unusual for colleges like Whitman, the committee suggests either eliminating this expense or capping it at \$20,000 per year.

Rationale: Having a clear cap on funding will foster better planning for faculty PDA expenses. Moving coaches' PDA funding to the Athletics budget allows for more discretion by those with more understanding of what professional development looks like for coaches. Reducing VAP contract travel funding retains Whitman's competitiveness, but eliminating it or lessening it aligns more with practices at other institutions and prioritizes resources for permanent members of the Faculty.

Reserves

The Committee recommends reallocation of roughly \$400,000 in reserves held in the faculty Professional Development Account (PDA/ASID) to the general operating funds of the college for the '21-22 academic year.

Rationale: This one-year reallocation adds substantial funding in areas of the College to meet the current budget deficit.

Sabbatical Leave Policy

The Committee recommends some form of change to the current policy. The Committee evaluated several scenarios that would reduce the cost of the college's sabbatical leave policy while maintaining strength and competitiveness necessary for the teacher-scholar model. Policies

from peer institutions were evaluated based on information available to the committee, which included publicly-available documents and information provided by faculty and administrative peers across institutions. Three models were reviewed by the committee with different frequencies and levels of compensation and replacement positions in each model. Based on the variable number of faculty taking a year-long versus semester sabbatical, as well as the replacement rates for faculty on leave, the models are projected to realize between \$150,000 and \$550,000 in annual savings over our current plan. The Committee was unable to come to a consensus on recommending only one model to the Cabinet and ultimately to the Board of Trustees. The Committee understands that variations on any of these models (e.g., on compensation percentages) may produce a better solution for all stakeholders. We encourage the administration and board to be flexible in their ultimate decision of what constitutes the best choice for Whitman from among these frequencies.

- After 4 years of teaching, Faculty may apply for a one-year sabbatical at 60% pay or a one-semester sabbatical at 92% pay
- After 5 years of teaching, Faculty may apply for a one-year sabbatical at 70% pay or a one-semester sabbatical at 94% pay
- After 6 years of teaching, Faculty may apply for a one-year sabbatical at 50% pay or a one-semester sabbatical at 100% pay

The committee recommends that the current policies for sabbatical opportunities and compensation for pre-tenure faculty remain as they are at present.

Rationale: All three options (as well as possible variations) reduce cost, decrease interruptions to student learning, align Whitman's policy with peer institutions, and may increase faculty capacity to serve in faculty governance. All of the semester options retain 96-100% of a faculty member's annual salary. The recommendations here allow for the administration and Board to more fully consider what may be the best choice with added information (especially about equity and year-long sabbaticals). This may include considerations of access to external funding, potential less visible internal funding that other institutions utilize to subsidize their programs, goals for faculty salary levels relative to peer institutions, and capacity for faculty members whose family or personal financial circumstances may not allow a larger pay reduction.

Notes on Process

The Committee met weekly and deliberated all decisions as a whole group. We began with discussions of the sabbatical program. The Committee constructed and evaluated various models against the historic costs of our own program, and against those of peer and aspirational schools. The faculty members of the Committee gathered input from colleagues via a survey about various models, and how frequency and salary mattered. We did not reach consensus on one new model, so three models are included in this set of recommendations. We continued with discussions of PDA and ASID funding, and reached consensus on the cap and average savings (with options remaining for VAP contract travel). We agreed on the reallocation of PDA/ASID reserves to the College operating budget. We then looked at three models for reductions in the academic program, one of which involved some department and program (and tenure-line) eliminations, and two that reduced department staffing through retirements and contributions from NTT Faculty. The committee reached consensus that the program and department elimination models would not go forward. There were many points of consensus among the two other models, though there are still areas of disagreement. We did not reach consensus on the elimination of the Language Assistants program. We did reach consensus on compensation for faculty overloads. We decided to omit course releases from the FSR process.

Between the initial report and this final report, the Committee reviewed, discussed, and considered the various forms of community feedback, including feedback received via the formal feedback forms, open fora with faculty, staff, and students, meetings with individual academic departments and programs, and informal submissions of information, questions, and ideas from these constituencies along with alumni. This feedback was helpful in reconsidering initial proposals, offering new ways to configure proposals, affirming some proposals, and prioritizing within the proposals. Volume of feedback was considered for some revisions, but feedback that contained new or helpful information from small numbers of community members was also important in drafting this final set of recommendations.

Strategic Investments for Consideration by the Academic Committee of the FSR

The committee discussed the following as areas that could help generate student demand. In all cases there was an understanding that investment decisions by the college will be based on study and deliberation, including the use of data generated internally and by Hanover Research.

