After consultation with deans, academic department chairs, and departmental financial managers, a plan for addressing more than $3 million in budget cuts, called for in the ratified state budget, has been finalized and is being implemented. The university budget reduction planning process involved each department or division submitting recommendations to the respective vice chancellor on how to best meet UNC Pembroke’s mandated target. The plan was reviewed by the University Budget Advisory Committee, made up of administrators, faculty and staff, and was presented to the Board of Trustees for their comments on September 20.

The mandatory budget reduction of $3,194,283 required that reductions meet targeted amounts in the areas of operational and instructional efficiencies; it also required a review of programs that could be curtailed or possibly eliminated. In the end, we were able to cut more in operating and instructional expenses than originally proposed – $972,007 verses $662,468 – and therefore less in personnel expenses – $2,222,276 million.

As a result of the planning process, eight filled (three SPA and five faculty) and 22 vacant positions have been eliminated and six academic departments have been consolidated or reorganized.

Also, the budget reduction plan includes a recommendation, which requires approval from the Board of Governors, for the elimination of the graduate degree program in music education and the undergraduate degree program in applied physics. The faculties of both programs will be given an opportunity to respond to this recommendation and to provide additional information before this decision is finalized. Should the programs be discontinued, there will be a teach-out schedule to accommodate any currently enrolled students who are working toward these degrees.

Other academic programs cited previously as being under review for possible budget cuts have been approved for continuation. These include undergraduate programs in theatre, art education, and music education, as well as the graduate program in art education. The provost and deans will work with the faculty in those areas to develop plans to increase program enrollments and ensure that institutional and UNC system goals are met.

I want to acknowledge the department heads and vice chancellors who sought every possible solution to minimize the impact on employees and on student academic offerings and services. While there are still unavoidable losses, the plan enables us to continue to provide an engaged learning experience for our students.