

# Questions and Comments with Answers from AVCs Jones & Powell

**Webcast Topic: Workforce Planning**

**Webcast Date: 04 October 2016**

Dear Administrative Staff,

As promised and in an effort to promote full transparency, we are disclosing all questions and comments submitted during our webcast on October 4, 2016, in raw/unedited format. Following each question, please find our written responses to these inquiries.

I want to thank all staff for participating. We had 224 colleagues signed onto the webcast. The [WFP Webcast](#) and accompanying [WFP PowerPoint slide deck](#) are now online and will remain so for your continued viewing and reference.

As with all administrative staff, if you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to us directly.

Best regards,

Brian K. Powell

Assistant Vice Chancellor &  
Chief Human Resources Officer

Donna Jones

Assistant Vice Chancellor,  
Finance

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**Question 01: Is there anything being done to help staff who are incredibly over worked, sometimes over 60 hours per week 6 months out of the year.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Yes. We anticipate that the Chancellor will authorize an immediate release of approximately one dozen FTE's – half of the Year 1 WFP FTE's – to assist divisions with their most compelling needs.
- Additionally, we need to assess vacant positions. We have almost 100 across campus. Prolonged vacancies are creating real stressors for existing staff. But, we can't reflexively refill positions. We need to assess, as I know that many department and division heads are doing so that we allocate vacant resources towards most compelling needs.
- Lastly, I must return to my point on tolerable suboptimization. No one is getting everything that they requested in their WFP's. We simply can't afford the requested growth. We will have to have conversations up-and-down the organization regarding what is tolerable suboptimization and what is intolerable suboptimization and how we address the latter without exploding the burden. Sharing, consolidation, reassessing processes, abandoning unnecessary practices, and alternative working arrangements (where applicable) are all strategies to apply to assist our hardworking staff.

**Question 02: Since new positions aren't being created through WFP where is the new money (from increased enrollments) going - the funds that were supposed to go to a least some of those positions requested? Seems there is a great incentive not to settle the WFP. For some, the delays in decision look too strategically beneficial to a privileged few on campus.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- New positions ARE being created through WFP: approximately 25 new FTE expansions per year over the next 5 years for a net gain of approximately 125 new staff FTE's.
- I must disagree with any assertion that there are incentives not to settle WFP. This simply isn't true. A lack of settlement PREVENTS the release of these 125 new FTE's. We need to move as swiftly as possible. This is why we are committed to completing the 5-year WFP Roadmap by Winter Break. That will lead us to conversations on areas of suboptimization and how we will bridge that through creative means: reassessing processes; creating processes where they are absent; abandoning unnecessary practices; and identify opportunities to leverage sharing or consolidation.
- Finally, I don't know what you mean by a "privileged few on campus". We are all in this together. We are a team of teams. We may have conflicting priorities, but we are not in conflict. Everyone's participation is welcome and desired, but I would discourage unnecessary, inflammatory comments that inject destructive conflict into our operation at the expense of our shared academic mission.

**Question 03: If revenues increase, does that mean more FTE's will be made available for workforce planning?**

**AVC Jones' Response:**

- Revenue projections across all fund sources informed FTE growth calculations. If all else is equal, and total revenue exceeds projections, campus leadership may consider increasing the FTE allotment. Nonetheless, it is important to note that our staff need is among other competing needs across the campus, including additional faculty, other types of faculty support, maintenance needs now that some of our campus infrastructure is aging, wage and benefit increases, etc., all from which depend on increases in revenue to cover.

**Question 04: Is workforce planning being used for layoff planning?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- This is a great question, and from Staff Assembly I know that it is a concern for our campus community.
- WFP is definitely not a layoff plan. It never has been and never will be a layoff plan. I believe that anyone in leadership who has said that WFP is not layoff planning has been sincere and truthful.
- WFP is a "smart growth" plan, allowing us to prioritize our limited resources and align them with our most compelling needs.
- That means WFP is a strategic growth plan.
- But, as we look to increase efficiencies or refocus resources to our most compelling priorities, there could be displacements.

- Do I think many? No. But I would never say never.
- What I prefer is to openly engage affected staff *should* this happen, emphasizing *should* because it is within the realm of possibilities.
- In this way, we can work to retrain (if needed) and realign the affected staff member, perhaps moving that individual to new areas where new career opportunities await.
- Open and transparent dialogue will reduce – not eliminate, I understand – stress and begin a very important dialogue about career planning with the affected staff member. To me, this is an honest approach, and it is the right thing to do.
- I also believe that WFP, if done holistically, will further reduce the likelihood of layoffs because it will allow for considerations of where there are new needs and whether displaced individuals have the skills or can be given the skills to meet those needs. The limited number of layoffs currently being attributed to workforce planning (a total of 3 across the entire campus) are largely due to departments working on workforce plans in isolation of the greater campus workforce plan.

