

Updated March 3, 2024

Cost-saving measures and guidelines through June 30, 2024

College of Engineering Clarifications (added March 20, 2024)

A range of external factors stemming from the post-COVID economy are creating both near- and longer-term financial challenges across higher education, and UD is no exception. Accordingly, UD has been navigating a challenging and volatile economic landscape characterized by significant increases in the costs of goods and services, as well as in resources needed to educate students across a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

During the past academic year, we developed well-aligned plans for enrollment, faculty hiring and capital expenses, positioning UD for sustained growth in a fiscally responsible manner during this academic year and beyond. Recently, however, despite meeting our enrollment targets for the current academic year, further increases in scholarship needs and education delivery costs, especially escalating health care expenditures now and in the immediate future, have accelerated budget pressures.

To mitigate this impact, we need to implement several cost-saving measures, effective immediately. These measures and guidelines outlined below are intended to both balance and conserve resources for the University's long-term financial health. The measures are phased in now to provide some budget relief this academic year, but more so to enable us to address the recurring pressures next academic year and beyond. This Web page is a living document that will be updated and refined periodically as conditions change and more details become available, particularly around state healthcare benefits.

In parallel, the President and Provost will be engaging in strategic conversations with our UD community to expand the reach of our academic programs, as well as create new revenue streams for the University. This is very important to effectively manage the projected, continued rapid escalation of benefit and other costs in subsequent years beyond this academic year. Further, as we strive to innovate and continuously enhance our operational excellence, we will also need to accelerate planning and optimization efforts that have already been in progress and will continue to evolve going forward.

Even in this difficult moment, we first and foremost reaffirm our commitment to the sustained excellence of the top-ranked education, world-renowned research and outstanding services and campus experiences that define the University of Delaware. That commitment will never stop, and realizing its potential will require us all to work together, as a united team.

Measures and Guidelines

[As communicated on February 6](#), effective immediately through June 30, 2024 we will implement the following proactive steps to manage expenses. Faculty and staff are encouraged to continue working through any needs and questions with senior leaders of their respective campus units since many of the refinements and clarifications relate to the nuances that are most evident at the local level.

Faculty Hiring

All previously approved faculty searches that are underway are currently expected to proceed as planned with the following important guidelines, which should be carefully followed:

- Financial impact should be assessed for all offers being made, with a conservative assessment of availability of funds to cover start-up, salary, and other incentives. [Adequate funds are available for all searches initiated FY25, therefore, they will continue with guidance to seek dean approval before approaching second candidate.]
- Offers made to first choice candidates that are declined should not automatically be re-issued to an alternate candidate without a careful consideration of academic qualification and fit. Departments should be willing to pause the search for the year if the right candidate is not in the pool; such paused searches will be integrated into the faculty hiring plans and authorized to resume in Academic Year 2024-2025. [Only candidates deemed suitable by the department chair, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and dean will be considered for hire.]
- Extension of simultaneous, multiple offers should not be pursued. [Despite stiff competition in some disciplines, multiple offer strategies will not be used this year.]

Maintaining the quality and breadth of UD's course offerings is a very high priority. To ensure that we meet our educational commitments, we prioritize continuity of instruction, excellence in teaching, enrollment, and contract renewal and conversion to more permanent roles, using the following guidelines.

- Existing contracts for temporary faculty and adjunct faculty on s-contracts with strong performances and who are teaching courses critical to mounting our curriculum should be reviewed and renewed based on the recommendation of the department chair and approval by the dean. [We define faculty with strong performance as those who meet the educational objectives for assigned courses as evaluated by the department chair and courses that are critical as those that either have enrollments higher than the department average or are necessary for the students to meet degree requirements.]
- Requests for new hires of full-time temporary faculty and adjunct faculty on S-contracts, or to convert current adjunct faculty to full-time temporary or continuing track faculty, will be considered on a case-by-case basis consistent with the priorities listed above. Such positions require evaluation of the dean and should be included in the faculty hiring plans developed by the colleges. [These requests will require submission for approval by the dean.]
- S-contracts to cover teaching related to phased-retirements and sabbaticals are permissible with the approval of the Dean if no existing teaching capacity exists to cover these courses. [Should the chair determine that there is not existing teaching capacity, the dean will approve s-contract coverage.]
- Faculty retention offers and opportunity hires will be considered based upon availability of resources and in the context of the unit's faculty hiring plans. [These requests will require submission for approval by the dean.]

Staff Hiring

For staff hiring, a hiring freeze will remain in place through June 30, 2024, with the following exclusions: [Hiring requests that do not meet any of these criteria will be reviewed for exceptions.]

- Soft-funded positions, when full funding is derived from external sources
- Work-study students
- Graduate student employment funded as part of their education
- Positions that are necessary to directly perform work on grants and contracts funded through external sponsors [Work accomplished with cost-share funds is considered necessary.]

For Full-time position vacancies:

- Vacancies should be covered via restructuring, reassignment of tasks to other full-time employees, or deployment of resources from [Talent Share](#), which is a tool for sharing capacity across positions and units. Full-time position vacancies may not be filled with part-time, miscellaneous wage, temporary agency staff, or through increased overtime of other staff. [Having completed restructuring in the last few years, we will rely on reassignment, Talent Share and collaboration with other units to cover work associated with vacancies.]
- Units are encouraged to consider partnering with others for sharing lines, consistent with an integrated shared services approach.

