

Western Sydney University Bulletin

At a recent meeting with Western Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Denise Kirkpatrick, the PSA (CPSU) discussed member concerns regarding the University's "staffing freeze".

It was admitted that the University is in a position where it is seeking to control expenditure and increase revenue. However, we were informed that it was not seeking to embark on a program of voluntary redundancies. Rather, the Uni has requested that all areas commit to a 2% reduction in expenditure. Reasons given for this decision revolved around the flat domestic undergraduate market the need to increase revenue and meet competition (including the move by Wollongong University into Liverpool) head on.

Concerns raised by members included funding of capital projects, staffing levels and casualisation.

We were informed that capital projects currently being undertaken have already been funded and so will continue.

Current staffing levels are being monitored and all requests for recruitment will be scrutinised by the Director, Human Resources and the Vice-Chancellor. The University has stated that it does not want to casualise the workforce to achieve its objectives and the Vice-Chancellor has imposed a cap on casual spending, although we were not told what that cap was.

Although the Vice-Chancellor has committed to a staff presentation in the second half of the year

around the University's short term future, we remain deeply concerned that the 2% reduction in expenditure can be expected to remain in place for the foreseeable future and probably into next year.

Of particular concern is the fact that all work areas are able to decide for themselves how best to achieve the 2% reduction. We are already receiving reports of staff going on maternity and/or long service leave not being backfilled which of course will lead to workload issues for remaining staff. Given that these types of leave are centrally funded, we find it extraordinary that the University would claim that not using central funding to replace people is a way to contribute to an area's individual budget reduction.

If you are being asked or expected to increase your workload because your area has decided not to use central funds to replace your colleagues on long service or maternity leave, please advise your union immediately.

In the meantime, the most important thing you can do is to ensure that everyone in your workplace has a voice.

Joining your union is the only way to have your voice heard in the continuing consultations with management.

If you are already a member, increase the strength of the union by asking your colleagues to join.

Not a member? Join your union today to fight for improvements to your workplace and working environment.

Join the PSA

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