**Question 05: The budget office has reduced funding of my unit without consultation. I have brought this to their attention often. We are a small customer service unit, heavily dependent on student workers. Without consultation the student fee budget (used to pay students salaries) has been reduced. Additionally, one of the career positions in my unit, funded via student fees, has not been adjusted for equity and merits for over two years. Now we are experiencing a structural deficit. Why is the Budget Office able to unilaterally make these value-based decisions? An old-fashioned budget call would allow funding of at least some staff positions and informed priorities. As workload increases and indecision inhibits funding for new provisions we must rely even more heavily student workers.**

**AVC Jones' Response:**

- I stand by the response I provided during the webinar. The Campus Budget Office does not have the authority to reduce or augment departmental budgets. We have, however, had to adjust budgets to reflect actual revenue. For instance, if a unit budgeted \$100K in student fees and yet the campus only received \$80K, the adjustment of the \$20K might appear as a reduction when it's actually aligning the budget to the actual revenue.
- The campus has allocated nearly 100% of the annual revenue that's anticipated. We are using a portion of the incremental increase for new faculty, faculty and staff merits, benefit increases etc. and have a portion set aside to increase staff which is being prioritized via the Workforce Planning process. We are developing a process to look at the allocation of the non-salary portion of the budget as well, given that the increases just referenced consume the majority if not all of the increases in revenue.
- Lastly, the Chancellor has encouraged organizations to first look within their existing budget to find capacity for departmental needs before identifying a budget shortfall. The budget office can absolutely assist you in doing so.
- Please direct any questions you have that are specific to your department to [budget@ucmerced.edu](mailto:budget@ucmerced.edu) and we will help you specifically. In particular, if communication

on this topic is not reaching you, we will make additional efforts to cater the communication to your organization.

**Question 06: You don't need to read/answer this question but AVC Jones' response is NOT ACCURATE. I believe she believes it to be true but MANY MANY MANY units have seem MASSIVE budget reductions without a single conversation. Someone (AVC Jones? VC Reese?) needs to KNOW this. Her answer is NOT accurate (I don't think she's dishonest - I think she's misinformed).**

**AVC Jones' Response:**

- I would invite you to reach out to me directly so that we can address the specifics of your concern in a constructive manner.

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I concur with AVC Jones and encourage you to reach out to her directly.
- Not directed at the author of this question specifically but more of a general appeal to the larger campus: we understand that things may happen or that problems and pain points may arise. It's understandable to me that people sometimes have to blow off steam, if you will, as they work through frustrating events. But, we can't stop there; we have to also remember to reach out and partner. If I have a concern with my Budget, I reach out to Donna and Veronica to discuss. If I have a concern with IT, I reach out to Ann Kovalchick or other IT partners to discuss. If I have a concern with procurement, I reach out to Mike Riley and his team. And so on. How else are they to know of my concern, and how else are they empowered to assist me? Frustrations happen, yes, but we have to reach out and partner in order to work towards better understandings and craft workable solutions. If we don't do that outreach, then we only have ourselves to blame.

**Question 07: The assumptions behind Workforce Planning and the percentage reduction of staffing levels were that offices had been over-funded at the beginning of campus development and so the "rich" staffing enjoyed then was no longer necessary, and that automation and centralization would yield efficiencies and staffing gains. However, the primary driver of workload for my office is administrative initiatives and constriction of the regulatory and IT resource environments. We are now heavily dependent on automation and some of the housekeeping work behind those systems has been devolved to the units. Self-service web design has created a lot of poor websites on campus, institutional compliance (and licensing costs) are laid on small under-staffed units, Halogen and Workforce Planning are ineffective. This has resulted in high turnover in staff, faculty and IT staff. In light of what seems to be proof of incorrect assumptions for future planning and budgeting, will leadership revisit assumptions about effective staffing levels?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I can't say that I agree with your assessment of the assumptions behind workforce planning. Workforce planning was introduced in response to our past practice of adding staff incrementally. How are we to strategically allocate limited resources to meet the most compelling needs of the campus? That is both the catalyst and the goal of WFP.
- Leadership is assessing assumptions about effective staffing levels. WFP contributes to this.

- In addition, there are questions that can be explored: do we reduce the projected number of faculty increases per year and redirect those savings to reassess staffing levels? That is a possibility, but to further that possibility requires discussions with multiple partners, most importantly our academy. We could speculate that an increase in teaching loads could drive cost savings that would be directly invested in academic programs support, but again: this requires discussions with multiple partners, most importantly our academy.
- So, yes, I believe that we are constantly revisiting staffing levels within multiple demographics, but if projections remain unaltered, then our long-range planning models tell us what staff we can afford to add each year over the next five years: approximately 25 new FTE each year over the next five years.
- In an aside, I must address the comingling of Halogen and WFP – two very different initiatives. I would encourage you to reach out to me and provide me with real, meaningful feedback on Halogen rather than an incidental insertion with no frame of reference. If you believe that Halogen is ineffective, then let me know how so that we can address the frustration. Fundamentally, you need to remember what Halogen is: a tool to facilitate dialogue and document progress. Halogen is not going to assess the performance for you. That's your manager's job.

