

**AGENDA**  
**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Thursday, May 5, 2022**  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**ASU System Office/WebEx**

I. Call to Order  
Christy Clark, Chair

\*II. Agenda

- Proposed Henderson State Resolution
  - Resolution requesting that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendations for addressing HSU's financial exigency.

\*III. Adjournment

\*Action Item

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Contact: Jeff Hankins (501) 660-1000

**ACTION ITEM:** The Chancellor of Henderson State University (HSU) requests that the Board of Trustees (Board) consider the recommendations provided to the Board for addressing HSU's financial exigency.

**ISSUE:** Pursuant to the Henderson State Faculty Handbook, the Board of Trustees must approve any plan resulting from the financial exigency process for it to be effective.

**BACKGROUND:**

- On March 28, 2022, the ASU System Board approved the recommendations of the Faculty Senate, Provost and academic administrative personnel, and Chancellor and certified that a financial exigency exists for HSU (see Resolution No. 22-17).
- After the Board certified the financial exigency, the Faculty Exigency Committee (Committee) was formed to make recommendations to the Chancellor on ways to address the exigency.
- On April 22, 2022, the Committee submitted recommendations to the Chancellor. The Chancellor evaluated those recommendations and submitted them, along with his own recommendations, to the Board on May 2, 2022. Both sets of recommendations are attached to this Resolution.
- The Chancellor formally presented these recommendations to the Board at the May 5, 2022, Board meeting.
- The expected salary savings, resulting from the Faculty Exigency Committee recommendations total \$3,744,504.
- In Fiscal Year 2023, the expected salary savings from the Chancellor's recommendation are \$2,551,836, and an additional \$2,789,180 is expected in Fiscal Year 2024, a combined total of \$5,341,016.
- If the Chancellor's recommendations are approved, HSU's academic degree programs will be organized into four meta-themes: (1) Health, Education, and Social Sustainability; (2) Applied Professional Science and Technology; (3) Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship; and (4) Arts and Humanities.
- Under the Chancellor's recommendations, a total of 88 faculty positions will be eliminated as a result of the financial exigency process. Sixty-seven of those positions are currently filled. Forty-four of those positions consist of tenured faculty members, who, pursuant to the HSU Faculty Handbook, will be provided with notice twelve months prior to the termination of their final appointment contract. A complete list of individual positions being eliminated has been provided to the Board.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**


Contact: Jeff Hankins (501) 660-1000

**RECOMMENDATION/RESOLUTION:**

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees approves the Chancellor's plan, which was submitted to the Board, and that Henderson State University is ordered to implement this plan.

  
Niel Crowson, Secretary

  
Christy Clark, Chair

  
PRICE GARDNER  
ACTING CHAIR

**TO: Dr. Charles Ambrose, Chancellor, Henderson State University**

**FROM: Catherine Leach, chair Financial Exigency Committee**

**DATE: April 22, 2022**

**RE: Program Eliminations & Reductions due to Financial Exigency**

The Financial Exigency Committee appointed by the Henderson State University Faculty Senate is making the following recommendations.

**Recommendations for Program Eliminations:**

- French
- General Studies
- German
- Music Performance and Composition
- Accounting
- Management Information Systems
- Data Science
- Finance
- Management
- Business Information Systems
- Marketing
- Political Science

savings:           \$1,727,034

However, a general business degree was suggested with many of the School of Business faculty being reassigned.

**Recommendations for Program Reductions:**

- Eliminate all part-time/adjunct positions. However, Nursing and Education stated they may need some of those faculty lines for student intern supervision or clinicals.
- Eliminate all faculty lines in the Instructor Scenario Tool for faculty no longer with the university.
- Art
  - Eliminate 3 faculty positions
- Aviation
  - Eliminate 1 faculty position – instructor has another job
- Biology
  - Eliminate 2 faculty positions
- Chemistry
  - Eliminate 2 positions

- Communications & Theater Arts
  - Eliminate 1 Communications faculty position
  - Eliminate 2 Theater Arts faculty positions
- Curriculum & Instruction
  - Eliminate the faculty line for Dr. Givan's position
- Engineering & Physics
  - Eliminate 2 faculty positions
- English, Foreign Languages, & Philosophy
  - Eliminate 6 English faculty positions
  - Eliminate 1 Spanish faculty position
- Mathematics, Computer Science, & Statistics
  - Eliminate 1 Computer Science faculty position
  - Eliminate 2 Mathematics faculty positions
- Music
  - Eliminate 5 faculty positions
- Psychology
  - Eliminate 1 faculty position
- Social Sciences
  - Eliminate 3 Political Science faculty positions

Salary Savings: \$ 3,744,504. This includes the \$1,727,034 listed under program elimination recommendations.



**HENDERSON**<sup>®</sup>  
STATE UNIVERSITY

## Future of Henderson



Henderson State University is redefining the future of institutional performance based on net cost of instructional delivery and student success metrics—access, opportunity, completion, and learning outcomes aligned to 21st century workforce needs.

Henderson faces three structural deficits as we reimagine college to work for all students:

1. **Fiscal Deficit**—defined by our overall cash position and the significant shortfalls in annual operating revenues compared to our operating expenses
2. **Student Success Deficit**—defined by our low overall persistence and completion rates that have had a direct impact on our net tuition revenue, overall student accounts receivable, and available cash balances
3. **Instructional Allocation Deficit**—defined specifically by the overall levels of our instructional spend compared to the revenue generated and attributed to academic programs

These deficits led to the Arkansas State University System Board of Trustees certifying Henderson’s recommendation of financial exigency on March 28, 2022.

# Reimagining Henderson



- Henderson State University is thinking boldly and strategically about how we deliver our academic portfolio with financial sustainability and performance defined as student success outcomes. This requires a careful reimagining of our academic degree programs as we chart the future.
- Given Henderson’s structural deficits, we cannot grow our way out of this challenge without implementing significant academic restructuring through the financial exigency process. As margins between net tuition and instructional costs widen, our only choice is to re-engineer ourselves to offer the academic degree programs that best fit student and community workforce needs.
- We must take a transformative approach to instructional delivery that responsibly stewards our financial resources, leads us toward financial recovery, and better serves the needs of our students and communities. The next steps to realize this vision will be difficult but necessary, and we must continue our progress toward financial recovery as we reimagine Henderson as a college that works for all students.
- Reimagining Henderson will allow us to prioritize and realign resource allocation around academic meta-majors to improve overall cash position and restore financial stability.
- Reimagining Henderson will allow us to redefine the value proposition for public higher education in Arkansas in terms of student success—access, opportunity, affordability, completion, and alignment of degrees to workforce needs.



## Financial Exigency

- The financial exigency process has pushed us to think holistically about organizational size and shape, to align our academic portfolio to available resources and workforce needs, and to creatively re-engineer ourselves to be a student-ready college.
- As part of the financial exigency process, Henderson's leadership team established an initial financial target of \$5 million for the Financial Exigency Committee's recommendations for academic restructuring, which represents one component of the university's larger financial restructuring need.
- The \$5 million target is comprised of salaries and does not account for fringe benefits or academic overhead costs such as supplies and services. The target does account for the resources required for instruction throughout the next year of transition to a new instructional meta-major model.
- Non-instructional units have been reduced through position management by \$1.5 million. Administrative position restructuring has saved an additional \$300,000.
- Per the Henderson Faculty Handbook, under the exigency process both the Chancellor and a faculty-led Financial Exigency Committee propose a set of recommendations related to academic program restructuring.
- The Financial Exigency Committee and Chancellor each evaluated data related to academic costs and net marginal costs, student outcomes and completion, and labor market and workforce demand to inform their respective recommendations.

# Academic Meta-Majors

Henderson’s reimagining of academic degree programs is organized into four **meta-majors** that align with the competencies, skills, and talents that define community-based workforce needs:

## Current Structure



Teachers College  
School of Business  
Ellis College of  
Arts & Sciences



## Future Meta-Majors



Health,  
Education, &  
Social  
Sustainability



Applied  
Professional  
Science &  
Technology



Business  
Innovation &  
Entrepreneurship



Arts &  
Humanities

Henderson’s leadership team will continue developing the detailed design and composition of the meta-majors in the coming months.

## Academic Recommendations



- Recommendations for academic restructuring and financial savings are listed under the four meta-major headings.
- Academic degrees are designated as either Future Degree Programs, which will continue to be offered, or as Teach-Out Degree Programs.
- Currently enrolled Henderson students and freshmen enrolling in Fall 2022 will be supported to complete Teach-Out Degrees. Academic disciplines included in Teach-Out Degrees will continue to be incorporated through the general education and interdisciplinary studies curriculum to enhance outcomes for all students.

