

**From:** University Communication  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 9, 2021 1:00 PM  
**Subject:** Message from the President on the budget

## Message from the President

Colleagues,

We're looking forward to celebrating our 646 winter graduates Saturday with a virtual commencement. The pride and joy we take in the accomplishments of these students doesn't change, even when we can't be together. We know they will go on to great things and will always be part of the Sycamore Family.

In the meantime, we are moving forward on campus to fulfill our important mission for the state of Indiana. We are working hard to address the challenges of COVID-19 facing ISU and every other institution of higher education. Last week, we updated the campus on enrollment. We have 9,662 wonderful students in the current semester — not including 246 dual-credit students — down 8.7% from Spring 2020. Nationally, first-time enrollments dropped almost 14% for four-year public universities from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020.

Not surprisingly, this has an impact on our budget. With a lot of hard work, we have every confidence that we will finish the current fiscal year (FY21) with a net in operations, as we have in every fiscal year. We ask that budget managers continue to do the excellent job they have been doing since last July in controlling spending and keeping vacant positions open as long as possible. Budgeting for FY22 is our bigger challenge. During these unprecedented times, it is difficult to predict enrollment until the state and country have moved on from this terrible pandemic. In the meantime, our legislative leaders are working hard to craft a state budget that, we hope and anticipate, will continue to be so supportive of higher education. We know enrollment is trending lower nationally. State support won't be settled by the legislature until late spring.

We are preparing budget modifications with several scenarios. Everyone's priority will be to keep as many people employed as possible. This said, we will have a balanced budget. The University Budget Committee met Monday and will meet again at least two more times in the coming months. Vice Presidents are working with their respective divisions and Interim Provost Christopher Olsen is working

with deans to identify potential budget reductions. During this process, we're grateful for the Faculty Senate's collaboration on strategies and the thoughtful engagement from the Staff Council and the Student Government Association.

As we move forward, we will focus on the pivot to addressing the reality of future demographics and the workforce needs of the state. We will continue to serve the first-time, full-time student, but we must be inclusive of the needs of citizens in our state. Non-traditional students may not be looking for a traditional on-campus experience. They will likely value the rich experience of an ISU education, learning from our tremendous faculty, but only if we make it accessible and fulfilling.

We will continue to keep the campus updated on the budget. This continues to be a fluid environment. Meanwhile, everyone can participate in our preparation for the future by getting involved in the strategic planning process. That will guide us as ISU adapts and grows and, as always, educates and inspires students.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Curtis, Ph.D.  
President