1. Re-Envision Academic Programs

Investigate the possibility of re-envisioning/re-framing existing academic offerings to bolster student recruitment, retention, and preparedness for Life After Whitman, to maximize existing tenured and tenure-track faculty expertise (no additional FTE in proposed offerings), and to strategically add new hires/additional FTE in investment areas (e.g., Computer Science) that are strategically linked with other programs. As part of this, investigate renaming existing programs to align more with prospective student understandings of academic areas, combining existing

programs, or creating tracks or hyphenated courses of study within existing programs. Opportunities for re-envisioning/re-framing (given in greater detail in Appendix A) are in the following areas:

Black and Indigenous Studies

Creative Arts

Digital Studies/Experience Design/UX

Global Literature and Culture

International Trade and Finance

Neuroscience

Public Health

Social Justice and Human Rights

2. Enhance Connections between the Academic Program and Career Development, Off-Campus Locales, and Walla Walla Valley Community Engagement

Investigate and, if warranted, invest and enhance infrastructure and faculty development across all three divisions to better align the curricular and co-curricular offerings of the College. This would include support for courses or programs associated with Whitman-managed locales away from campus (e.g., Seattle, “West” programs), Walla Walla community-engaged learning and research, student research opportunities, and curricular opportunities that prepare students for Life After Whitman.

3. Consider Revisions to the Academic Calendar to Allow Short-Term Learning Opportunities

Investigate a revised academic calendar that includes a January and/or June term that would work with current faculty teaching loads, and that would allow short-term learning opportunities linked with career development, learning in Whitman-managed locales away from campus, Whitman-Walla Walla connections (especially community-engaged learning and research), and Life After Whitman.

Investigate the potential revenue generation from short-term opportunities that would result from a revised academic calendar that includes a January and/or June term. This could also include Alumni College, options for local community members to take courses, or festival/camp opportunities if a modest tuition is implemented.

4. Consider Bolstering External Grant Support for Faculty Professional Activity

Evaluate investments in the Grants and Foundation Relations Office that may enhance the reputation of Whitman College, to support any new initiatives or investments in the academic program, to accommodate revisions to the sabbatical policy, to increase divisional equity of opportunity for external funding among faculty, and to better align Development and Provost offices' efforts.

Appendix A Elaboration of Re-Envisioned Academic Programs

Submitted by Sharon Alker, Barry Balof, Shampa Biswas, Kurt Hoffman, Michelle Janning, and Lisa Uddin

Academic Sub-Committee of the Whitman College Financial Sustainability Review

February 2021

We propose several new and reconfigured programs of study that emerge from and build on the existing expertise of our current faculty that can enhance our current offerings and we expect will be attractive to current and prospective students. Although the specifics of these programs will come from the larger faculty, most of these are ideas that have been in discussion among different groups of faculty and we expect will have wide buy-in. Many of these programs exist at our peer institutions. These ideas are starting points for conversations about ways to reimagine the academic program, and we anticipate refinements and additions as the faculty continue to exchange ideas.

Please note that the new programs we suggest below can be either Majors, Minors, or Concentrations (configurations that already exist at Whitman). We have also indicated co-curricular and Student Engagement Center connections for each of the programs, and have ideas for communicating the strengths and possibilities of each program in ways that would be attractive to prospective and current students.

In preparing this document, we have been guided by the “**criteria for review**” that President Murray delineated in her charge to the Financial Sustainability Review committees:

- Centrality to Whitman’s liberal arts mission
 - Does it support the teacher-scholar model?
 - Does it drive enrollment?
 - Does it drive revenue?
 - Does it connect to our strategic priorities?

The **strategic priorities** of the College are:

- Increasing access and affordability
- Enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion
- Innovating the curriculum
- Connecting to life after Whitman
- Celebrating the College's location in southeastern Washington

NEW AND RECONFIGURED PROGRAMS (majors, minors, or concentrations)

Black and Indigenous Studies

Creative Arts

Digital Studies/Experience Design/UX

Global Literature and Culture

International Trade and Finance

Neuroscience

Public Health

Social Justice and Human Rights

1. Black and Indigenous Studies (replacing Race & Ethnic Studies)

- Black and Indigenous Studies examines the locations and experiences of Black and Indigenous people in the modern world at local, national and global scales. Students study the intellectual, cultural and political aspects of blackness and indigeneity both historically and in the present. They develop tools for analysis and communication that are applicable to career fields such as law, medicine, education, arts, and business.