## Reimagining Henderson

Meta-Major	Instructional Lines Impacted			Salary Savings		
	Filled	Unfilled	Total	FY23	FY24	Total
Health, Education, and Social Sustainability	12 (10 Tenured)	4 (1 Tenured)	<b>16</b> <b>(11 Tenured)</b>	\$308,200	\$643,256	<b>\$951,456</b>
Applied Professional Science and Technology	19 (13 Tenured)	5 (3 Tenured)	<b>24</b> <b>(16 Tenured)</b>	\$568,346	\$870,826	<b>\$1,439,172</b>
Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship	N/A	6 (5 Tenured)	<b>6</b> <b>(5 Tenured)</b>	\$687,678	N/A	<b>\$687,678</b>
Arts and Humanities	36 (21 Tenured)	6 (3 Tenured)	<b>42</b> <b>(24 Tenured)</b>	\$987,612	\$1,275,098	<b>\$2,262,710</b>
<b>HSU Total</b>	<b>67</b> <b>(44 Tenured)</b>	<b>21</b> <b>(12 Tenured)</b>	<b>88</b> <b>(56 Tenured)</b>	<b>\$2,551,836</b>	<b>\$2,789,180</b>	<b>\$5,341,016</b>

*\*An additional \$81,662 of adjunct instructor savings will result in \$5,442,678 total*

# Degree Program Changes



## Future Degree Programs

Health, Education, and Social Sustainability
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BS-Psychology
BA-Psychology
BSE-Computer Science & Business Tech Education
BS-Educational Studies Elementary
BS-Educational Studies Middle Level
BSE-Elementary Education
BSE-Middle Level Education
BSE-Health & Physical Education
BS-Health & Human Performance
BSE-Special Education K-12
AS-Health Science
AS-Health Studies
BSN-Nursing
BS-Recreation
BS-Social Work
BA-Sociology
<b>Graduate</b>
MSE-Educational Technology Leadership
MS-Clinical Mental Health Counseling
MSE-School Counseling K-12
EDS-Educational Leadership
MSE-Educational Leadership P-12
MS-Sport Administration
MAT-Education B-K, K-12 SPE, General Education
MS-Developmental Therapy
MSE Teacher Leadership
MSN-Nursing
MSE-Special Education K-12

Applied Professional Science and Technology
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BS-Aviation
BS-Computer Science
BS-Engineering
BS-Computer Engineering
BS-Physics
BA-Physics

Arts and Humanities
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BA-Innovative Media
BM-Music Education K-12
BA-Music

Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BBA-Management Information Systems
BBA-Accounting
BBA-Business Administration
<b>Graduate</b>
MBA-Business Administration

## Teach-Out Degree Programs

Currently enrolled Henderson students and freshmen enrolling in Fall 2022 will be supported to complete degrees listed here. Academic disciplines included in Teach-Out Degrees will continue to be incorporated through the general education and interdisciplinary studies curriculum.

Health, Education, and Social Sustainability
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BA-Geography
BA-History
BA-Political Science
BA-Public Administration/Public Management
BSE-Social Science
BA, BS-Criminal Justice
BS-Early Childhood Development
BS-Family & Consumer Sciences
BS-Human Services
<b>Graduate</b>
MLA-Liberal Arts

Applied Professional Science and Technology
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BA, BS-Biology
AS, BS-Radiography
BS-Chemistry
BS-Mathematics
BS-Nuclear Medicine Technology
BS-Medical Lab Scientist

Arts and Humanities
<b>Undergraduate</b>
BFA-Studio Art
BSE-Art Education K-12
BA-Communication
BA-Mass Media Communication
BA-Theatre Arts
BA-English
BA-Spanish
BM-Music
BIS-Integrated Studies

Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship
<i>While no specific teach-out degrees have been identified thus far, future consolidation and reimagining of the current programs will likely take place.</i>

# Certificate Programs

- Decisions about the composition and structure of these certificate programs as well as their placement within the meta-majors will be made as part of future reimagining conversations.
- The certificate programs listed here:
  - Are part of Henderson’s current academic portfolio;
  - Are not supported with additional or unique instructor resources and thus, have no savings impact; and
  - Typically require shorter completion timeframes that create flexible options for students.
- CP = Certificate of Proficiency
- GC = Graduate Certificate

Program Name	
Undergraduate	Undergraduate
CP-Analytics	CP-Pre-Law
CP-Entrepreneurship	CP-Project Based Learning
CP-Digital Media Production	CP-Software Development
CP-Social Media	CP-Museum Studies
CP-Academic and Professional Writing	CP-Non-Profit Management
CP-Creative Writing	CP-Personal Financial Planning
CP- Women’s and Gender Studies	CP-Philosophy and Logics
CP-Film Studies	CP-Integrated Marketing Communications
CP-Statistics	Graduate
CP-Commercial Pilot Certificate	GC-English
CP-Certified Flight Instructor	GC-Supply Chain Management
CP-Small Unmanned Aerial Systems	GC-Developmental Therapy
CP-English as a Second Language	GC-English As Second Language
CP-Cognitive Science	GC-Special Education Resource
CP-Sport Psychology	GC-History
CP-Gerontology	GC-Drug and Alcohol Counseling Specialization
CP-Health Communication	GC-Dyslexia Therapy
CP-Social Justice and Human Rights	GC-Educational Leadership
CP-Public and Local History	GC-Educational Technology Leadership
CP-Special Education Resource	GC-Instructional Facilitator
CP-Criminal Justice	GC-K-12 Education
CP-Forensics	GC-Nursing Education
CP-Instructional Technology Essentials	GC-Project Management

## Additional Information



- **FY22 Budget:** The savings estimates shown throughout this document are based on FY22 budget data.
- **Future Program Reimagining:** Cost savings from impacted programs and instructor lines have been provided for each meta-major. In the coming months, the remaining programs in one or more meta-major may be further restructured, consolidated, or reimagined as we design our student-ready future. These changes are not expected to further impact instructor lines.
- **Instructor Lines:** The recommendations include impacts to instructor lines that are filled as well as lines that are unfilled and have been recently vacated. This distinction is reflected in the earlier slides.
- **Staff Salaries:** In some cases, recommendations may impact staff that teach courses. For these individuals, the estimated salary savings that are presented include only the portion of their salary that was paid for instruction. These recommendations do not suggest a full elimination of that individual's staff position or salary.

**Henderson State University is thinking boldly and strategically about how we deliver our academic portfolio with financial sustainability and performance defined as student success outcomes. This requires a careful reimagining of our academic degree programs that work for all of our students as we chart the future for higher education in Arkansas.**

Arkansas State University System  
Board of Trustees  
May 5, 2022

The Arkansas State University System Board of Trustees met on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at the Arkansas State University System Office in Little Rock. Price Gardner, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Board members present were the following: Christy Clark, Price Gardner, Steve Eddington, Robert Rudolph, and Paul Rowton. Niel Crowson and Jerry Morgan were on WebEx for the meeting.

**Dr. Charles Welch, President, Arkansas State University System:** Vice Chair Price Gardner is chairing the meeting today. Chair Christy Clark was traveling, and we did not think she was going to make it back in time to attend the meeting in person. We knew there would be some different logistics today, so we worked with Mr. Gardner. Since he has the background information, he is going to go ahead and chair the meeting, even though Mrs. Clark got back in town a few minutes ago.

**Mr. Gardner:** We are here to consider some resolutions regarding Henderson State University. We have a number of people in attendance today. Board policy generally does not allow for public comment, but in light of the commentary and a lot of the discussion around today's subject matter, it is something that I think we should consider. If there is anybody physically present here today who would like to make a comment, I would like for you to raise your hand. I'm not seeing any hands, so based on that, we will go ahead and proceed with our action items today. Dr. Welch, will you begin?

**Dr. Welch:** I'm not going to speak to the specific recommendations, but I do want to give some history on how we got here. I think it is important for all to remember. I received the first call for possible assistance in the summer of 2019. When I received that call, I honestly had no idea of the depth and complexity of the problems that were facing the University. We had no idea that the University was going to borrow or get an advance of six million dollars from the state, and that those funds would be spent almost immediately to clear up past obligations, not to be used moving forward. In August of 2019, we formalized our assistance with an MOU with the University, because we found a university that was literally on the brink of closing its doors. We found a university down to one week of reserves, with expenses far outpacing revenues. We found a Financial Aid Office that was incredibly far behind in processing students for a fall semester that was to begin in just a few weeks. We found a self-insured health insurance plan that had a zero fund balance and no plan for how to handle large claims. We found