**Question 08: Can either of you speak to timing...**

**As both of your areas are NOT direct support of faculty or students, you're probably less sensitive to the fact that the WFP for the 16-17 academic year comes SO LATE that it's almost effectively for the NEXT year. I mean, as far as any of us know, no decisions for THIS YEAR'S WFP has been announced but, even if they were announced right now, we're unlikely to have those positions classified, posted and filled until 2017! So, if your function is "administration" maybe this doesn't matter as much but those of us on the FRONT LINES serving our faculty (and students) are DYING out here while everyone "deliberates." Can we expect WFP to tighten up next year and actually provide some help WHEN THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS ARRIVE expecting service?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- My comments in the webcast stand, but I will restate some key points here.
- I respectfully but sternly reject the premise of your question. That we are in administration and may not directly touch or interface with faculty and/or students on a regular basis does not desensitize or disconnect us from our shared academic mission. To assert such is simply wrong. I will restate my perspective voiced in Question 02: we are all in this together. We are a team of teams. We may have conflicting priorities, but we are not in conflict. Everyone's participation is welcome and desired, but I would discourage unnecessary, inflammatory comments that inject destructive conflict into our operation at the expense of our shared academic mission.
- Planning takes time, particularly when the results of WFP Phase 1 identified a critical budget misalignment that had to be reconciled. ALL members of senior leadership – academic and administrative – recognized this critical need and elected to pause additional work until we could reconcile our budgeted FTE's.

- Deliberations must be thoughtful and intentional. While I may echo your sense of frustration, to move hastily would result in improper conclusions.
- WFP FTE's will be released beginning with the October 12<sup>th</sup> Cabinet meeting. Yes, it will take some time to activate those. I concede the point. But, there are approximately 100 vacant positions across campus, some of which could be or could have gone forward to recruitment and have not, or could have been redirected to other compelling needs and weren't. In the alternate, those salary savings could have funded limited or contract employment to alleviate the burden on staff created by the vacancies. My point here: there are options available in the meantime to offer relief, and I encourage dialogues within units on options available to alleviate the strain. Managers should be continuously reassessing their respective operations to align and realign resources and problem-solve. Ours must be a culture in which this is both encouraged and rewarded.

**Question 09: Does the alignment of resources with the most compelling needs have any impact on projects that are currently in flight? If so what is the impact?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I would need to know more about your definition of "projects" as this could reference a myriad of activities.
- That said, it is conceivable that we could reassess how we do things (process), if we could do them better (a modification of process), if we still need to do them (an abandonment of process, or project), etc.
- Some projects, like UC Path, are mandated by UCOP. It is foreseeable that these will impact WFP in terms of resource allocations, on either a temporary or permanent basis.
- I think this will be a case by case assessment, to be honest. Additional context to your question would be helpful for me to give you a more concise or complete answer, and I would encourage you to reach out to me for further discussion.

**Question 10: Is Cabinet also looking at how much it will cost to replace the employees who leave UCM or go out on medical leaves because the workload is simply beyond reasonable... some are working the equivalent of 1.5 - 2 FTE's and extremely stressed to the point their health is suffering. There are more costs to consider.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Certainly we are sensitive to these concerns, hence the conversations regarding tolerable suboptimization, sharing and consolidating functions, reassessing process, and other means of achieving greater work/life balance that we value and strive towards.
- These conversations and considerations, though, must also take place outside the Cabinet-level and be held up and down the divisional chain by engaging directors and managers. Operations, assignment of work, and redistribution of work falls within the manager's scope of responsibility. Cabinet sets the standards by which we must operation (to my above point), but leaders at all levels of the organization must actively work up and down the chain to ensure responsiveness.

**Question 11: You mentioned that the campus will gravitate towards a shared services model. Will ACT expand to include other campus units?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- To be clear, I stated that shared services are built into the evaluation as they reflect our current budgetary and operating reality. How ACT, specifically, expands across the campus will depend upon Cabinet and divisional conversations as to the best way to leverage shared or consolidated resources in order to best align resources and/or to best address identified suboptimizations that may exist individually. The solutions may be ACT or a hybrid model that bridges localization with centralization (e.g., "quasi-consolidated models among similar areas or divisions).

**Question 12: Will current employees lose their jobs when UC Path comes online?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- The honest answer is: I don't know.
- What I will say is that if – if – dislocations were to manifest as an outcome of UC Path, then we should identify that sooner rather than later and then begin those conversations consistent with my response in Question 04.
- If you have additional or specific concerns, I encourage you to reach out to me so that we can have a fuller conversation to address your specific concerns.

**Question 13: Does workforce planning include potential promotions of existing employees? This campus really struggles with retaining employees due to low pay that doesn't increase over time to compensate for cost of living increases. How do you plan on retaining good employees?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Yes, it does.
- It should be emphasized, however, that promotional opportunities must be consistent with the needs of the organization. We are not a civil service operation in which one gets a grade promotion every X years. That's not how this works. Someone could work an entire career in the same position without ever having a reclassification if the job itself doesn't change. Rewards then come from pay-for-performance models, recognition awards, and performance development to empower that employee to grow and assume new and higher level duties within the same unit or from another area of the organization. As each department and division work towards strategic growth, we need to have conversations about how we can leverage new opportunities for existing high-potential staff within their home department or elsewhere on campus.
- It should be understood that there is no repository or list of employees that will be promoted. But, we certainly aim to build this organization in a collaborative model that rewards performance. This is why President Napolitano moved us towards pay-for-performance models starting this summer. Again and again, we see how initiatives and activities intersect on high-potential staff.
- I believe that more opportunities will be identified once we enter discussions on how we can share, consolidate, or otherwise leverage our staff in advancement

opportunities so that we can reduce projected suboptimizations to tolerable levels or otherwise eliminate them completely.

