

The Computer Science Department of Western Washington University had a meeting with the Dean of the College of Science and Technology and the Provost on Tuesday afternoon, May 10, 2011. Our impression of the current thinking of the administration of WWU is as follows:

1. The President feels that budget cuts, at whatever level, are to be used to redirect funding away from low quality, low need programs and toward high quality, high need programs ("rebasings").
2. The Provost feels that some budget cuts must take place within the College of Science and Technology.
3. The Dean of the College of Science and Technology feels that within our college, the Computer Science Department should be the target for any large cuts.

We disagree with point 2: Cutting science and technology in favor of other disciplines in a time of recession is bad for the university, the economy, and the state of Washington. The only way Washington is going to lift itself out of the budget crisis it is in is through high-paying, high-productivity, high-tech jobs. Without the training for those jobs, the recession will be deepened and prolonged.

We disagree with point 3: Our graduates are among the most highly regarded in the state. In standardized, national exams, our students consistently score in the 90th percentile among peer institutions. We obtain this result because, individually, every faculty member in the Computer Science Department works hard to stay current, and holds their students to extremely high standards. A Computer Science Baccalaureate from Western Washington University is highly prized by all tech employers in the state, and aggressively recruited every year.

According to the Mission Statement for Western, our number one Strategic Goal is: "Build upon Western's strengths to address critical needs in the State of Washington." It is an established fact that computer science will be the most pressing need from higher education for the State of Washington in the foreseeable future. This indicates to us that the Administration of Western has made some mistakes in judgment, and we only hope they can be persuaded to change their minds before they do irreparable harm to WWU, and to the businesses and people of the State of Washington.

Geoffrey Matthews, Professor and Chair
David Bover, Professor
James Hearne, Professor
James Johnson, Professor
Philip Nelson, Associate Professor
Martin Osborne, Professor
Jianna Zhang, Associate Professor
Martin Granier, Director, Internet Studies Center
Christopher Reedy, Instructor
Yudong Liu, Instructor
Phillip Nordwall, Computer System Manager
Sue Hutchings, Department Manager
Julie Marx, Program Coordinator