

Arkansas State University
Chancellor's Task Force on Cost Containment

Charge to the Task Force

Arkansas State University has an important duty and obligation to ensure that its precious financial resources, which are provided by legislative appropriations, tuition and fees, returns on investments, philanthropic contributions, and other funding sources, are used optimally in achieving the mission, goals, and objectives of the university. The university currently employs a number of practices and procedures for cost control, such as competitive bidding on contracts; preventive maintenance of facilities, fixed equipment, and non-fixed equipment; cash management; and a variety of energy efficiency measures. However, there is no doubt that there are other actions that the university should consider to further contain costs.

With the aforementioned in mind, the Chancellor's Task Force on Cost Containment has been constituted and approved by the Executive Council of the university. It is comprised of individuals from campus with the explicit charge of identifying how ASU may be able to contain costs more effectively and to prepare, in written form with an executive summary, a set of objectively based and well-considered recommendations to be presented to the Chancellor's Office by the end of the academic year 2011-12.

Although it is expected that the Chancellor's Task Force on Cost Containment will have considerable latitude to review institutional practices, procedures, and data, there are a few areas and associated potential recommendations that are outside of the role and scope of their charge: infringement of academic freedom; elimination of tenure; dropping specialized academic accreditation and non-academic accreditation in such areas as the University Police Department (UPD); lowering admission standards; eliminating intercollegiate (NCAA) sports and/or dropping to a lower level of NCAA competition; altering the role and scope of the university; or undermining campus safety and security.

In order to fulfill its charge, the Task Force will be expected to consider the best cost containment practices in the field, including those employed by other institutions of higher education, and to assess if these practices may have merit for possible adoption (with or without modification) at ASU.

When recommendations are offered by the Task Force, it is expected that the Task Force will consider and report upon the cost/benefit of such recommendations. For example, if replacing less energy efficient windows with more energy efficient windows is recommended, it will be important to provide a best faith estimate of the time it will take for energy savings to offset the cost of this action.

The Task Force is expected to carry out these responsibilities: meet at least monthly; prepare and follow an agenda; prepare, approve, and disseminate minutes; and establish a Chancellor's Task Force on Cost Containment website on which it is to post valid, reliable, relevant, and timely information (e.g., Task Force membership, charge to the Task Force, meeting times and locations, meeting agendas and minutes, and Task Force tasks and timelines). Both the chair and the co-chair are expected to meet at least monthly with the interim chancellor to discuss progress, issues and concerns, and challenges for which feedback or assistance may be necessary.

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