budgets with overstated revenues and understated expenses. We found employees, who were currently working at the University, but were not even listed in the budget. We found massive problems with student accounts receivables. We found bills to vendors that had not only not been paid, they had not even been entered for payment. We found debts that had been incurred on the capital projects side, with payment due, but with no structure in place for how to pay for those debts. We found information and data about institutional finances and processes that were incomplete at best, and incorrect at worst. We found a university that had the lowest net tuition revenue of any in the state of Arkansas, and the highest percentage of budget spent on scholarships of any in the state. We found a university whose bond rating had been downgraded twice by Moody's Investor Services, in a period of literally about a month. We found a university that had massive problems in most every area of financial and financially-related operations. With the assistance of campus officials, we, meaning the ASU System, immediately had to work to implement cuts of approximately \$3.5 million. We literally went line by line through the budget to find those cuts. Unfortunately, we quickly found that staffing levels were a primary driver in the cost overruns and would have to be addressed. That initial \$3.5 million in cuts included salary increases that had just been given a couple of months prior, reductions in all employee retirement contributions, and cuts across the board to program budgets, such as supplies and services and travel. And we were still not confident this was enough, as we were not able to trust the budget numbers that existed. In the spring of 2020, we embarked upon a search for a permanent chancellor, while we continued working to resolve some of these critical challenges. We were making progress in many of the areas, but everyone realized, and we said publicly on many occasions, that this was a long-term recovery effort. There simply were no quick fixes. Then the pandemic hit, and everyone was sent home for months. This obviously slowed down our efforts in a number of areas. We suspended the search for our chancellor and brought in a one-year interim just to get us through the pandemic. Our work to shore up processes and do a deep analysis into budgetary matters was severely curtailed. Even after our employees were able to return to campus, much attention had to be given to protocols for dealing with the virus and the internal changes that had to occur. We were not able to focus our attention solely on the financial crisis facing the University. We were now in survival mode in more ways than one. Then the fiscal impact of the pandemic really began to surface. We lost enrollments, we lost housing revenues, we lost food service revenues, and we lost

other revenue sources directly related to our inability to offer a full array of university services. These revenue losses continued into this current fiscal year, just as they did for many university campuses across the nation. Fortunately, we did receive federal stimulus funding to help offset these losses. However, these funding sources did not address the underlying structural challenges that faced the University even before the pandemic began. The stimulus funds were simply temporary band aids to get us through the pandemic. Even with the pandemic, however, there have been monumental accomplishments at Henderson over the last three years that I think are important to point out. Since 2019, the following is just a small sampling of things accomplished at Henderson. Internal and external audits of University practices and policies have been completed. A complete restructuring of the Business Office and many finance processes have been done. There has been a complete restructuring of Financial Aid, resulting in faster processing times, and we had two audits and saw a reduction in audit findings go from 15 to 1. We had a complete restructuring of Admissions and Recruiting, and we are cautiously optimistic about Fall 2022 admissions numbers. We transitioned Henderson's health plan to the ASU System health plan, saving money for the institution and many employees, while providing much greater financial stability. We transitioned the University to a more modern ERP system, which is our internal processing system, to allow for greater operations and efficiencies for our students and employees. Henderson is now participating in multiple ASU System shared-services opportunities to save money and increase efficiencies. A comprehensive student-aid review was completed, and Henderson's scholarship program was overhauled to provide greater impact to more students, while also increasing net tuition revenue for the University. Under the leadership of people like Julie Bates, Rita Fleming, and Bernadette Hinkle, we now have a budget that is complete, accurate, and understandable. That was simply not what we inherited, and it was not an easy undertaking. The University engaged in an energy-performance contract, in an effort to reduce unanticipated critical maintenance costs that were significantly harming the institutional budget. Negotiations with the Legislature were successful to provide for a delayed payback for the \$6 million advance with no interest. Multiple contracts with external vendors have been, or are being, renegotiated to provide savings and less exposure for the University. Analyses of University data, related to revenues and expenses, have been significantly upgraded from prior analyses. Moody's Investor Services changed Henderson's outlook from negative to stable within days of Henderson joining

the ASU System. Just a few weeks ago, Moody's declared that any refinancing of bonds, which is effectively if you refinanced a mortgage and get a better rate with lower payments, would be done with the rating of the ASU System, a much better rating than what Henderson held on its own. This was after the financial exigency declaration, and Moody's specifically referenced financial exigency and said, "It addresses cost cuts that are necessary to remediate a fundamental structural imbalance." Now, I realize that this recitation of the last three years may seem unnecessary for some who already know all of these unfortunate details; however, I think it is important that we all realize just how critical the situation is and that major steps have to be taken to help this University survive, recover, and prosper. Major steps still have to be taken. Many people across this nation are currently addressing the higher education model as broken and unsustainable, and in many instances, it is. But we must realize that if the overall model of higher education is flawed, that Henderson's situation is far worse than that of the vast majority of institutions. I'm heartbroken at the depth of these recommendations and the impact it is going to have on so many lives. This campus was my home. I know these individuals. I know their families. I know how they are being affected. It's hard. It hurts. At the same time, though, I know that Henderson must survive. Henderson must continue to serve Southwest Arkansas as it has done for 132 years. Not one person involved wanted this day to come or even for these discussions to have to occur. But the combination of where Henderson was in 2019, and the negative impact of the pandemic, made these discussions necessary. I've had multiple individuals ask why we don't just get more money from the Legislature or private donors. I can assure you that we have discussed Henderson's situation at length with legislators and with donors, but there is not an appetite for ongoing assistance without cleaning up, as Moody's said "that fundamental structural imbalance." And one-time gifts would only temporarily solve issues and would not address the underlying unsustainability of the Henderson model. Our only two options were to make the hard recommendations necessary to keep the University open and self-sufficient, or to do nothing and see the University cease to be a stand-alone institution. The latter was, and is, simply not an option. Finally, I want to address the question of: Why did this take so long, and why weren't these cuts made before now or recommended before now? First, it took a considerable amount of time just to decipher the level of issues facing the University. I have never in my career seen challenges so widespread, so deep, and so complex. Second, it took an incredible amount of time to

address each issue individually and develop plans for how we were going to resolve those challenges. Third, our efforts were interrupted by an unprecedented pandemic that severely slowed down our work. Fourth, perhaps most importantly, we had to have data and financial information that was complete and accurate and that we trusted. Fifth, we had to do a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of instructional spend to ensure that decisions were based on data and not on anecdote or emotion. I also want to point out that today's discussions and recommendations are purely related to instruction and faculty positions as a result of requirements in the Faculty Handbook. Henderson's non-instructional staff and non-academic units have also incurred cuts in recent years and months. Non-instructional staff and non-academic units, including athletics, were required to take furlough leave, even before the most recent furlough. Henderson has reduced the number of staff members and has reduced non-academic budgets multiple times since 2019. However, these cuts and changes do not require Board-level approval, as do the ones being recommended today, because of the Faculty Handbook. So, that's why they are not included today. I'd be remiss if I didn't publicly thank the employees of Henderson State who have worked tirelessly in the past few years to help us stabilize the University and prepare for the future. I know how hard it has been on these individuals, how much this has hurt them financially, how much this has hurt them emotionally. But I also know how much they love this University and believe in what this University does, because they have continued to push forward through very difficult times. We are certainly nowhere near where we want to be, but the institution has made monumental improvements since 2019. I also would be remiss if I didn't publicly thank our staff at the ASU System who have worked so hard to assist Henderson. Literally every member of this staff has pitched in to help to make sure that we can keep Henderson alive and thriving and prospering. And I just want to thank them all publicly for that. We are going to have a lot of discussions about the specific recommendations, but hopefully, I have provided some context and background as to how we got to this point today and some of the things that have been done in advance of these recommendations that are being made. I'll invite Dr. Ambrose to come forward and make his recommendations to the Board.

**Dr. Chuck Ambrose, Chancellor, Henderson State University:** Thank you for your ongoing support of Henderson State University and your willingness to work with us throughout this exigency process. It's important to state clearly that no campus leader wants to utilize the financial exigency

process. As the American Association of University Professors states, “Financial exigency is usually deployed too late or not used at all, which puts the survival of the institution at risk.” That was certainly true when a situation of financial exigency was recommended on February 3, affirmed by our campus leadership, and when you, as a Board, approved a situation of financial exigency on March 28. Financial exigency is a painful process, but necessary for the long-term viability of our institution and the students that we serve. There is no way to minimize the human impact of the exigency process and the significant disruption that eliminating academic positions has on our faculty, their families, and our community. The timing of this financial exigency process is especially challenging, due to the urgent need to improve our financial position by the end of this semester. I am deeply sorry for the challenges that this University has faced during this semester and for the longer-term challenges the campus has endured over the last several years, as President Welch outlined in his remarks. On December 9, we notified the campus community that a modified cash budget was required to restore the fiscal integrity of the University. A modified cash budget is a tool primarily used within the private sector, and usually not required within a public setting. Without significant reductions in spending, we could not pay our debt service or our vendors and have enough cash remaining to cover our payroll through the month of June. We have taken difficult actions during the spring semester. Unfortunately, furloughing staff and faculty one day a week, rolling back administrative salaries and stipends, position management, and other spending controls, are factors that only address the need to improve our cash position, but do not address the structural deficits that have accumulated over the last decade and that resulted in our request to declare financial exigency on February 3. These temporary reductions to achieve savings are simply not sustainable to control costs through the rest of the fiscal year and into next year. When you, as the Arkansas State University System Board of Trustees, approved the declaration of financial exigency on March 28, an Academic Performance and Program Viability Tool was then developed to support a 30-day process where the Faculty Senate appointed a Financial Exigency Committee to meet three primary objectives:

- 1) restructure the academic program in alignment with the \$5 million reduction in instructional costs, not including benefits; 2) determine the number of programs for elimination or reduction; and 3) determine the number of instructional lines for elimination or reduction. Those recommendations are contained within what we have presented to you today. We are incredibly grateful for the leadership of Dr. Catherine

Leach and the members of the Financial Exigency Committee for their diligent work and recommendations. The Academic Performance and Program Viability Tool allowed us to consider our academic program on the basis of the net costs of delivery; student success outcomes in terms of enrollment, persistence, and degree completion; and last, but perhaps most important, the high demand workforce needs and career readiness of students in Arkansas. The summary of the data within this tool was made available to the campus community on April 20. The data tells the story of the two structural deficits that have accumulated at Henderson over the years, resulting in our deficit spending, which has defined our negative financial position and led to this financial exigency process. These two structural deficits include exceptionally low levels of student persistence and completion, and instructional spending that exceeds our enrollment and credit hour production. The Arkansas Division of Higher Education reports indicate that Henderson has the lowest retention in Fall-to-Fall '21-to-'22 of any of our public, four-year institutions in the state, with the majority of our community colleges persisting students at a higher rate than ours. This results in graduation rates that are less than half the national average for four-year institutions, and even lower graduation rates for our Pell-eligible students. Since 2017, there have been 10,809 students who have enrolled at Henderson. Forty-seven percent of those students left the University without a degree. Seventy percent of those students are represented in our student accounts receivables and cannot pay their bills. That represents more than 60% of our total accounts receivables, with more than \$6 million in cash owed to the institution. When you combine our losses in enrollment and our low persistence rates with our instructional capacity, you find that our average annual credit hour production for all of our instructional lines is 298 credit hours. For a teaching institution like Henderson, we should be producing 600 credit hours per instructional line. Total credit hours produced across the University have fallen roughly nine percent a year since 2019. This drives our overall instructional costs higher, the third highest in the state of Arkansas, behind the UofA and UCA, while producing the lowest net tuition, as a matter of fact, \$1,000 less per student than the closest four-year institution to us, according to ADHE data. As we spend more for instruction, while at the same time collecting less net tuition, the overall effect is an academic program portfolio that has been deficit spending over time. In the 2021 academic year, our combined academic portfolio lost \$13.7 million on an operating basis (overall instructional dollars compared to the net tuition generated). In that same year, instructional salaries and

benefits comprised 70% of our academic costs, including tenured and tenured-track faculty, which represents 79% of that total amount. All of the data, contained within the financial exigency dashboard, represents cash. It includes what we have actually paid for instruction and what we've actually collected from our students. Let me give you an example: The Communications and Theater Arts Department had a Fall 2021 enrollment of 73 students across its three degree programs that are slated as part of our teach-out recommendations. The total cost per credit hour for the entire department, inclusive of all programs, was \$307. In the academic year 2021, those programs graduated a total of 13 students, and the department operated at a net operating loss of \$1,111,361. Some of those students may have graduated in other degree programs with another major, but the broader takeaway is that all of our academic departments operated with a deficit that totaled more than \$12 million in losses last year. These deficits require a significant level of restructuring, which is represented in the financial exigency recommendations. People have asked for an alternative to this plan, and I understand the request. But without reversing the multi-year trends in enrollment, persistence, completion, financial stewardship, and instructional cost management through a significant restructuring, the solvency of Henderson is at high risk. Put simply, surgical and incremental changes are not sufficient to keep Henderson financially viable and to effectively, at the same time, serve our students. After serving as a chancellor or president of a university for more than two decades, I would not recommend changes that affect this many people without the firm belief that this is our path forward to creating a "Reimagining Henderson" that can work for students in South Central Arkansas. The recommendations within this proposal are designed to give us flexibility to redefine our academic portfolio in ways that develop career pathways for students aligned with high demand fields, which will provide a higher degree of career readiness with a Henderson degree. This restructuring significantly reduces our overall costs of credit hours to align with our resources. Ultimately, these savings can be shared with our students to actually lower their cost for education. We will provide instruction across all the disciplines that we are currently offering, in order to support students' general education; to provide interdisciplinary competencies; to have requisite degree outcomes and electives, meaning that we will still teach math, we will teach chemistry, we will teach biology, English, and art, producing the durable skills that we aspire to for every college degree to include and to represent what it means to be a Henderson alumni. We are not abandoning our liberal arts core. We are

reimagining that core curriculum in ways that best serve our students and ways that create flexibilities that will include maintaining a focus of synthesis and expression and appreciation that we want every student to maintain. This is why we have committed to maintaining offerings in disciplines, like music and sociology. We also are not abandoning academic rigor and quality. Rather, we are striving to help students succeed at HSU by meeting them where they are, by becoming a student-ready college from a college that requires college-ready students in measures defined decades ago, and by better supporting students along their academic journey as they become alumni. We will work in partnership with our ASU System sister institutions, along with our good neighbor, Ouachita Baptist University, to broaden our definition of who our students are, provide a platform for enrollment growth, lower our overall costs of instruction, and produce outcomes that are flexible and current to meet the needs of our students and the communities we serve. What does this mean for our current students? We are not closing. And, we are not becoming a future trade school. Our first and highest priority, today and into the future, is to meet our current students' needs. We will work with our existing programs and faculty to finish the degrees that students came to Henderson to pursue. They will also be a part of restructured Henderson that will reallocate our support to make certain our students can complete their degrees. We are also, with a high degree of priority, reaching out to the 6,200 students who have left without a degree, who do not have access to their transcripts or have been put into collections, to re-enroll or re-up to help meet their degree or career objectives. As many of our faculty have already begun to do, we will work in collaboration with our students and partner institutions to meet the highest objective, and that's for each of our students to complete their degree. There is no way we can provide a sustainable model for the future of Henderson without the vital support you have provided as the Arkansas State University System. There has been daily support in so many ways - institutional research, legal, finance, advocacy, shared service with Jonesboro, and most importantly, the willingness to align and offer programs and pathways with our sister institutions across the System. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and encouragement as a Board in this process thus far. We look forward to the future of the University within the System, committed to each student's success.

**Mr. Eddington:** I don't like the thought of cutting programs that students will need. How will you continue to reach out and provide general education courses, even when the programs are eliminated?



Could you expand on that a little bit and help us understand how students will complete their degree programs in that environment?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Yes. First, with the academic portfolio provided - that measures the net productivity of our programs - it became painfully clear that we could not meet the financial objectives for reductions with only incremental change and produce a sustainable financial model for the future. Program elimination is not a tool that anyone wants to utilize. The breadth of our curriculum, combined with the number of programs that we offer, again illustrated that we could not be everything to everyone. Teaching students out is not a complete description of what is more important. It's to provide the instruction for every student to meet their degree objectives as they enroll at Henderson, while at the same time, provide partnerships, guidance, counsel, and advising to get them to a place where they can complete their degrees. That will require a personalized approach for every student. That process has already started because of the uncertainty that is part of financial exigency. We have faculty members, who are already assisting students to help them find where they can best meet their degree objectives. Unfortunately, given our historical persistence rates, as students move into their third and fourth years, there are a relatively smaller number of students. So, by virtue of the tenured faculty lines that will be a part of our teach-out, and with the outreach of partners, including within the System and OBU, we are very confident that we have the resources to provide the instructional resources for every student to complete their degrees. Does that mean every student's best interest is to remain at Henderson? Again, our faculty members are already actively working with their students to help them bridge where their needs can best be met.

**Mr. Eddington:** In other words, there are going to be opportunities for English classes and for biology classes and for accounting and those courses that may fit into other programs. So, there will be opportunity for students to take those classes as part of the General Education program?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Yes. These new meta majors enhance all of our programs by utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, where every student has access to those disciplines. I will be very direct; we can't offer all of those disciplines as a major with full-time tenured faculty positions at a cost of credit hour that is unsustainable. When 75% of our instructional workforce is either tenured or on tenure track,

reducing our cost of credit hour is one of the most important elements contained within these recommendations.

**Mr. Eddington:** The net cost figures were alarming.

**Dr. Ambrose:** Again, the allocation, and so as we would move instruction from 298 credit hours per year to 600, again, you are becoming much more efficient with an instructional allocation that can be more cost-effective, while at the same actually having the capacity to meet the needs of a larger number of students.

