

Mr. Chad Ranney- State Budget Director
Indiana State Budget Agency
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Budget Director Ranney,

Vincennes University remains committed to achieving fiscal sustainability while maintaining high-quality educational services for our students and stakeholders. As part of our ongoing efforts to meet the 5% reserve requirement, we have implemented a series of strategic cost-saving measures. Below is a summary of the primary actions we are currently taking:

- **Position Reductions and Hiring Freeze:** The University has eliminated 17 positions (9 faculty and 8 staff roles) and is actively reviewing an additional 30 positions for potential elimination. The University practices tight controls with the hiring process and will continue practicing these controls. A university-wide hiring freeze has been implemented to further control personnel costs. Only mission critical positions will be rehired and any other open position responsibilities will be reassigned among existing personnel.
- **Departmental Cost-Saving Initiatives:** Each academic and administrative department has a practice of identifying targeted cost-saving opportunities within their respective budgets. We will continue this practice to ensure minimal impact on core operations and student services.
- **Reduction in Instructional Equipment Allocation:** Vincennes University has scaled back allocations for instructional equipment purchases. This temporary reduction prioritizes essential equipment needs while deferring non-critical upgrades and replacements.
- **Reduction in Facility Repair and Rehabilitation Allocation:** VU has also reduced institutional (General Fund) funding dedicated to facility repairs and rehabilitation. Efforts are focused on addressing only the most urgent maintenance needs during this period.
- **JAG and Public Broadcasting Reduction:** As a result of changes to dedicated fund appropriations, VU was forced to eliminate 38 positions in the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program that VU administered in Regions 7 and 8. Cuts to the Public Broadcasting funding also resulted in staffing reductions to VU's public broadcasting station, WVUT. Four positions (approximately half of the staff) were eliminated as a result of funding cuts and the remaining staff are supported by the General Fund in furtherance of our academic programming in Broadcasting.
- **Federal TRIO Program Cuts:** Over \$5 million of Federal funding for VU's TRIO program, a longstanding initiative that provides academic support to over 300 low-income, first generation, and students with disabilities, was surprisingly discontinued just before the start of the new academic year. Supporting these students is core to the VU mission and this program has a history of positive outcomes, including improved student retention and graduation rate. VU chose to use unbudgeted, general fund reserves to ensure these valuable support programs are still available to students.

These measures reflect our commitment to prudent financial management and long-term sustainability. We will continue to monitor our fiscal status closely and make adjustments as needed to ensure compliance with state expectations and institutional priorities.

While Vincennes University is resolved to make the necessary strategic reductions to meet fiscal requirements, it is important to emphasize that we remain deeply focused on delivering student-centered, hands-on, high-quality programming. These difficult decisions—whether they involve reducing personnel, deferring facility repairs, or limiting access to instructional equipment—have real and direct impacts on the student educational experience.

Broad percentage reductions applied across all universities have a disproportionate impact, especially on institutions like Vincennes University, where state appropriations make up nearly 60% of the general fund. For VU, cuts to state funding affect a significantly larger portion of our total budget compared to institutions that rely less heavily on state support. The capacity of each university to offset these losses also varies widely, depending on differences in research revenue, fundraising capacity, endowments, and tuition structures. Such funding changes can lead to larger class sizes, fewer course offerings, and limited access to updated tools and resources—essentials for effective, hands-on learning. These outcomes run counter to the core mission and values of Vincennes University, which is grounded in accessibility, innovation, and student success. The long-term effects of these reductions may not be immediately clear. At the same time, major bond rating agencies have downgraded the outlook for higher education from “stable” to “negative” due to ongoing federal uncertainty. While Indiana’s colleges and universities continue to hold favorable bond ratings, future reductions in funding, liquidity, and stability will be closely scrutinized.

VU remains firmly committed to delivering accessible, personalized, and career-focused education—often serving first-generation, low-income, and rural Hoosiers. Although funding reductions present real challenges, they do not diminish our determination to transform lives through relevant and affordable education. As we move forward, we will continue to make these decisions thoughtfully, with a clear focus on preserving the integrity and value of the student experience to the greatest extent possible.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional detail on any of the actions outlined above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Hahn', written in a cursive style.

Tony Hahn
Vice President, Government & Legal Affairs
Vincennes University