**Question 14: A lot of employees are overworked and under a lot of stress and from your conversation it seems like the WFP only includes extremely limited new additions. That will add stress to existing employees who cannot keep up with the growth. What is your plan to address that?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I understand the stress and concern, as does all of our leadership team.
- As I stated in my response to Question 07, we can consider numerous options to alleviate this stress; however, if revenues and expenditures remain as projected in our long-range model, then we know that we can afford the addition of +125 new staff FTE's over the next five years. That is less than the +335 new staff FTE's requested in WFP Phase 2 iterations. But, +335 is simply not affordable, and we are not in a position to engage in deficit spending. We must live within our means.
- Living within our means, though, does not mean piling on to our staff. It means we must suboptimize where tolerable and identify means of bridging suboptimizations that are intolerable. This means reassessing how we do things (process), why we do things (abandon the unnecessary), and how we can share, consolidate, or partner to leverage and coordinate our activities. It also means Service Level Agreements (SLA's): with X staff my unit can provide turnaround in Y time. Those SLA's must be circulated and accepted.
- The key thing will be up and down conversations. We are aware that some areas deal in deadlines imposed by external parties. Knowing where we can't suboptimize will drive conversations on how to rally and allocate efforts in a way in which allows us to either suboptimize or adopt new methods and solutions to these functional areas.

**Question 15: Why is UCM so broke?**

**AVC Jones' Response:**

- UC Merced is in the black. The prioritizing and planning for our liabilities is not only fiscally responsible but necessary. It is imperative that as we grow, our constrained resources are aligned where they are needed. The plan is to keep us in the black as we grow to achieve our goals and reach for new ones.

**Question 16: How are we expected to keep up our performance with strict timelines and deadlines while being stretched beyond our abilities...Tolerable Suboptimization sounds reasonable in theory, but reality is we are expected to get the work done.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Tolerable Suboptimization does not mean under-performance. It means that we will accept a standard of output that may not be ideal but is necessary so that we do not overwork and overtax our valued staff.
- In this environment, if we have a Service Level Agreement that states with X staff my unit can provide turnaround in Y time, acceptable performance is based on meeting the



“Y” turnaround time. Within this environment, we expect “to get the work done” within Y timeframe. That timeframe becomes circulated and accepted as the operating reality.

- Where we cannot suboptimize, we must assess new processes, new partnerships, new collaborations, and/or new consolidations available that will align existing resources to time-sensitive deliverables in a way that is responsive to operational needs and to employee work/life balance.

**Question 17: It appears that WFP has replaced our annual budget process, with no results in the last few years. Will we resume a "normal" budget process at some point in the future? Or will WFP be the de facto budget process? And if so, how will we capture non-personnel related budget needs?**

**AVC Jones' Response:**

- Workforce Planning is a portion of the budget process and is currently the procedure for determining increases in staff. The Provost has an Academic Strategic plan for increasing faculty. We are developing a process to look at the allocation of the non-salary portion of the budget as well, given that the increases related to faculty and staff consume the majority if not all of the increases in revenue.

**Question 18: Why does it take 4-6 weeks for classification review when UC Merced has Job Builder? Job Builder was meant to streamline the process. There are more resources in HR (human and technology) than ever in UCM history but classification process takes longer than ever. How can this be changed? Do we need better resources in HR Compensation?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I wish your assertions were true but they are incorrect.
- Halogen allows us to assess performance; it is not an HRIS system, nor is it a compensation technological solution. Job Builder and eDOC were created in-house to automate processes, an advancement over the paper and/or email transactions of the past. Notwithstanding, the analytical work remains manual, as it will in existing and future state operations.
- The key technological solution for HR is an HRIS system. We will not get an HRIS system until we deploy UC Path, which is a year away. And while the HRIS will benefit all areas of the organization, it does not supplant or displace the manual, purposeful nature of classification assessments.
- Job Builder is a delivery tool (see above). It provides a template to help facilitate the creation of a job description, but it is not now, nor ever was, intended to replace the need for fully developed job descriptions, or the review of them for proper classification. There are problems, a couple of which include the following:
  - One, it is wide-open, meaning that you can go in and see every possible title code and level available, even if your area does not use or even need to see many of those (e.g., if you work in IT, you have access to unrelated student affairs title codes such as athletic coaches, as well as others).
  - Two, I believe that submissions are made in good faith. But, with this wide array of choices, we oftentimes see submissions in which the improper title code or

job family is selected, and/or the selected professional level does not comport with the listed job duties. To maintain the integrity of Career Tracks, a commitment made by UCM when we adopted Career Tracks in 2012, the analysis and manual review of the is required and will always be required.