**Mr. Rowton:** Dr. Ambrose, I want to personally thank you for your leadership in what is a very difficult time for everyone involved, and certainly the entire campus community; so thank you for that. I requested some additional data earlier this week in regards to the cost per scheduled credit hours and the net revenue Mr. Eddington speaks about. Can you walk us through that data?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Let me first tell you what the sources of this data include. This all represents both instruction and students, our IPEDS data provided to the federal government, and is dispersed across every tool for assessment, accountability and accreditation. I think this is probably one of the most important factors to realize. This is because, as Dr. Welch walked through Henderson's journey, there were really not reliable budgets, projected revenues, or budget actuals that reflected our true cash position. I have to give Bernadette Hinkle, our CFO, a lot of appreciation for her dedicated work throughout the past five months. Again, it's very rare to move to a modified cash budget within a public university, but what you are seeing in instructional costs is actually what was paid to instructors, regardless of the complexities of employment relationships and multiple pieces of their compensation. The revenues reflect what is actually collected from students. These are not budgeted numbers. This is our checkbook. This is what we bring in and then are required to pay out in payroll. This set of tables represents the departments recommended for teach out. This data indicates the students who will enroll this fall with a dedicated major. For example, I went to college as a first-year student majoring in pre-med, and was going to major in biology. We have a large number of students who entered with a declared major of biology, which is great for recruitment, but just like most students, they change their objectives, they find their path and purpose. So, how they enroll doesn't mean that they will necessarily graduate in that major. As you look at the 156 students who are majoring in biology, last year we

graduated 16 students at a cost per credit hour of \$210, but with actual operating revenue generated of \$39, leaving an instruction by-credit-hour deficit of \$171. It's okay for students to change majors and departments that aren't necessarily attributable to that student. But, when the entire academic portfolio the viability tool illustrates, is operating at a negative net revenue, the result is a model that is unsustainable. So, whether they transferred, and, like me, became a sociology major, our program in sociology is producing negative revenue. There is a reason most institutions do not want to know what the unit measurement is for net costs, because you usually have a few programs that drive revenues, so you can afford other programs. We do not have it. That's what makes this exercise exceptionally difficult and nearly impossible. But, in doing that, that data is cash in and cash out, and so the net-cost basis is a structural deficit. If not addressed aggressively, we do not have sufficient revenue to offer our academic programs and sustain our institutional operations. The second structural deficit is our student-success outcomes. It's really pretty clear that, without improving our persistence rates all the way through to degree, an institution with a small campus and a liberal arts mission with a low student-to-faculty ratio, you would expect that our graduation rates would be beyond the national average of 66 percent. That completion rate is what basically drives the overall net productivity of the academic program and costs-per-credit hour required to be in a net-positive position.

**Mr. Gardner:** Dr. Ambrose, to kind of pick up on Mr. Rowton's comment, I, too, was a biology major when I started. I was 82 hours toward a biology degree and graduated with an accounting degree. I understand how that happens. There's been a lot of discussion and commentary addressed to us asking if there is a one-time fix, and obviously there is not. Just to make the point again, even if there were a way to balance it all out today, the data which we are relying on is of actual performance, and the data is verifiable. This just shows that you cannot teach your way out of it, you are just going to continue digging the hole faster. I mean, obviously, if you get more students in these classes, the cost goes down and you spread some of those costs out. But, I guess, at the end of the day, about 80% of the cost of these programs is actually compensation.

**Dr. Ambrose:** That is true. This is not an economic exercise. It's really not a financial plan. This model, by virtue of who our students are and how we serve them, does not work for approximately 70% of our students.

**Bishop Rudolph:** We've had some communication, and I received a lot of emails from current students, former students, and I've read all of them, and I understand the situation that we are in. I have a couple of questions. Are these programs that are possibly scheduled to be eliminated, these various majors and degree programs, could they possibly be brought back in the future if our enrollment increases and if the budgets allow them to be? I think that was the biggest concern, one of the concerns of a lot of people.

**Dr. Ambrose:** Yes, I would like to preface this by saying, especially with you and Trustee Eddington being alumni, that this isn't easy to tell a campus community, and more difficult to tell our current students. It's just something you don't want to do. And these broader career pathways that allow for competencies to be developed and measured and leveraged to be competitive would allow absolutely for the third outcome metric to say that, if there is a high demand in the state of Arkansas that produces career-readiness opportunities, it absolutely can be reestablished. But as an example, in talking with a student-support services staff and a product of Henderson, who is recruiting a student who is excited about pre-health science, and in talking with one of our alumni who is on our Foundation Board, let me just give you an example. Population health or social sustainability with the proper interdisciplinary courses and the proper requisite courses providing the competencies in biology, chemistry, and math, has the ability to demonstrate those competencies, pass the entrance exams, and have the skills required to serve in the areas of population health, outcome-based wellness, that will make that young person more competitive. This allows for the meta majors to provide more, not fewer, demonstrable competencies. We are moving very quickly to meet the needs of students. We are only ten years behind health care, where the outcome to define performance won't be by credit hours. College won't be defined in terms of semesters. They certainly won't be required to pay at the same rate to develop these competencies, because they can find them at a better and more affordable cost today.

**Bishop Rudolph:** The other question is, what has been done to assist those individuals who fall into this kind of category, whether it's faculty or staff?

**Dr. Ambrose:** We've been very fortunate to gain the support and services of the Arkansas State University System. As we have moved to a shared-services model around Human Resources, the level of support for the campus has increased. We also are very fortunate to increase our assets on campus to

assist directly with the needs of our faculty and staff. Janet Brewer is directing our Talent Management as coordinator of support that has included the outreach from across the state, shared job postings, and employee assistance. There has been tremendous outreach from the Arkansas Department of Education to provide pathways for alternative certification to teach. The ADE has also provided short-term solutions for employment during the furlough that includes substitute teaching. We've been offered by the state the full array of employee assistance, and that will only accelerate as these decisions move forward.

**Mr. Crowson:** We've spent quite a bit of time this morning, and rightly so, on the academic side of this problem. I know of no business that can survive when their expenses exceed their revenues. So, I applaud you and your efforts for recognizing that and then putting together a plan to address that. However, I have not heard anything about nonacademic expenses that we have cut. Could you share some information with regard to that?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Let me reiterate something that Dr. Welch said. Through the scarcity of the last several years, our staff has shouldered very significant positions and resources. Due to the timing of these decisions, our staff members were furloughed in the summer last year, when most of our instructional staff were not. From that time, the savings have been generated primarily through attrition. We have open positions and vacant positions that have generated \$2 million in net savings since January. It is accelerating, as you could imagine. There are a lot of staff positions, especially lower-wage positions, that have a very difficult time shouldering a 20% reduction in salary through the furloughs. If I went office-by-office and told you the multiple offices that are understaffed and under salaried, we would really wonder how we are providing the services and support to high-need areas, in terms of risk management and other functions, that we must pay attention to every day. Police officers, physical plant, health and safety, and certainly our housing are areas of concern. We have just about gone down to a level of staffing to a point that we are going to have to rebuild, and we are going to have to rebuild the salaries that put people above the living wage and do something with some continuity and consistency that says Henderson is a place that you can work for years. It is not impossible to cut our way to a viable future. We have done all that we can to sustain operations. At the same time, we are flattening our administrative spend, our academic administrative structure. I had all of their stipends rolled back. It's a part of the furloughs, and they've been furloughed and had salary reductions. We have permanently

eliminated some field positions in places like our Hot Springs Initiative and our Biological Center. We have maintained open coaching positions that we are getting to the point where there is sports sponsorship and staffing for health and safety. There is only so much that you can cut without reaching the point of asking the question, are we going to fund intercollegiate athletics or not? We are having to really think about those staffing attritions and open positions, and in the short term, as we rebuild enrollment and rebuild revenue, we will have to start allocating those. I would mention, very directly, that those allocations need to be made very differently. They need to be in a support structure that puts students first. We are not staffed in a structure that is what our future will look like. So, part of this is the real requirement to relocate to a new model that works for all students.

**Mr. Crowson:** It certainly sounds like you took a comprehensive approach, both academic and non-academic, and I feel more comfortable about understanding that everything has been considered in a multifaceted approach. Thank you.

**Mrs. Clark:** Dr. Ambrose, speaking of the new structure, are there other institutions with this same structure that you are proposing, and what does that look like for them? Have they been successful in implementing a structure like this?

**Dr. Ambrose:** There has certainly been across both public and private higher education, but also seeking alternative ways to deliver better outcomes and initiating the kinds of transformational change that is required to be viable in the future. Across the liberal arts, there are growing trends to offering interdisciplinary approaches. Whether it be the arts, whether it be the social sciences, or the sciences, finding ways to actually be able to maintain the disciplines and have the outcomes, but, again, at a cost of credit hour and staffing that actually works financially. There is a significant move, and this is higher-education speak, to meta majors that design around career pathways that actually align to probably the most important metric you should hold us accountable for, and that's how our degrees align with the greatest talents, competencies, and skills required to move Arkansas forward. I would consider that to be our mission as a public institution, and, again, this is a restructuring of the curriculum to produce outcomes that work from a student-success set of outcomes and career readiness. It does not mean that you are not going to teach x, y, or z. And it would be fair to say from an overall enterprise standpoint,

that the operating integrity, driven by the cost of instruction or our students' ability to pay, is being considered by every institution.

