Western Connecticut State University

OPPORTUNITY IN A TIME OF CHALLENGE

AUGUST 28, 2008
wei ji vs. zhuan ji

Crisis vs. Opportunity
Economic Challenges

- Slowing economy = Declining tax revenues
- Connecticut’s $151 million January surplus steadily falling; $75 million in July
- Trend outlook is downward
- Pressures on 38% of WCSU’s budget that comes from state funding
Immediate Pressures in State’s Response

- Hiring freeze
- 3% rescission in FY 09
- Increased scrutiny of travel expenditures
- Future increases in tuition fees will face scrutiny
Yet

- CSUS 2020 FY 08 funding is approved
- $950 million for CSUS 2020 program is approved
- $97 million for Visual & Performing Arts Instructional Center is approved
- Governor Rell addresses investment in education as well as fiscal restraint
- CSUS actively managing pressures
And, Connecticut’s challenges are relative

- University of Georgia is canceling faculty research leaves
- New York has $1 billion deficit; $51 million cuts for CUNY
- New Jersey is eliminating academic programs
- Florida has capped enrollments
- Michigan is facing double-digit tuition increases
- California is eliminating 22,000 state positions
How will we at WCSU address today’s realities?
Impact of FY 09 rescission

- $1.3 million cut from our $108 million budget
- Reductions in operating expenses, adjunct funding, overtime and travel
- Management and discipline in hiring freeze
- Focus on efficiency
- Manage to minimize impacts on mission and on students
What can we all do?

- Look for small efficiencies; plan ahead
- Exercise patience and understanding in expectations
  - Facilities and maintenance
  - Information technology
- Today’s picnic as an example
Going forward: Budget like a family

- Prepare for continuing difficult realities
- Save for the future
- Think in multi-year terms
Why we will weather this storm

- Momentum from our Strategic Plan
- Shared commitment of everyone here
- The attractiveness of our vision
Very strong enrollment picture for FY 09
Evidence

Continuing investment in strategic priorities

- First Year Experience
- Library resources
- FY 09 faculty positions
- Technological capacity—WCSU is now 100% wireless
- President’s initiatives
Evidence

Continuing improvements of facilities

- Fairfield Hall
- Old Main and White Hall stairwells
- Ancell MIS lab
Our work is too important to be deterred

- We’ve overcome bigger challenges
- Comments from one student
We face our realities with a spirit of zhuan ji