- Within Human Resources there are only 3.0 FTE's allocated to Compensation & Classification. Yet, those three individuals are not sitting around waiting for class/reclass submissions, nor is classification review their only responsibility. In fact, classification makes up only one of many responsibilities. Please understand: unlike any other unit in HR, the Comp&Class team is routinely tasked with UCOP/System-level assignments that have non-flexible deadlines; they are responsible for SMG administration; managing the implementation of represented employee salary programs (ATB's, MOU's, Equity, etc.); administering additional cash-compensation programs (e.g. Stipends, STAR, etc.); administering annual Salary Increase Programs for non-represented staff (ATB or Merit); managing, maintaining, and analyzing Compensation (salary grade structures, TCS updates, Salary Surveys, Mandatory reporting, Ancillary Pay, Dual Employment, DOS codes, etc.); and administration and monitoring of Federal and State programs (e.g. FLSA, Minimum wage, Overtime, Hours of work, etc.) and there's more. Marcia Patino, our manager, must participate in mandatory, weekly Career Tracks meetings where governance and structure are overseen and calibrated. She is tasked with data mining and analyses to assist System partners in their collective bargaining initiatives with our 14 system-wide bargaining units. Additionally, she must participate as a subject matter expert (akin to a witness) when grievances are lodged at the campus level. Policy and procedure review and implementation further reduce her time. As such, we at best have 2.25 FTE's in HR to exclusively work on classification review and analysis in what is a complex, research intensive, manual process, that is required of our campus in order to maintain the integrity of our Career Tracks classification system (as discussed above) and it is only a portion of their responsibilities.
- The operation is, in my professional opinion, under-resourced, and the combination of the above results in a level of suboptimization that neither my team nor I like, but such is the reality of our current operating state absent additional resources as requested when I submitted the HR WFP. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) that I can hold out to the campus is a 4-6 week turnaround time absent additional resources.

**Question 19: Will Faculty be consulted with where Faculty would like to see additional staff support?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Yes, they will be consulted, and their feedback will be reflected in – but not exclusively dispositive – in the final WFP Roadmap. It will be an important area of concern that leadership will assess in finalizing our 5-year WFP allocations.
- In addition and as I stated in my response to Question 07, if we were to pose questions regarding faculty hiring goals and/or teaching loads, then I 100% support broad discussions with our academy as that is not only necessary but the proper thing to do.

But, such considerations are speculative on my part and do not impart any support or opposition on my behalf.

- Please know that the Chancellor is authorizing the creation of a Faculty Liaison position that will further assist in facilitating these consultations and driving towards shared consensus on staff allocation.
- I personally welcome any opportunity to discuss faculty perspectives regarding staff support, either in 1:1's, small groups, or at the School level. If you are a faculty member who would like this engagement, please reach out to me directly. I just want to ensure that any resulting conversations and/or meetings comport to the rules of the Academic Senate, as I respect that institution and wish to honor any structure it may have in place.

**Question 20: Are there plans to consolidate Academic Personnel, Research Administration, Business Operations, and HR across the schools?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Plans? I think that word imparts a level of definiteness that I think is premature at this time. I think we should explore all options assuming they result in efficiencies and effectiveness, and I believe that such conversations exist, but I don't think we can say more at this time as it remains to be seen. I would just offer that we want to be consultative and considerate in these deliberations and would seek input and collaboration should we move in this direction in the future.
- Your question does state HR, and I do want to point out that administrative HR is entirely centralized at the campus level already. There are no decentralized or delegated administrative HR functions or responsibilities outside of HR Proper. I believe this is an important call-out as I wish to dispel any concept of a decentralized model in operation at UCM at this point in time.

**Question 21: For contract employees that are career status and not funded by grants or other "soft money," how may their status change under workforce planning?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- It likely depends upon the nature of their engagement.
- If a contract employee who is funded by "hard [state] funds" is engaged to provide project-specific services for a limited period of time, then I do not foresee any status change under WFP.
- If a contract employee has career status, is funded by "hard [state] funds", and provides services that are otherwise ongoing, regular work, that may result in a different outcome. We are working to identify such individuals and to assess whether or not we can convert them to full-time, non-contract status, and such conversations are taking place currently. But I cannot commit to any outcome at this time as such decisions are ultimately balanced against WFP allocations and require approval by the Chancellor.