**Mr. Gardner:** Dr. Ambrose, one other point. Your proposal today actually goes further than what the financial exigency committee recommended. Could you give us a little bit more background about why you feel that deeper cuts were needed and why more programs were affected than what came through the faculty process?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Yes. Again, I'm going to have to lift up Catherine Leach and her colleagues on the Financial Exigency Committee. It's a very difficult task. It would be fair to say if you aren't utilizing that data to allocate instructions in this environment, we're all moving quickly, right toward a lower model of productivity. They made what I consider to be the very best effort they could. If you look at their recommendations, there is a huge gap from between \$3 million of reductions and \$5 million. And we know our structural deficits contributed in that 30% to 40% range, and within a 30-day time frame, it just again became a task that was very difficult, but one they took on and produced the very best results they felt like they could. I know that's true from the Chair.

**Mr. Morgan:** I have a couple of questions. My first one is to Dr. Welch. I was not on the Board when the ASU System took over the Henderson campus a couple of years ago, but I appreciate your history on that. My question to you Dr. Welch is the following: If the ASU System had not taken over the Henderson campus at that time, we obviously could have voted not to, then what would have happened at that time to the Henderson campus?

**Dr. Welch:** I think I need to go back to 2019, because that's really when we first stepped in. And let me preface my comments by saying that this is no reflection on the people who were there, actively working to try to do things. It was just simply a lack of resources and number of staff members and collaboration opportunities and both non-financial resources to do it. If I am going to be very honest, I truly believe that had we not stepped in in 2019, the University would have failed to survive, and more than likely would have closed by early 2020.

**Mr. Morgan:** My next question is for Dr. Ambrose. Obviously, this is a very tough plan to swallow for a lot of people. What are the options if this plan is not approved today?

**Dr. Ambrose:** I've asked that question a number of different ways, especially once we saw the net margin data of cost versus net revenue. That data kind of washed over me to say that the significant depth and breadth of these recommendations were required to transition and transform to a sustainable model. I have never seen, in the public or private sector, such low productivity numbers as our model is presented. And I would tell you that I've looked at that data and asked, what's the alternative? I'll just be very direct: I don't have one. As chancellor of the institution reporting to the state system, I believe Arkansas would be asking the question about what to do with 80 acres in Arkadelphia. I believe there would be \$78 million in debt that would probably become the responsibility of the state of Arkansas, and I don't believe that we would be discussing only the recommendations of exigency and reducing the numbers that we are going to reduce, but it would be a workforce issue with campus closure.

**Mr. Morgan:** One last question. We've heard that this process will turn Henderson into a community college or a trade school. Can you elaborate on those statements?

**Dr. Ambrose:** I appreciate that question and I'm going to give you an answer that I gave to almost every department as we discussed where we are and what financial exigency meant. Are we going to remain a public liberal arts institution, are we going to become a trade school, are we going to be a community college? I will be very direct with you as a Board. I don't really know what those terms mean. Because those are labels and designations that perhaps once worked for college, but they certainly don't work for our students. As we've engaged with really a commitment of public education here in the state to think about seamless pathways to productivity, the trades need the liberal arts. Every job needs the skills required for at least a baccalaureate degree, or beyond, in terms of skill development. And I believe this gives us an opportunity to think differently about some of those artificial organizational impediments that we put in place that actually just represent costs and not outcomes. If we don't, then those designations will become of less value, and I think one of the reasons the general public has so much concern about the cost of education up against the value they receive for their degree. This gives us an opportunity to redefine college in ways that produces a higher value for the future students we will serve.



**Mr. Gardner:** Jeff Hankins has let me know that there are people online who have asked to speak or make comments directly to the Board. Based on that level of interest, I would entertain a motion that the Board will allow public comments for those individuals to speak, and limit their comments to three minutes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Eddington, seconded by Bishop Rudolph, the board approved allowing individuals, online, to make public comments, limited to three minutes each.

Ayes: Clark, Gardner, Crowson, Eddington, Rudolph, Rowton, Morgan

Nays: None

**Mr. Gardner:** I'll ask Jeff Hankins to moderate the process of public comment, and to monitor the time, as well.

**Timothy Barnes:** I appreciate Dr. Welch, the Board of Trustees, and Dr. Ambrose and his team. Obviously, this is a difficult situation that didn't just happen. Because it didn't just happen, it's going to take a few years to get the situation better. Henderson, you will probably hear from alumni, is more than just a university. When you, like myself, can remember riding your tricycle down Presidents Avenue from McBryan, when my parents were going to school there, and actually having more scholarship money to go to that other university across the street, but you knew more people at Henderson and they knew you. That relationship is what makes Henderson that school with a heart. And, I know it's a sad day today. I know difficult decisions have to be made, and sometimes the best thing to do is you cut it deep, you cut it quick, and then you have to move on. As an institution, I think we need to move on. And we get to redefine what Henderson State is going to be in the future to meet the needs of the students and the student body, not only in Arkadelphia, but in Southcentral Arkansas and the rest of the state. I think the only thing that concerns me, and probably concerns a lot of alumni, is that it appears that there is not going to be any accountability for those individuals who were in charge at the time. They knew that this was going on. One thing about numbers and figures and accountability and with budgets and audits is that numbers don't lie. You cannot say that individuals weren't aware of the situation that was happening at the institution. I don't know what can be done from the standpoint of you, as a body of Trustees. With a lot of people, the feelings that they feel and the hurt feelings that they feel is because they see individuals who should have been held accountable, and hopefully will be held accountable. Then

we can move on to better things, and just leave this garbage can to burn, so to speak. But I have full faith and confidence in the institution. I have full faith and confidence in Dr. Welch and the Board of Trustees, and I have full faith and confidence in the people at Henderson. After these tough decisions and the tough decision you are going to have to make today, then we get to move on. There are going to be better days for Henderson State University and for the ASU System as a whole. There are a lot of students in that area who need Henderson State. They need that opportunity. They need that post-secondary experience.

**Megan Hickerson:** I just want to say I'm a history professor at Henderson State. I also direct the Master of Liberal Arts degree. And both of those programs are on the teach-out list. They are being closed. I understand, and have never doubted, that there needs to be significant change at Henderson State, that there is a lot of waste, and that a lot of the spending isn't very intelligently done, and it hasn't been for years. I want to say two things about that. First, I've got a massive problem with all this, obviously, and I just need to say, although it's probably not necessary, I'm going to be fine when I lose my job financially. So this really isn't about that for me. But when this strategy was introduced to us, it was done with no consultation whatsoever. There was no conversation with faculty and the University about possible ways to correct any number of the problems that Dr. Welch and Dr. Ambrose have identified. We feel that we are not incapable of intelligent thinking and that we would have really embraced the opportunity to try to work out strategies to solve some of these problems that weren't quite this catastrophic. And when I say catastrophic, I don't just mean to the faculty who are being fired. I think they are catastrophic to the region. The other thing I want to say about the history that Dr. Welch told, is that the administration just absolutely refused to listen to the faculty when they raised concerns. And we did so visibly, publicly, and loudly more than once from 2017 to 2018 and 2019. It was about the bad spending and the bad decisions that were being made by the administration. And the one thing that every one of these administrators has had in common, and I'm going to add the Board of Trustees of Henderson State University into that, is that they absolutely refused ever to listen to the faculty. Absolutely refused to give us any sign that they thought we had any idea of what we were talking about and that they cared at all. And, I just feel that we are back in that place. We weren't given any chance to brainstorm and

think creatively to contribute ideas. The Financial Exigency Committee was given a mandate, not an opportunity to think creatively.

**Haroon Khan:** I will echo Dr. Hickerson on the fact that we were not given any chance to deal with the financial situation. I would say that you could appoint 34 faculty members, and we are going to take care of the financial situation. Another thing I would say is that the other alternatives have not been explored. The strategy was just to eliminate the programs. That is not leadership; that is poor leadership. This is not a Russian Federation. This is the United States of America. That's why I deeply believe. Are you going to offer degrees and general education? Is it going to be a technical school? I will say that I don't know all the facts, because we didn't get a chance of that. We can work for half to keep the University alive, but you are not giving them a chance. I can offer that opportunity. We had been given a lot of suffering. For the last 10 years, we did not get any salary increase. The faculty members tolerated that. We are willing to take more cuts, if we are given that opportunity to do so. We can explore other possibilities. The state has a surplus. What can the Governor do for us? Can our leadership explore that?

**Richard Hawthorne:** I have to admit I have a vested interest, only because my wife was on the list to be cut. Having said that, I am also a business person. I do accounting for a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Little Rock. As a business person who makes hiring decisions, I don't know that I like the idea of having an accounting degree, but hiring somebody who didn't take their math class at Henderson, because the program is being cut. I'm not sure if that is true or not. If I were Henderson, I would have problems knowing that I'm sending my kids to OBU, and relying on their program to satisfy my needs. As a hiring person, I don't know that I would like the idea of my potential graduate, my potential hire, not having math class at the school. Not being able to read and write because they didn't take English, read great literature, or learn to think critically, and I don't hear the answers to these sorts of things. I think everybody understands cuts have to be made. I don't think there is anybody who doesn't get that. But I question why eliminate an entire English department, why eliminate an entire chemistry, biology department to save other things that may not be as necessary to the University? I don't understand how English and biology and chemistry and math are not essential. I believe you are saving the Engineering Program. How does an Engineering Program survive without having the math to go along with it? Does the engineering professor have any say in the math being taught at wherever the

students are going to take the math classes, if they are not going to be at Henderson? Finally, if I were a student enrolling at Henderson, why would I want to go take those classes somewhere else? I'm going to Henderson for the Henderson experience. If I have to go to Malvern to take a math class or go across the street, that's not really what I would be signing up for. I understand these cuts are necessary. I think everybody knows just from the financials, we have to do something. I just am questioning why cut so many basic University academic classes. Thank you for your time.

