

Board of Regents Public Forum on the University Budget
Wednesday, June 17, 2009
Testimony of Kelly Alghamdi Zimmerschied, Treasurer of AFSCME 3800

I am Kelly Alghamdi Zimmerschied, an 8-year clerical financial employee of the University working in Auxiliary Services and one of the 99 people University-wide who had my suggestions for cost-savings forwarded on to the President

I would like to speak today about the impact of cutting financial clerical staff and ways the University can cut costs without cutting staff.

Financial Management needs more than tools or software programs to function properly – it needs people to do the work – people who can analyze data and properly disseminate it. The university needs people that take ownership of a system, or the system just plain doesn't work from the first moment data is entered.

By cutting the clerical workforce that performs most of the tasks to keep the transparency and accountability alive, the university is putting itself at greater risk.

The workforce that accounts for the financial state of the U is not limited to certified accountants. It starts and ends with the people that enter the information and make the university work, FRONT LINE CLERICAL employees financial or otherwise ones that have a base of knowledge spanning several years and even decades. Working hard every single day and make complex systems function smoother and better.

Our 50+ million dollar EFS system is a perfect example. Talk to anybody who has any relationship to EFS, they can tell you how difficult the past year has been. What used to take me 5 minutes to do in the old system, occasionally now takes 15 minutes, 3 phone calls, and a trouble ticket or two, but is alleviated by a call to a fellow clerical worker that has the experience, holds the knowledge, and shares the fix long before central calls back. Resourcefulness? Ask yourself.....We know how to make things work. Don't cut our jobs. Our jobs have intricate value to the financial stability of OUR University. Many are already to the point of what just won't get done anymore? This is a travesty.

Where then, can the U find cost savings? We can tell you.

Clerical workers enter most expenses into the University financial system. Ask a clerical worker – we can tell you about wasteful spending. It is fact. Here are just a few from coworkers in departments all over the campuses.

First –**CUT** the Muffin Funds! Internal meeting day after day where food is provided. Enforce the policies on when it is appropriate to provide food and when its not.

Second – **ENFORCE** travel expense policies. Travel per diems that in many cases are a “money maker”. Frequent flyer miles gained in University travel used for personal travel.

Third –**CUT** cell phone reimbursements. How many employees have cell phones on the University dime?

Fourth – **CHANGE** the printing practices – stop printing on the expensive heavy stock, and glossy postcard paper.

Finally – **INSTITUTE** strict guidelines on recruitment funds. We should not wine and dine candidates at top restaurants and hotels. We must send the message that our financial priorities are on funding the academic mission – teaching, research, and outreach, not on entertainment. We must show that we are frugal stewards of taxpayer dollars and it starts from recruitment.

The University does not need to lay off staff in order to reduce the budget. The University can accomplish savings by enforcing current policies and instituting a few new policies and procedures.