**Question 22: ...to follow-up on the question about long work weeks (60+ hours) - that's an incredibly important question. AVC Powell asks us to consider tolerable suboptimization, and that's fair, reasonable and fine, but MANY of us work in units where it continues to be expected that we get the work done in a week - while our volume has gone through the roof and no new resources arrive. Tolerable Suboptimization is fine but then EVERYONE needs to know the wagon wheels ARE going to fall off and replacement wheels will be several weeks out. This place is breaking and no one seems to mind...**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Respectfully, I don't believe the place is breaking, and I don't believe that no one cares. I KNOW that our leadership team cares deeply about our staff and have had numerous conversations with Cabinet members regarding that shared concern for our staff.
- I agree with you that this is an incredibly important question. I live it every day and hope that we can, together, achieve breakthrough in our remedies to this concern.
- Your wagon wheel metaphor is completely analogous to the Service Level Agreement dialogue that I have had above (see my responses to Questions 14 and 16). I agree with you 100%: "EVERYONE needs to know" what the SLA's are. They should be circulated, and they must be accepted. In that way, everyone will know how long a new wheel will take to arrive, and even if we don't like it, we know that we must accept the delivery time if new WFP FTE's were allocated to other areas of the campus. That's only fair.
- Those conversations are forthcoming. They will happen, and that will reduce some of the burden and concern that I think is at the heart of your question and comment.

**Question 23: About how many of the new FTEs are staff and how many are Faculty?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- The WFP FTE's of which I speak are exclusively staff FTE's. They total approximately 125 over the course of the next five years. Faculty expansion slots are driven by a different process (the Strategic Academic Focusing Initiative) and different campus partners (the Academy and the Provost Office).

**Question 24: Part of the challenge in working across units on campus is that there are no written protocols and procedures posted in an easy to find place. Written protocols would help create transparency and consistency. What are the plans for creating a campus intranet and requiring units to document their procedures?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I know that an intranet has been suggested, but I cannot advise on whether it has funding or prioritization within other IT deliverables. I would defer to Donna on the funding issue and to Ann Kovalchick on competing IT deliverables.
- You're spot-on with your assessment of undocumented process and procedures. I don't think there is one area of the campus that isn't impacted by this.
- I believe everyone recognizes the need for this kind of documentation, but we must also acknowledge that this work won't get done on its own: to move forward would require a momentous undertaking of our/your time and efforts.
- In my opinion, we may have to remedy this in successive waves. By that I mean we can allow certain processes and initiatives to drive towards a larger collection of

documented process. For example, the deployment of UC Path has already sparked those conversations on campus specific to how reports are requested and created; how onboarding of new staff will transpire; how classification and recruitment requests will be facilitated; and so on. I've dedicated one staff member exclusively to focus on UC Path process mapping and development. That is a significant investment, but one that I believe will pay dividends as we work towards solutions to the problem you have identified. Other areas are doing the same. We will achieve this better state, but it will take time.

**Question 25: My current responsibilities do not align with and exceed my job description and pay scale. How will workforce planning aid in resolving the issues of investing in current employees?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Respectfully, I can neither confirm nor deny your assertion absent seeing an updated job description and referring that to Comp & Class for a classification review. Therefore, your first conversation should be with your supervisor or manager.
- I would refer you to my response to Question 14 in which I discuss ways of investing in high-potential employees.

**Question 26: Our office is going under program review, and one of the recommendations is increases in staff FTE, which is supported by evidence and external experts. How is this evidence and work being factored into the decisions for allocated FTE?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- That would be accomplished via internal communications within your department and division.
- WFP submissions were by division, meaning that each division head (the Chancellor for her division; the Provost for his division; and the Vice Chancellors for their respective divisions) submitted on behalf of his/her division. How each division head chose to consult up and down their organization was within their purview and control. I can only speak to my home division, Business & Administrative Services (BAS), in which VC Reese was highly collaborative with each of his department and unit heads to ensure free flow of information as he crafted his final WFP submission.
- I accept the tenets of your question: a program review recommends increased staffing. I've seen that within my operation and within others. But a program review can only inform WFP; it is not dispositive. We have more requests than we have resources, requiring the leadership team to converge on key priorities as we prioritize and allocate the approximate +125 WFP FTE's over the next five years. Perhaps yours is an area that will receive FTE allocations? Perhaps it will not? I cannot say, but I can say that absent an allocation of FTE's your area will need to engage your divisional team and the campus on areas of tolerable and intolerable suboptimization and how the latter can be bridged with process enhancements, abandonment of non-critical functions, sharing, consolidating, or other leveraging techniques.

**Question 27: Recently there has been an apparent increase in leadership hires, are they part of the workforce plan?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Yes and no. Any expansion (e.g., a new position) would be part of WFP and would require the Chancellor's authorization.
- Sometimes the optics of new hires are unclear. By this I mean that we may think that leadership hires are expanding, but the reality is quite different. All hires I have seen have come from either replacing vacancies or by repurposing vacancies and allocating them to other, more compelling needs:
  - For example, the Chancellor recently hired an Associate Chancellor. From the outside (the optics) this may seem to be an expansion in leadership hiring, but the position was created by repurposing 2 FTE's within the Chancellor's Office following the departures of those incumbents. The result was a new position, yet, but it was net-neutral in terms of impact. There was no expansion.
  - Another example: new directors of budget and of long-range planning within Planning & Budget. There are not expansions. These were refilling vacancies in new ways following departures of employees and subsequent to a reorganization of the P&B operation. Here, too, we see a net-neutral impact on the campus. In fact, I believe that the reorganization returned money to the campus for use in other key areas.
- If there is a position(s) that you would like to discuss, please reach out to me and I will be happy to share the history behind the hire. I just cannot recollect any expansion position within leadership. All have resulted from repurposing existing FTE vacancies, and I think that should be commended. We cannot reflexively fill vacant positions; we must always challenge ourselves to find new and innovative ways to use vacant FTE's to further the mission of the campus.

