

General Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

This FAQ document is designed to provide campus with information and resources to navigate the transition.

- **How/when were people notified they were losing their jobs?** Those affected by the staff reduction received direct communication from Sonoma State on Wednesday, January 22, in compliance with applicable collective bargaining agreements.
- **Will there be additional layoffs as part of the budget plan?**
No additional staffing reductions are planned at this time.
- **Will students in the eliminated programs still be able to graduate from SSU?**
Yes, Sonoma State is committed to the timely graduation of all of our students. Students who are within 60 units of graduating from completing a program that is planned for discontinuance will be able to complete their program. Students who are not within 60 units of completion will be advised to change to a related major so that SSU can support them.
- **Why did the Chancellor's Office require SSU to make these cuts?** The university had a structural deficit that it had to resolve in order to balance the budget.
- **Are other campuses being required to make these cuts?** Other campuses are also being required to have a balanced budget.
- **How did the budget deficit get so large?** The University has had a budget deficit for several years. It is attributable to a variety of factors – cost of personnel, annual price increases for supplies and utilities, inflation – but the main reason is declining enrollment. Student tuition and fees, combined with enrollment-based funding from The California State University, are the major sources of revenue in the university budget. Sonoma State's enrollment has dropped 38% since its peak in 2015.
- **Has the Chancellor's Office signed off on this plan?** Campus budget plans do not require the chancellor's approval, but the chancellor has been informed of the campus plan.
- **Is it possible that funding from the CSU or the Legislature could change this plan?** The state budget is not finalized until the summer, so while sufficient funding to cover the campus deficit is unlikely, it is possible.

- **If the state budget improves and the CSU gets more funding, will people be hired back? Will programs/majors/athletics return?** It is possible. Resources will be reinvested in accordance with applicable CBA language and as the University identifies priorities.
- **If faculty and staff resign from the university before the next fiscal year, will some jobs be saved?** It is possible, but at the same time, we must move forward with implementing the budget reduction plan. The layoff process is dictated by the provisions outlined in the applicable collective bargaining agreement(s). These agreements provide clear direction on the order of layoff and how such decisions are made.
- **Won't eliminating degrees and programs and athletics have a negative effect on future enrollment?** We anticipate that it may have short-term effects. Eliminating some programs will allow us to retain and grow programs that prospective students have demonstrated the most interest in entering.
- **What happens to student-athletes' scholarships?** Student athletes who choose to remain at SSU will remain eligible to receive scholarships, as long as they meet the current terms of the scholarship..
- **Will the university have any sports at all?** Sonoma State will not offer NCAA II sports next academic year. Sonoma State has a robust Club Sports program and Intramural sports, offered through Campus Recreation. Currently, there are 19 active club sports and 15 intramural sports.
- **What will be done with unused classrooms, offices, and the gymnasium/athletic department building?** We will be looking for opportunities for the University to repurpose them and use them for other activities.
- **What happens to non-renewed/laid off faculty and staff who live on campus?** Employees living on campus may continue to live on campus through the end of their lease agreement.
- **What happens to non-renewed/laid off faculty and staff who have children in the Children's School?** Their children may remain at the School through the end of the academic year.
- **Why can't employees be furloughed to save jobs?** Furloughs offer one-time savings and do not provide a permanent solution to balance the budget.

- **Will there be any additional funding cuts due to not meeting enrollment targets?**

No, the Chancellor's Office has agreed to hold us harmless for three years for any additional enrollment drop in the short-term as a result of the planned cut (i.e., there will be no funding cuts for the next three years as a result of low enrollment).

- **Will the school keep its accreditation?**

Sonoma State University is and will continue to be institutionally accredited by the [Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission](#) (WSCUC). The WSCUC is one of the seven regional agencies in the United States recognized by the federal government to accredit institutions of higher learning.

- **What is going to happen to our COPLAC status?**

Our status in COPLAC, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges, is unchanged, and Sonoma State continues to be a full member. The Provost has addressed this concern with the COPLAC Executive Office and is assured that SSU will remain a member. Many COPLAC institutions have made budget cuts and changes to their program mix and are still grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, as is Sonoma State.

For questions not answered in this document, please send an email to questions@sonoma.edu.