- Departments with interested faculty: Anthropology, Art History, English, Film and Media Studies, French, German Studies, History, Music, Politics, Religion, RWPD, Sociology, Theater and Dance
- Following through on the recent Inclusion Task Force action items (<https://www.whitman.edu/campus-life/diversity/inclusion-task-force-final-report/inclusion-action-items>) and 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (<https://www.whitman.edu/documents/Offices/Provost/CTUIR%20MOA%202017.pdf>)
- Actualizing strategic planning plank of “celebrating our location” with “its dynamic history, diverse population and inspiring physical landscape” which “is a source of strength and pride for the college.”
- Co-curricular elements: Confluence Project, site visits, speaker series (funded by Lewis endowment, endowments for Northwest History and Politics), OCS, extensive use of Maxey Museum and Penrose archives, and Sheehan art collection.
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: Whitman Teaches the Movement; internships such as curatorial and oral history projects at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute or micro-lending development with (located locally but a national LLC) Seven Sisters Community Development Group, community fellow positions with CTUIR First Foods Program or Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts, Alumni networking events surrounding race in the business world
- For examples at other institutions, see:
<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/areas-study/black-studies>

<http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/black-studies>

<https://admissions.uiowa.edu/academics/native-american-and-indigenous-studies>

<https://www.ualberta.ca/native-studies/index.html>

2. Creative Arts

- Creative Arts focuses on the aesthetic, cultural, ethical and political dimensions of the contemporary arts across a range of related creative disciplines. It examines how the arts of the present relate to past movements, and explores the capacities of creative expression to reflect and change the world. Students learn to think and make between and across artistic fields, preparing themselves for multidisciplinary professions in art practice, education, and administration.
- Departments with interested faculty: Art, Art History, Creative Writing, Film and Media Studies (Production), Music, Religion, Sociology, Theater and Dance

- Study Abroad and/or Language study recommended
- Humanities courses in creative arts criticism required (e.g. AHVCS, FMS, French, Hispanic Studies)
- Co-curricular offerings: artist-in-residence program, Sheehan Gallery exhibits, studio visits, speaker series (funded by O'Donnell endowment), an Arts West program.
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: community-engaged learning projects bridging Walla Walla Music Organization and Walla Walla Public Schools, internships or community fellow positions (with Seattle Art Museum, San Francisco Arts Commission, Walla Walla Symphony, ArtWalla, and the Carnegie Picture Lab, internships in film-related fields with existing alumni-connected firms in California and Vancouver, BC

3. Digital Studies/Experience Design/UX

- Digital Studies operates at the intersection of technology and the humanities/social sciences. It is highly complementary to Computer Science and could involve many collaborative projects between a wide range of disciplines and CS. It is comprised of a broad array of practices, methods, and approaches that are aimed at providing students with such knowledge/skills as: multimodal literacy, digital storytelling, the creation and representation of humanities, fine arts, cultural, and historical data, data mining, visualization techniques, information preservation, archive management, exhibit design, the management of cultural data, the ethical use of technology, the use of specialized tools to capture and interpret cultural and human subjects data. Digital Studies infuses technology with forms of creativity and analysis more associated with the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences.
- Departments with interested faculty: Anthropology, Art, Art History, Classics, Computer Science, English, French, German, History, Penrose Library, Religion, Rhetoric, Film & Media Studies, Music, Psychology, Sociology.
- Co-curricular offerings: site visits, speaker series, digital fluency certificate
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: internships with Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco tech firms, community fellow positions with local historical organizations such as Kirkman House Museum or Fort Walla Walla to enhance rural access to digital preservation of documents, alumni networking events with firms dedicated to design thinking, experience design internships with tech and design firms, and intersections of built-environment design or urban design with environmental sustainability

- This handbook gives more in-depth information about the sort of work digital studies students might do. Much of this is information that can be presented to future employers as part of student portfolios, <https://handbook.pubpub.org/>
- For examples at other institutions, see:

<https://www.davidson.edu/academic-departments/digital-studies>

<https://wheatoncollege.edu/academics/majors-minors/digital-humanities/>

<https://shc.stanford.edu/digital-humanities>

<https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/digital-humanities-initiative>

<https://www.hamilton.edu/news/story/why-user-experience-design-is-a-great-career-for-liberal-arts-students>

4. Global Literature and Culture

- Global Literature and Culture studies cultural expressions as media through which to think across cultural boundaries, develop an ethic of hospitality toward other worlds and people, and cultivate an ethos of global citizenship.
- Departments with interested faculty: Art History, Chinese, Classics, English, French, German, Hispanic Studies, Japanese, Music, Religion
- Language requirement and Study Abroad Experience
- Co-curricular offerings: Visiting writers and artists (funded by Mabel Goreclose endowment, O'Donnell endowment), Sheehan Gallery exhibits
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: internships and community fellow positions with local schools for curricular design and afterschool programming in global literacy and languages, internships with international NGOs, alumni networking with company leaders in global trade
- For an example from another institution, see:
<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/areas-study/comparative-studies-literature-culture>

5. International Trade and Finance

- International Trade and Finance investigates how and why goods, services, information, money and power are exchanged across the world. Students ask questions and think critically about the risks and complex factors that shape the structures and practices of global trade, businesses, and organizations. And they

create solutions to address the challenges, problems, and opportunities that businesses and organizations face in today's global economy. (Denison)