**Question 28: If WFP decisions are being made by winter break where is the money coming from for the new positions coming on line across the campus right now, specifically in the areas of administration and planning and budget?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I would refer you to my response to Question 27.
- People may believe that we are adding positions, but the reality (the optics) are that existing vacancies are being repurposed and recrafted to provide different services.
- I am unaware of any FTE *expansions* within Administration (P&B or other). All new hires have been the result of repurposing existing vacancies, meaning new working titles you may be seeing are based upon existing, vacant FTE's for a net-neutral impact.

**Question 29: Can either of you address the recent shift to a "Consultant Culture" on campus? One doesn't have to be particularly highly placed to know we're spending MILLIONS of dollars on consultants (largely by the same handful of areas on campus) INSTEAD of investing those resources into boots-on-the-ground STAFF.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I will be happy to refer this question to the Vice Chancellor's Council as they possess more perspective on this than I.
- I will offer some insight, though: my opinion only, I do think that leadership deliberates long and hard before engaging an outside consultant. After all, we have to spend our dollars wisely.
- One such consultant invited to the campus was The Grove, who assisted in our Visioning Summits that resulted in the Change Alignment Map that we now possess. Theirs was a limited engagement that has provided this entire campus with a meaningful product for use and revision over successive years.
- I'm also aware that we have engaged Huron to assist with process mapping and to make recommendations regarding UC Path's implementation. This, too, is limited duration of expert skills that are very familiar with the UC Path product. Their services would not have resulted in permanent FTE positions (boots on the ground), and I believe that their work product will dramatically assist this entire campus with the UC Path rollout – a rollout that will create new opportunities for boots on the ground staff.

**Question 30: What is being done for employees that are being denied and/or asked to change their vacation time due to their presence being too crucial to department operations? Given the reasoning that other staff members can not continue their work without their presence. Is there a plan in place to provide staff back-up to highly specialized positions?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I would ask you to reach out to me so that I can understand more. From my perspective, the University provides all staff with paid time-off for vacations to afford them time to step away, recharge, and enjoy their family or friends. If a manager is perpetually denying or cancelling an employee's vacation, I find that inconsistent with policy and inconsistent with our Principles of Community.

**Question 31: How does WFP actually benefit units and staff that are primarily funded by grants; when the grant amount doesn't necessarily increase. How will campus support these additional increases?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- As leadership outlines campus priorities, WFP FTE's will be allocated accordingly. Those allocations will provide structure, support, and administrative relief to all areas of the campus and to all members of the campus community, including grant-funded employees.
- Our long-range planning also projects an increase in grant revenue, and that in turn generates indirect cost recovery income to further support grant-funded staff and grant-funded operations.
- By growing the pie along multiple fronts, we build safety nets and structures to assist everyone. Yes, there will be suboptimizations, but those will be known and accepted to manage expectations and the workload accordingly.

**Question 32: Hallogen [actually, UC Path; see note below] update? Do you have a time line when this will be done? We have heard about this for years. Note: After this question was received, the participant sent in the following clarifying statement: “UC Path not halogen. I sent a question earlier. Do you have an update on the UC Path program.”**

**AVC Powell’s Response:**

- I understand the fatigue about UC Path. It is true that we’ve been talking about it for years.
- Things have shifted and accelerated after UCOP’s successful roll-out of UC Path in December 2015. Following that successful launch, other campuses are expected to implement UC Path as quickly as possible.
- UC Merced will join UC Riverside and UCLA in the first wave of UC Path campus rollouts.
- We are feverishly working to prepare our campus for this rollout, which is slated for August 2017 – that is less than a year away.
- I anticipate more messaging about this as the date solidifies, but I can assure you and the campus community that UC Path is coming, and it is coming in 2017.

**Question 33: UC San Francisco is planning to reduce their IT workforce by outsourcing many of its technology functions to an India-based service provider. Is UC Merced looking at following this model? Given that this agreement has been carried out at UCSF, it seems that any of the other nine campuses can leverage this same type of contract.**

**AVC Powell’s Response:**

- Anything is certainly possible, but I don’t think we can conclude that just because UCSF does this that the other campuses can do the same.
- For one, we have centralized IT functions as well as numerous decentralized, independent IT personnel. On top of that, there are staff who are engaged in fractional IT support. In my opinion, we don’t truly know what all we are spending for IT operations, and that is the first step in making that assessment.
- Second, as a medical center, UCSF has radically different operating models, technology needs, and revenue sources. From my perspective, they have significantly more resources available given their revenue streams (medical centers are typically more funded/resourced than campuses by the very nature of their operation).
- Third, we have suboptimized and outdated hardware and software. Outsourcing would require a significant investment in infrastructure to make the hand-off successful.
- Finally, and consequently, preliminary estimates are that outsourcing would actually cost triple our current IT expenditures.
- For all of these reasons, I think contemplating such an outsourcing model is good to have in consideration but is premature absent a feasibility and impact assessment to see if it is truly viable. I would encourage you to reach out to our CIO, Ann Kovalchick, if you would like to discuss this further.



