What is The New Normal?

My main message today is that our budget situation and the withdrawal of state support are simply visible manifestations of something much deeper and more challenging that must occupy our attention and draw upon our best thinking in the years to come. The state support we enjoyed in the past will not return.

The term *new normal* is the label that is being applied to the transition we are undergoing in this nation as we shift from one economic and social order to another and as we explore the impact of humanity on the natural systems of our planet.

- “Whatever the coming century brings, it will not unfold smoothly as some improved but largely familiar version of life as we know it. That is the only thing that seems certain.” (Dianne Dumanoski, *The End of the Long Summer*)
- Our sharpened focus on liberal education, health sciences and wellness, sustainability, and human welfare will be crucial assets in the years to come.
- We must reexamine the deep assumptions that have formed the foundation of the way we work together, what we seek to accomplish and how we evaluate and support our work.

Strategies for the New Normal: How do you go about responding to changing times?

- Offer attractive options. In the New Normal, VALUE matters most
- Pay attention to the student experience
- Be clear about what you are trying to accomplish and what it costs to do it
- Approach the budget as an investment in our future
- Count on your employees and pay attention to their experiences
- Practice what you teach
- Think about what we need to do to thrive, not just survive
- Be distinctive

Distinctive elements that are taking shape at WSU
1. A student learning experience that integrates theory and practice and the application of knowledge to meaningful problems across all liberal arts disciplines and areas of professional study

2. A campus-wide focus on climate commitment/sustainability/environmental stewardship instantiated in how we construct and remodel our buildings, design our curriculum and operate our campus

3. Health sciences/wellness/child advocacy and rehabilitation

4. Professional study (both undergraduate and graduate) that prepares scholar-practitioners who can read the changing environment of practice, work well with colleagues and apply what they learn to the enhancement of outcomes for the people they serve

**Stick to the basics.**

As we enter this new academic year, we will steer by five simple principles as we work on the rest of our current budget solution and as we chart the path ahead.

- Will this help us protect and enhance our attractiveness to potential students?
- Will this contribute to the success of our current students?
- Will this generate additional resources that we can use to invest in our future?
- Will this help us focus our strengths, protect the quality of our academic programs and maintain our integrity as an academic institution?
- If we are sure that this is something we need to do, have we figured out the best way to do it?

**Steady as She Goes (Principles developed last year and still in place)**

- **Shared Expectations:** Put students first. Protect academic integrity. Generate revenue. Consider layoffs only as a last resort.
- **Clear Goals:** (1) Support academic innovation, distinctiveness and excellence. (2) Enrich the student experience and support student success. (3) Expand our climate commitment and sustainability efforts.
- **Mindset:** We are investing in our future and the budget is an investment portfolio.
- **Discipline:** Revisit all assumptions and look for buried assumptions that are worth exploring. Examine each significant expenditure carefully--Is it an essential investment? If so, is this the best way to accomplish our goals? If not, how can we redesign this function or program to ensure that it works well and can function with the staff levels available?
- **Note:** We have begun to expand the capacity of our campus community to employ Education Lean strategies and tools to (a) learn how to read our environment more
accurately; (b) engage more members of our campus community in helping us adapt to changing political, social and economic pressures and expectations; (c) provide opportunities to practice new habits that will serve us well in the years to come; and (d) develop leadership throughout the organization.