**Mr. Gardner:** We are going to give Dr. Ambrose an opportunity to respond at the end of these comments to some of the questions that have been raised.

**Fred Worth:** I'm in my 31st year on the faculty at Henderson State University. I'm in the mathematics department, and I'm also on the Faculty Senate. We didn't find out about these cuts until Monday. The Faculty Senate met yesterday and endorsed a letter that a colleague of mine sent to the *Democrat Gazette*. We also passed a resolution of no confidence in Dr. Ambrose. That was sent to Dr. Welch and the Board this morning at 5:00 a.m. I was wondering if you all got that and if any of you have read any of that?

**Mr. Gardner:** Yes, we each received it, and I believe everybody has read it.

**Dr. Worth:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I was also on the Financial Exigency Committee, and the data that we were given on that, and I'm a mathematician, was garbage data. The numbers didn't add up that should have added up. The faculty lines were included for faculty who are dead, as well as a number of faculty who are no longer here. We kept talking about the problem, the data. They kept giving us new data. And we didn't get the complete data until about a week before we had to get our report done, instead of having a month to do it. We were told there were three programs, three of the most expensive programs on campus, that we could not touch. So, we are trying to find cuts in areas that are not as expensive as some others, and we could not touch those. That basically crippled us. That's why we only came up with \$3.7 million in cuts instead of the \$5 million that Dr. Ambrose wanted. There has been absolutely no Shared Governance. Dr. Ambrose loves to use the word, "transparency," but it is absolutely not transparent. We were recently told who these six new academic officers were going to be. No one was given an opportunity to apply for those positions. He just appointed them with, as far as I know, absolutely zero faculty input. He said that we are reimagining

Henderson, and that is false. He is reimagining Henderson. He is getting no input from the faculty at large. He mentioned communication and theater arts as being a very expensive area. He neglected to mention that several of the faculty in that department have non-teaching responsibilities as part of their load, running the yearbook, running the radio station, running the television program, overseeing the student newspaper, and students pay directly for those services. Many alumni have talked to us about what can they do to help. A lot of people would like to help if they are given the opportunity. And lastly, I want to address Mr. Hawthorne's comment. Dr. Ambrose keeps talking about our partners, and he's been asked how that is going to work, and his response is always we don't know yet. So, he's asking you to buy it. He has no idea how it will work.

**Katherine Strause:** I am Chair of the Art Department. I've been a 15-year faculty member. I want to point out that this began with a former administration. As soon as we were made aware of their negligence, I will say that faculty and staff were bullied by these people. We could not make noise; we could not ask questions. We came up with a vote of no confidence. The Board completely ignored it. I do not think they even addressed it in a Board meeting. The next year we had a public vote of no confidence. During this time, this news is getting out, our financial instability is known, our numbers are going down. And as these numbers go down, we hit COVID. So, all these numbers that you are seeing, and this data that you are seeing, are because of the bad situation with the financial problems, and then COVID. We certainly had much better numbers prior to the Glen Jones and Brett Powell administration. It wasn't just those two gentlemen though; it was everyone across the board as far as VPs go. We are in the poorest part of our state. Those kids deserve to have degrees in liberal arts and humanities. It doesn't have to be all about teaching and business. Our students are so smart and amazing. They go and do great, great things. What I would say is restructure this. Let us sit down and pare away the money we need to pare away from our own departments and help with this. Thank you to all of you today.

**Steve Listopad:** I just want to echo all of the concerns shared by fellow faculty. I am in the Communication Theater Art Department. This is my last year. I have chosen a new career path before, but I'll be fine. But there are two major concerns that are new that I just wanted to address. The Communications Theater Arts Department provides a lot of things to the community that I don't think get talked about enough. Of course, there is the theater. We're the only community news organization in

Arkadelphia, and that will be gone, or at least not supported by faculty anymore. We're the only community newspaper, we're the only Arkadelphia community radio station, and Arkadelphia television station that support the community. All of those will be gone. Arkadelphia is a news desert, and I think that's a broader conversation that needs to be had about how different aspects of the campus will be potentially gone. Also, I'm just concerned that certain departments were put on the "don't cut list," like faculty from Business or Education or Nursing or whatever, because it's just easier and quicker to eliminate whole departments than doing the hard work of eliminating faculty lines and spreading the payout. I think delaying a vote today, looking at that a little bit closer, would be in the best interest of the community. Thank you very much.

**Tammy:** I have a student who is a freshman there at Henderson. I'm sure there is a really simple explanation, but I'm getting lots of phone calls from him, and I'm not sure that I understand why all of this is going on during the week that the kids are taking their exams. It's been very disruptive to the students.

**Dr. Welch:** Dr. Ambrose, I think you should respond now.

**Dr. Ambrose:** Tammy, we have had that conversation with many students and many parents. And if we go back to the February 3 declaration, the March 28 Board approval, the 30 days that the faculty have to consider, not only the date of the recommendations, and the need to make reductions in instructional lines which you have received, but before the end of the contract period. But the financial carry of the one-year-notice for tenured faculty lines, which actually we will spend more for the one-year notice for tenured faculty than we actually produce in year one in eliminating non-tenured faculty. Unfortunately, our cash position and our need to restructure position management is urgent. And Tammy, again, I've had this conversation with several parents. I had it yesterday with some parents, who actually shielded students who were participating in some athletic events from these decisions because of exam week. Tomorrow is our commencement, and it's supposed to be a celebration, when people will celebrate the work of faculty and the accomplishments of students. There were questions asked about why we called people affected earlier in the week. Because of this process, we didn't want them to find out in an email or a press release or certainly release it following a Board decision on the day before graduation. It is the most unfortunate timing and the most compressed process that you could be a part

of and so, Tammy, for you and your son and other parents, we certainly understand that concern. We will continue to provide as much information as we can.

**Dr. Welch:** Chuck, you had mentioned that the 30 days and the Faculty Handbook were other reasons this week, right?

**Dr. Ambrose:** Right, because the faculty committee was really tasked to respond by April 28. And once those recommendations were made, there was an urgency for us to provide the instructional recommendations after fully considering the committee's recommendations.

**Dr. Welch:** The calls that the administration at Henderson made on Monday were simply courtesies to notify those impacted individuals that their program, and thus their name, was being recommended to the Board for elimination. The list was actually only sent to the Board on Monday, so it was simply a call to notify them that their name was being recommended for today, but certainly nothing is final until after this Board takes action.

**Nathan Holloway:** I might also be slightly different in what I would like to comment, because I am an alum, and I've also taught at Henderson since 2014 as an adjunct and I've worked there as staff, and work study, graduate study, anything you can imagine really. One of the things I would like to present is more of just looking at a singular case that presents what could potentially be a problem from this decision. And that is that getting rid of some of these programs is going to devalue some of the educational opportunities that are coming out of it. So, for example, I think one of the things Ambrose is potentially trying to do would be to involve other campuses, potentially other ASU campuses in teaching out these programs, or in providing the education that is being cut from programs like biology, for instance. But when you look at something like the RN pass rates for these other schools, they are not as high as Henderson's are. The Arkansas State University-Mountain Home pass rate is only 75% and Newport is only 63.6%. Their past rates are not as strong as Henderson's. They are not delivering the education that is as strong as what's being delivered at Henderson. They are not prepared then to give the same level of education, and these students are going to be worse off. If this is done, Arkansas as a whole is going to be worse off. Another issue is that certain things weren't considered. Why aren't you using the faculty at Henderson to supplant these other programs that are not doing as well? Why aren't you kind of reverse-engineering Henderson's way out of this? Use the faculty at Henderson to help these

other schools be better? These kinds of things, I feel, have not been considered as well as they could have been. Henderson is doing better than other schools are, and could be used to do better things at these other programs within the System.

**Mr. Gardner:** Thank you for each of you who took time to provide comments and input to the Board. Several questions were raised that I think I'd like to give the opportunity to Dr. Ambrose to return and maybe address some of those concerns.