**Question 34: Will you be conducting pay scale evaluations to ensure that positions are paid at competitive rates and fair rates across all units?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Absolutely. Since my arrival we do this annually, and we have already adjusted our pay scales last year, and we will be making further modifications this year to ensure that our pay scales reflect current market conditions. I anticipate that the next adjustment will be effective in January 2017.

**Question 35: How will this information, specifically related to a minimal increase in staff support be relayed to Faculty? They have urgent and high demands, expecting staff to respond quickly, solve problems, and attend to them with very short timelines. With the great increase in Faculty, and low increase in staff, how can we address Faculty concerns? Working overtime and through lunches to appease them will soon not be enough and shouldn't be expected now, but sometimes it is our only option.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- First, I wouldn't assume that no communication is happening. For example, I know that Dean Robbins in SSHA is sharing information with her bylaw unit chairs on this very topic. Dean Robbins and all other Deans also receive this information through regular Cabinet meetings (on which they serve).
- Too, I will point out that the Chair of the Academic Senate serves as a Cabinet member and receives information that can be shared with Senate colleagues and the greater faculty.
- But, our information share must be larger and intentional, which I think is at the heart of your question. As I mentioned above, the Chancellor has authorized the creation of a Faculty Liaison to address administrative needs and service level bandwidth. Other WFP faculty engagement opportunities are in development, be assured, but I cannot detail those until the plans are finalized, reviewed, and approved by the Chancellor.
- We are going to have to have dialogues in all areas of the organization on service levels and tolerable suboptimization. If you're working overtime and through lunches, are you having discussions with your supervisor? (OT should be pre-approved, after all). As I have repeatedly stated above, suboptimization is not a mechanism to promote under-performance. It is a mechanism to promote dialogue: "These are my assignments, and I cannot do them all at the same time. What are our priorities so that we can serve and also communicate ETA's and establish deliverables?"

**Question 36: Some areas cannot do "sub optimization" due to regulatory issues, deadlines. This results in out of balance work/life issues which is exacerbated under a limited resource model. So how can this be the blanket approach for dealing with staffing shortages. Don't you need to look at areas where this is not reasonable.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- I think you misinterpreted what I mean by tolerable suboptimization. I did not at any time in my broadcast or comments present this as a blanket approach for dealing with staffing shortages. It is simply a certain outcome in some areas.

- There will be areas such as the one you describe in which intolerable suboptimization occurs. That will require numerous approaches to remedy the unsustainable nature driven by the very things you describe: regulations, agency deadlines, etc. Sharing, consolidation, reassessing processes, abandoning unnecessary practices, and alternative working arrangements (where applicable) are all considerations we must explore and apply to assist our hardworking staff. This is and remains at the forefront of our WFP deliberations. ALL members of Cabinet are expressly concerned about staff workloads and are committed to collaborate and reduce those stressors after WFP allocations are finalized.

**Question 37: You mentioned about addressing the under performers as part of workforce planning. However, there are examples of people who are under performers and have been promoted to other positions which is perceived as rewarding them instead of addressing the performance issues. How will workforce planning address that behavior?**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- Chronic underperformance has no room at UC Merced or in the UC System's pay-for-performance model. Period.
- Sometimes bad things happen to good people (illness [self or family], marital, etc.), and when life happens there can be a dip in performance. We should be an understanding community and assist those affected employees wherever possible to place them on the pathway to rehabilitation. But, we can never accept chronic underperformance as an operating norm.
- I personally abhor uncorrected underperformance and find it intolerable. It is certainly inconsistent with the operating models foreseen in WFP.
- But, WFP is not a tool to remedy underperformance. Performance Management is that process (or tool), and it requires the leadership of a unit manager and a simultaneous partnership with Human Resources. Where performance is below expectations, there should be coaching and counseling to rehabilitate the situation (always desired) or to move to other solutions if the employee is not responsive.
- I can't say that I'm aware of underperformers getting promotions. I would never support that outcome. But, HR is not the ultimate authority on hiring or promotional decisions. We advise; the hiring manager decides.
- What I can say is that I have been a steadfast proponent of a performance-based culture since my arrival almost two years ago. I will continue to pursue that culture and that outcome. It is the right thing to do from a fiduciary standpoint, and it is the right thing to do for all of our hardworking, high-performing, high-potential staff who desire and deserve opportunities to move forward in their career planning. **On that you have my solemn word and commitment.**
- A final note: Tolerable Suboptimization is not an invitation – or permission – to abandon responsibilities. It is an invitation for staff and supervisors to engage in ongoing conversations about priorities and anticipated turnaround times. As I have stated consistently: all employees are expected to perform.

**Question 38: Hello. Will we get the slides e-mailed to us? It was hard to see them.**

**AVC Powell's Response:**

- We won't be emailing them as an attachment, but we will provide links for ease of access. You may access the slide deck here: [WFP PowerPoint slide deck](#).