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Concerns surface over WSU budget and debate costs



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DAYTON, Ohio (WDTN) – Over the past year, Wright State University spent too much money and now leaders there are trying to figure out how to balance the budget.

On Thursday, the university's chief financial officer laid out the plan of attack to cut about 27 million dollars from Wright State's budget over the next two years.

They plan to cut expenses, raise graduate and out-of-state tuition by 3 percent and cut staff.

"When you don't have enough money, you have to stop doing certain things. Some things that aren't being productive, we are looking at them and when we do that we have to give people notice their jobs..the work is not going to be available anymore," said President David Hopkins.

WSU leaders say they're trying to limit the impact to employees by making those reductions through attrition and a voluntary retirement incentive program.

"For those eligible to retire, we can incentivize that. It allows us to manage the displacement of other people and move them to other positions that are being vacated by retirees," said President Hopkins.

Some people we talked to say this might not be the best time to invest in such a big undertaking—like the 8 million dollars estimated to host the presidential debate in September.

"I am not confident that they will necessarily raise this money. I think it is a bad expenditure. I think it's totally bogus, to be frank, that it will lead to an increase in enrollment," said Economics Professor Emeritus and Senior Advisor to the AAUP WSU, Rudy Fichtenbaum.

President Hopkins insists the university will not be footing the bill. So far they have about \$2-1/2 million raised.



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"I know under circumstances when we are working on a budget remediation plan, it makes people nervous, but we are confident and really accelerating now that we have 4 months left that will be a real plus not only for Wright State but for the whole community," said President Hopkins.

Faculty we talked to say, they've heard that before.

"We should have been confident that the administration was not running the university into a hole," said Fichtenbaum.

WSU Board of Trustees Chair, Michael Bridges said, "the board, by no means, has any interest in pulling out of the debate at this point. We are excited to have that here in the community."

President Hopkins tells us at one point they did discuss backing out of the debate contract but felt they had the community support to pull this off. He this debate is expected to increase their enrollment and bring money to the area.

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