Limited exceptions from the hiring freeze will be considered for prioritized areas including campus safety, institutional compliance or revenue generating initiatives for the University. Requests for an exception require an Exception Form, which can be obtained through your HR partner. [A limited number of exceptions for the prioritized areas will be submitted; these require recommendation from the department chair and HR Director, and approval by the dean before submission via the exception process. A key consideration is the financial (positive and negative) impact anticipated for the position.]

Exceptions for full-time positions will require endorsement of the Provost, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer and/or the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer based on reporting line, as well as approval of the President. Part-time and student positions will require endorsement of the appropriate Vice President or Dean.

Travel

All non-essential, University-funded travel is frozen through June 30, 2024. All employees should make concerted efforts to postpone travel beyond this fiscal year, if possible.

For trips that have already been paid for and are unable to be cancelled/changed, employees are asked to make every effort to reduce expenses when possible.

Academic travel by faculty, postdoctoral scholars, graduate students and undergraduate students is considered acceptable for the following purposes: [Only travel that does not meet the following purposes needs to be approved.]

- Travel to conferences is allowable on institutional funds (basic budget, reserves, endowment, start-up) when there is meaningful contribution and participation, such as presenting research, serving as a discussant, attending as an officer of a society, networking related to promotion, tenure, academic career advancement, and so forth.
- Travel related to initiatives funded by sponsored research and other external sources
- Operational necessities to conduct vital University activities or business, with supervisor approval
- Travel related to Study Abroad and World Scholars is allowed, with the expectation that the costs will be covered through fee-generated and external funds.

Development activities may continue but should be planned carefully and tied as directly as possible to impact and outcomes, with a focus on reducing scale, including number of travelers, number of days spent, scope, size and amenities for gatherings.

Discretionary Spending

Spending from start-up and enhancement accounts is allowable with support of the chair, with consideration to delay spending until the end of the fiscal year, if possible, without impeding academic progress. Faculty may request extensions on period for start-up expenditures. [The review of spending from start-up and enhancement funds will be the responsibility of department chairs.]

Spending from gifts and endowment income funds for items such as teaching, research, travel and events should be limited to essential items tied directly to the restricted purpose of those funds, pending recommendations by department chairs and approval of the deans. [Spending from gift and endowment accounts for activities beyond support of teaching, research, or university travel/events will require a recommendation from the chair and dean's approval.]

Discretion should be used for providing food/meals at events, weighing cost versus importance in terms of morale and community building.

Consideration should be given to continued membership within associations and purchase of non-research equipment.

Planned, course-centered and field-based experiences are allowable if already integrated into course design and syllabi.

Any spending from general supplemental fund accounts held by colleges and departments should follow these guidelines and requires permission from the dean. Expenditures that are approved should be drawn from non-base budget funds when at all possible. [Only those expenditures that do not meet the criteria listed above will require dean's approval. Where possible, non-base budget funds should be used.]

Events

Costs associated with University events should be managed prudently, prioritizing funding from endowment or gift accounts or from other organizations. Employees should also consider alternate modes of convening events where appropriate. While planning an event, please confirm authorization and feasibility with your supervisor before proceeding. **[Where possible, non-base budget funds should be used for events.]**

Institutionally funded events should be strongly connected to the mission of the University. Examples of allowable events include Decision Days, distinguished speakers invited to campus, events tied to endowed lectureships, and UD-hosted conferences already planned.

Compensation Adjustments

Contractual salary increases will be implemented in accordance with the applicable bargaining agreement.

For faculty, the salary equity analysis will be conducted and acted on as per the collective bargaining agreement. **[We will continue pursuing salary adjustments requested in the Fall 2023. All new requests will require detailed analysis by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and HR Director, and approval by the dean.]**

Non-represented staff salary increases will be implemented in accordance with the Annual Performance Management and Merit Pay Plan.

For staff, all off-cycle reviews of salaries and other salary actions are on hold until further notice. This includes, but is not limited to position reclassifications, market and equity reviews, one-time supplements, etc. except as required by a bargaining agreement. Approved exceptions may be made to support reorganizations that increase efficiency and/or result in overall budget savings. **[All requests for exceptions will require detailed analysis by the HR Director, and approval by the dean.]**

Plans in the colleges to increase minimum stipend levels for graduate students should continue.

Capital Projects and Equipment Purchases

Work on capital projects will largely be deferred; exceptions include projects financed from external sources and projects that are nearing completion. Other capital expenditures including University vehicles, technology upgrades, and non-research equipment are not permitted. Analysis of the effective use of our current spaces should be undertaken with the aim toward phasing out and eliminating external leases. **[We intend to continue work on the Spencer Design Studio as the funds are already allocated. All other work will be deferred.]**

Consulting Services and Contracts

Every effort should be made to reduce or eliminate use of external consultants and new contracts. Exceptions may be granted if the work is deemed critical, non-deferrable and organizations do not have staff that can support the critical work. Requests to engage new consultants or independent contractors will be carefully reviewed by supervisors to ensure consulting resources are not being applied where hiring has been frozen. [Requests for new consultants or contractors will require approval by the department chair.]