

MES Support Budget Request Narrative

June 7, 2012

The MES Support budget covers all wages and benefits for professional student staff, except for the Director. It also includes expenses as it relates to recruitment and retention of students, namely through travel to graduate conferences and advertising. Events such as orientation and the hooding ceremony are also covered by this budget. General office supplies needed for day-to-day operation are included, as well.

Historically, the salaries/benefits allocation has gone up as the professional staff salary has increased, and the rest of the budget used for recruitment and retention (R & R) has stayed the same with some roll forward added every year. In 09-10, the amount for R & R was reduced by \$2400 from \$15,160 to \$12,760. This amount is equivalent to 5 quarters of resident tuition for an MES student in 2011-12. In contrast, the MES program had approximately 84 FTE in Fall 2011, some of whom were nonresidents. Clearly, the amount of tuition earned during that quarter far exceeded the MES R & R budget for the entire fiscal year.

Below is the Graduate Program on the Environment's 2012-2013 budget request. Note that recruitment funding has increased substantially as our need for more nonresidents continues to climb. In addition, in order for the program to improve R & R, we have designed two student positions (some work/study) and one professional position to aid in internships/funding, recruitment, and communications. The idea behind these additions are that they will increase nonresident applications, as well as contribute to a greater yield of nonresident enrollments. For example, one company we plan to work with has estimated we could receive 25 nonresident applications (for Fall '13) with a \$5000 investment (equal to .75 residents). The amount we are asking for in recruitment alone is equal to 1.5 nonresident students (12/13) and the wage/benefit increase due to new staff is about \$39,000 or approximately 2 nonresident students.

Overall, the entire 12-13 budget proposes an approximate increase of a bit over \$61,000 or about 3 nonresidents. The entire request is about the cost of 8 nonresidents. For that low price, we hope to increase nonresident yield for Fall '13 to at least 50% (our average is 37%). If we were to do that for Fall '12 (13 students), we would bring in almost \$261,000 or 30% of total incoming student tuition for 12-13. We'd have to admit 33 residents to reach that number. Finally, when comparing the total 12-13 budget to our estimated total revenue of \$700,246, you will see an ROI of 350%. Of course, this doesn't include any other costs like faculty salaries, but it demonstrates how much a small amount of funds (remember, only an increase of 3 nonresidents to 8 total nonresidents) can go a long way.

The one item this budget does not address are tuition waivers and other forms of financial aid - as we increase recruitment costs, we must increase financial aid in order to turn recruited students into enrolled students. For 12-13, we have a little under \$122,000 in both waivers and foundation aid. The majority of our students have high need, and as we continue to admit nonresident students, we must find a way to cover the costs that loans don't cover. Students can only receive up to \$20,500 in loans - this only covers nonresident tuition (and is more than double resident tuition). There is another \$14,000 in additional costs that a nonresident student must bear. The MES typical maximum award for a nonresident with high need is about \$5000. Ideally, those nonresidents with maximum need would receive about \$14,000 or \$15,000 to cover living expenses; however, we would only be able to give such an award to a small number of people. Instead, we aim to help all students who have a need greater than 75% (nonresident) or 80% (resident). Clearly, if we want to "reel in" the nonresident students, we must increase waivers and foundation awards or we risk losing students not because our academic program is unattractive, but because they cannot afford to come - or have been given a more comprehensive financial offer at another school. See the list below to see where Fall 2012 nonresident admits are going instead of Evergreen.

Because services on campus are geared toward undergraduates (everything from food service to marketing), it is imperative that this budget be seriously considered. It is clear that other offices on campus do not include graduate school needs in their budgets, so giving financial support directly to MES will allow the program to provide services for students and prospective students that otherwise are not currently delivered or maintained. It is important to note that students in the Graduate Program on the Environment qualify as STEM students considering Washington's newest definition of STEM includes natural resources. In the last seven years, MES graduates have equaled, on average, about 13% of the total STEM graduates at Evergreen (MES, BS, and BA/BS grads). The allocation of 13% of the STEM funding already at Evergreen toward MES will allow the program to continue providing a quality experience to students as they contribute to the state and its environmental needs through internships and thesis research. This percentage will likely increase over the next few years as the program improves its recruitment and retention and graduates a consistently larger number of students.

Other sources of funding include working with alumni and established MES donors to build upon the Foundation funds that already exist. We seek more consistent support from Advancement in this endeavor. These funding sources, along with increased tuition revenue, will make this budget request possible.

Choices by nonresidents who choose not to come to Evergreen:

- UO Master of Environmental Studies
- ASU Sustainability
- International Marine & Coastal Management at University Center of the Westfjords in Iceland
- not ready for grad school (resident)
- Center of Environmental Policy at Bard
- Indiana University MPA
- American University - Global Environmental Policy
- can't afford it
- UO Community and Regional Planning Masters Program