Many of you have no doubt seen recent media reports that suggest the state and national economies may be on the road to recovery. However, other reports have indicated that the state, and thereby Eastern, are not yet out of the budget crisis that began several years ago. Thus, while the future does look promising, the state is not yet out of the woods. Specifically, state revenues, primarily from the income tax, have been lower than the amounts that were forecast when this year’s budget was approved last summer. Given the likelihood that the state was facing a budget deficit, Governor Malloy has begun taking steps to ensure the state’s budget will be balanced at the end of the fiscal year in June.

One of these steps has been the rescission of funding from a number of state agencies and programs, including higher education. As a result, Eastern saw a reduction of $360,000 from this year’s budget. This means that we now have less money than was anticipated when the fiscal year began. Thus, we too must take steps to ensure our budget remains balanced through the end of the fiscal year. To be clear, the University and state remain committed to completing the tenure-track searches that are currently underway. Given this commitment to hire much needed new faculty, however, we must still ensure that we have sufficient funds to provide the high quality education that our students expect and deserve.

The Ad Hoc Budget Committee remains confident that our University will be able to balance the budget, as has been done in every year since the fiscal crisis began. However, as in previous years, our ability to balance this year’s budget will depend on the assistance of all Eastern’s faculty and staff. To help manage our ongoing fiscal challenges, the Ad Hoc Budget Committee again strongly urges all departments to continue to limit their spending. Please restrict your purchases to only those items that are essential to current operations. As in past years, no department will be penalized in next year’s budget for amounts not spent this year. Any expense you can postpone at this time, however, will help us manage our budget as we continue to seek ways to protect our academic core and ensure our students receive an exemplary liberal arts education.

Eastern has successfully weathered this fiscal crisis so far, due in large part to the sacrifices made by all members of our community. Your efforts to date are appreciated. As it has since its creation, the Ad Hoc Budget Committee will continue to provide the campus community with a transparent review of our fiscal situation, and we encourage you to visit our website, which can be found at: http://www.easternct.edu/budgetcommittee/