- Departments with interested faculty: Anthropology, Art History, Economics, English, German Studies, History, Politics, Religion, Sociology
- Language requirement
- Strategic use of “Whitman Summer Studies in China” program
- Co-curricular offerings: Executives-in-residence program, site visits, speaker series (funded by Henry Jackson endowment, O'Donnell endowment, Perry Endowment, Asian Studies endowment)
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: internships in finance and international trade in urban centers on the West Coast and inland Western U.S. (including local organizations such as Baker Boyer Bank and the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation), community-engaged collaboration between the Whitman Investment Club and WWPS Future Business Leaders of America, international internships in development and sustainability in targeted geographic areas with alumni connections and potential for international student recruitment
- For an example at another institution, see:
<https://denison.edu/academics/global-commerce>

6. Neuroscience

- Neuroscience is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on the nervous system and the relationship between biology and human and animal behavior. By taking courses across sciences, social sciences, and the humanities, students investigate implications for mental and physical health, child development, education, medical ethics, and aging, among other areas. This area of study pairs well with in-depth study of chemistry, biology, psychology, and computer science. Students who study neuroscience as undergraduates pursue graduate work and careers in medicine, cognitive science, psychology, physiology, and patent or intellectual property law (Hamilton, Denison, Wellesley, Kenyon).
- Departments with interested faculty: BBMB, Biology, Computer Science, Economics, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, RWPD
- ideal for students planning graduate or professional study in neuroscience, biology, chemistry, psychology, medicine and other related fields.
- Co-curricular offerings: speaker series (funded by Brattain and Brode endowments).

- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: Internships with medical research hospitals (including via alumni networks), community fellow positions that connect neuroscience to local organizational missions relating to addiction (e.g., Trilogy) and disability (e.g., Walla Walla Valley Disability Network)
- For examples from other institutions, see:
<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/areas-study/neuroscience>;

<https://www.carleton.edu/neuroscience/>

<https://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/41/neuroscience>

7. Public Health

- Public Health educates students in public health from the perspective of the liberal arts, with particular attention to the analysis of public health problems from multiple perspectives and with tools from multiple disciplines and with emphasis on theory and history; linked to the formulation and implementation of public policy, thus connecting science and government at its core (Franklin and Marshall). It provides students with an array of analytical frameworks for understanding the complexities of population health and offers opportunities to integrate and apply these frameworks within the context of coursework, civic engagement, and independent research. (Macalester) It is essential for students with career interests in aid organizations, business and government, as well as in medicine, mental health and public health; opportunities to pursue and expand students' health interests and obtain hands-on experience both in the laboratory and in the community. (Dickinson)
- Second language and/or study abroad encouraged, especially for global public health focus or public service-based careers
- Departments with interested faculty: Anthropology, BBMB, Biology, Economics, Hispanic Studies, History, Music, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, RWP, Sociology
- Co-curricular offerings: site visits, speaker series (funded by Brattain endowment, Brode endowment, Lewis endowment)
- Examples of potential (and existing) Student Engagement Center connections: community-based research and internships (with Walla Walla Community Health Department, The Health Center (WWPS), and Providence St. Mary's, e.g.), alumni networking and speaking events with frontline COVID-19 health professionals (recently feature in the *Whitman Magazine*), internships with governmental health-related organizations at the state and national level

- For examples from other institutions, see:

<https://www.fandm.edu/public-health>

<https://www.macalester.edu/cgh/>

https://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/36/health_studies

8. Social Justice and Human Rights (Replacing Gender Studies)

- With possible tracks in gender studies, queer studies, immigration justice, environmental justice, criminology, and the law
- “Drawing from a wide range of interdisciplinary topics and approaches from the humanities and social sciences, the Human Rights and Social Justice program provides an overview of historical and contemporary human rights issues and their impact on human lives in different cultural contexts. The program offers students an opportunity to examine and critically assess the various strategies and mechanisms that have been used nationally and internationally to address these issues, including social movements, domestic legislation, international statutes, and human rights declarations and conventions.” (Carleton University)
- Departments with interested faculty: Gender Studies, German Studies, Hispanic Studies, Music, Philosophy, Politics, Religion, RWP, Sociology
- Co-curricular elements: Community-based learning projects, penitentiary project, site visits, internships, speakers series (funded by Henry Jackson endowment, Penology endowment, Skotheim endowment, William O’Douglas endowment)
- Examples of potential Student Engagement Center connections: community fellow positions (with local immigration law firms, the Juvenile Justice Center, Washington State Penitentiary, and the women’s shelter at the YWCA), national and international internships with human rights NGOs, networking and speaker events dedicated to gender rights advocacy in business and government
- For examples at other institutions, see:

https://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/104/policy_studies

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/areas-study/diplomacy-world-affairs>

<https://admissions.carleton.ca/programs/human-rights-ba/>