

**Doug Whitlock**  
**Remarks for Faculty Senate, February 2, 2008**

I regret that I am unable to be with you for this initial meeting of the Faculty Senate for this calendar year. Today I, along with several of my colleague presidents, am attending a conference in Lexington, where – I am sure – our discussion of the current budgetary situation will continue.

As you might imagine, the state's budgetary crises and the resulting impact on all of state government – post secondary education included – is consuming most of my working hours. As you will have seen in the media, the Governor's recommended budget includes the 12 percent reduction in our state appropriation for which we were earlier asked to prepare for as a "worst case scenario." This is an eventuality for which considerable planning has already been done.

I encourage you to keep in mind that the Governor's recommended budget is but the first step in the 2008-2010 state biennial budget process. While the economic problems with which Governor Beshear and his staff have been contending are real, they have had only a few short weeks to address them. The Governor and legislative leadership have given us their commitment to work together to improve the funding picture before final action is taken on the state budget in late March or early April. While I am guardedly optimistic that something better than the 12 percent reduction will become reality, I would be very surprised if no reduction was made.

Accordingly, we must continue to work together to prepare for as much as a 12 percent reduction in our state appropriations base. While this amount of \$9,240,000 is significant, we are committed to minimizing its impact on our core instructional mission. I continue to believe that we can accommodate the impact on personnel through attrition, and processes to implement this are already in place. A cut of this magnitude will effectively remove our financial flexibility

for the coming year. The new initiatives in our business plan will be delayed and as a result our momentum in the state's "double the numbers" effort and regional stewardship will be impacted. A tuition increase sufficient to replace these potentially lost state dollars would place an unbearable burden on our students.

Lest I sound too "gloom and doomy," I take comfort in knowing that this is a strong place and that as long as we work together as a faculty and staff that we will weather this temporary obstacle to our progress just as we have those in the past. We are in this together and we will maintain the collegiality that sustains us and that we want to have still in place when better times return.

On the more positive front, I remain hopeful that phase II of the science building might be funded in the second year of the coming biennium. We have received a nice earmark of federal funds for equipment and have been invited to submit proposals for more federal funding both for that purpose and for some other needs of the institution. One of those is the Studio for Academic Creativity in the library, which recently benefited from a private gift of more than \$1,000,000.00 from Ron and Sherrie Noel. That gift, and more than \$1,000,000.00 more from other donors, has moved us closer to meeting our capital campaign goal.

Indications are that our doctoral program in educational leadership has been well-reviewed by the consultants from the Southern Region Education Board by the CPE. Hopefully we will receive the go ahead for this program soon.

With the beginning of the legislative session, my time away from the campus has been increased. Visits to alumni and friends continue throughout the country as we visit major population centers with sizable concentrations of ECU graduates.