**Dr. Ambrose:** I think there are a couple of concerns that can be put together, especially on why we would utilize program eliminations, and especially what those program eliminations will mean in the future of the curriculum and the future of degrees. I would like to clarify the conversation between the chair of the Financial Exigency Committee, Catherine Leach, and myself. She wanted to know if there were programs that I considered to be essential, as a part of either a "Reimagined" Henderson or the "historical" Henderson, because of high cost, but not necessarily low outcomes. Nursing, for an example, is a high-cost program. If you, as a Board, told us that the workforce needs and the demand for nurses in this region would allow that this program would be cut, I would probably raise a real question, because it's such a high-demand field. We heard that in the conversations with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education last Friday, in terms of the high demand the state has for the next generation of nurses. The second program that we talked about, in earnest, was aviation. We're the only public university with an aviation program in the state of Arkansas, and the reality is, it's not only high-cost, but it's a high-tuition and fee-driven program. I mentioned to Catherine, that the only decision you really have is to deliver aviation or not; you either have it, or not. The discussion was not that those programs are sacred, and not touchable, programs. No, that's not what we talked about. Those were programs that met the criteria that it would be very difficult to eliminate, when you're up against what the state of Arkansas, or the region, would say are needs. The programmatic cuts are the only way to reduce our instructional spending and reset the balance of our full-time and more particularly our tenured, faculty lines. We only actually reduced one program, and that's music, and as you consider reducing a program, versus eliminating it by virtue of the criteria set in the Handbook, which includes tenure, professional excellence, and then rank, then it becomes very clear, that by reengineering the music program, we could produce the outcomes and the instructional spend, considering the Handbook criteria. I need to say this: Disciplines,



like biology, English, and math are critical requisites to certificates and licensure scores, absolutely. And it has to be done with high rigor and high outcomes. Does it have to be done with the instructional cost of a full-time tenured faculty member? Our model demonstrates that it clearly can. The assumption that every section, and every course, requires full-time faculty to produce the outcomes required for students, is not true. If it is, we're going to have to rework our overall job descriptions and compensation rates to accommodate the net margins of loss that that affects. This restructuring allows for the stewardship of our resources, willing to involve partners that produce the credit hours at a lower cost, absolutely. It has to be. Because we're not producing net tuition required to pay for the cost. And so that's the reason for program elimination. That's the reason for resetting full-time faculty. It's a reason for listing our reliance on tenure. It's because those are fixed costs that we can't support with the revenue we generate.

**Mr. Gardner:** One of the commenters referenced, "garbage data." I would like either you, or Eric Atchison, to talk about the sources of that data, and what was available and when. We've seen dashboards, and at least to me, it's been out there and transparent, as far as estimated operating margins. The total cost, enrollment patterns, and number of students in these programs have been out there, based on what's been released since this exigency question came up. So, maybe you can comment more about the data and the integrity of the data.

**Dr. Ambrose:** I'll ask Eric to come up and speak to the validity and reliability of the IPED data that we rely on for every analysis.

**Eric Atchison, Vice President for Strategic Research:** To the question of the validity, or reliability, of the data, the student and faculty alignment that we built this model on is all based on official, institutional information that was submitted to both ADHE, as well as to IPEDS. When those data go to ADHE, they are validated. They are run through numerous types of quality checks, and I'm reviewing Henderson State, along with the rest of the System schools, regularly. We publish that information. There are numerous checks and balances. In terms of the financial data, in order to have a more complete understanding of the cost and revenue that was generated, we utilized the most recent fiscal year, in order to have that more complete understanding of what it actually costs to produce these programs and generate these credit hours and enroll these students, as well as complete them. That's why that data, although it's just last year, may have had some faculty on those rosters, who are not

employed at the institution now. Then we also utilize a third-party organization that helped us both validate the information, as well as work through any kind of questions or concerns of the faculty Financial Exigency Committee during that 30-day review process, as well as to help us build out the tools that Trustee Gardner mentioned. The Financial Exigency Committee met with me, as well as our third party, numerous times. Any questions that they had were related through the Chair, Dr. Catherine Leach, back to me, as well as Dr. Ambrose, and we were able to go back and review and revise if necessary, but also provide answers as quickly as possible to them. We worked in partnership with the faculty Financial Exigency Committee as they were preparing the recommendations, and I'm satisfied that we answered all of their questions.

**Dr. Ambrose:** In frequent meetings throughout the process with Dr. Leach, and Dr. Worth is correct, the portfolio was built off 2021 data. It has been updated and scrubbed for current payroll and staffing, and probably the most important part of that question is the financial data is right out of our book of accounts. It is cash.

**Mr. Eddington:** Dr. Ambrose, it was mentioned by several of those who commented earlier, and it's somewhat the elephant in the room. I'm interested in, and quite frankly concerned about, the vote of no confidence yesterday from the Faculty Senate. As a Board, I feel like we really need to know the details of that. I'm not sure if you are aware, or if there is anything that you can share, with regard to the number of people who were involved, the outcome of that, and the percentage of faculty who participated. That, as you are well aware, is a significant and meaningful action on behalf of the Faculty Senate. Is there an official report, other than what we received this morning?

**Dr. Welch:** I will speak to that. We have received a Freedom of Information Act request, and we will be trying to track down an official report. I'm not 100% sure that there is. Unofficially, what we have been told is that the vote was 13 individuals voting for, six individuals voting against, and five individuals abstaining. Again, now, I'm getting that just as a verbal report. It is my understanding that the Faculty Senate chose not to report out the votes, just that a majority approved. But that's what we are attempting to get. If there is an official record, we would certainly provide that to you.

**Mr. Eddington:** Do we have any sense of the total number of faculty on the Faculty Senate?

**Dr. Welch:** I think it's somewhere near 30, and then with alternates, you get closer to 60. But that's off the top of my head. And then there's a total number of faculty, around 235; again, I'm rounding.

**Mr. Eddington:** Maybe I'm still a little confused, but are you saying that we had 13 out of 230 faculty members who voted no confidence?

**Dr. Welch:** Just the senate, not the entire faculty.

**Mr. Eddington:** I want the severity of that action and the meaning behind that to be understood.

#### Henderson State University Resolution:

- Resolution 22-18 requesting that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendations for addressing HSU's financial exigency

**Mr. Gardner:** I want to thank Dr. Ambrose, the faculty, and the staff of Henderson State for their work on this, including the alternative recommendation from the Financial Exigency Committee. I believe that the process, although compressed, has been as transparent as possible, with input from the various stakeholders, given the parameters that we have. Right now, unfortunately, we are at a fork in the road, where the losses are not sustainable, and if we dig deeper, we are at risk of putting the entire University in financial jeopardy, and its viability and existence at risk if we don't make changes. The history, it is what it is, and that's really what has created this situation of financial exigency. If there were a bailout, buyout, or a fix, that would be one thing, but to keep doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result is the definition of insanity. Financial exigency is a very radical, traumatic, dramatic event, and I think Dr. Ambrose said earlier, either you don't use it or you use it too late. So it takes a lot of courage to be able to step forward and do that. Painful, absolutely. It's always painful when people are involved and you are affecting lives, faculty, students, and people. At the end of the day, everybody that speaks and everybody that has an opinion about this has the best interest of Henderson State University at heart. While we may disagree about the path to get there, we are all trying to get to the same place. The situation on the academic cost-accounting side is not unique to Henderson State, you know. Within the ASU System, back in 2017, this Board, through leadership of Mr. Crowson and Ron Rhodes, we undertook an efficiency study from Huron to look at a number of things, and one of the things that was identified in there was academic cost accounting. And you've got to look at the cost

of delivering the education against the revenue, and you've got to look at what the students want. And adapt to what your customers want, and what they need. With the help of additional institutional research, we were starting to move towards that with our other System schools. And then, COVID hit, and we spent the last two years being flexible and pivoting and addressing alternative ways to deliver education and serve our students. We're now appearing to come out of that. As a board, I think you'll see us continue to address that in our other schools. Henderson's situation was just extremely accelerated. It might be nice to have had a little more time to do this, but at least, in my opinion, it's kind of evident we can't. Many of the comments point to other areas where cuts can occur. You hear athletics, you hear administration, et cetera. Dr. Ambrose has addressed those. Those cuts have been uniform, even earlier in their timing, throughout this entire process. Modified cash budget, cash in, cash out. These aren't funny numbers. It's like balancing your checkbook or my check book. We're spending more than we're taking in, and we've got to do something there. The fact that the financial exigency process addresses only the academic cost accounting, is why there's so much focus on it. That's why it has to be addressed in this meeting and by the Board, as part of our budget process. Everything is on the table and you'll continue to see this Board work to that. Again that's one of the reasons it brings us to this. As far as the academic performance and viability metrics, I think everything was fair and objective in the way it was done. Unfortunately, the biggest cost in delivering our product is human capital and compensation, anywhere from 70% across the board, and in some of these programs, up into 80 and 90%. You read a lot of the comments about, it is the death of the liberal arts. It's not the death of the liberal arts. We will continue to teach in these areas. It just won't be for degrees awarded in those areas. It'll be realigned and in the meta majors, and again, it comes back to what our students want, what the workforce needs, and addressing a way to make them better prepared to meet community needs and get good jobs. It does do away with some of the institutional departments and structuring. I think that is always painful. Everybody's got their own agenda. Actually, I think this plan is reflective of the creative thinking that is going to be needed as higher education goes forward. And I think we are going to be addressing this more as we go forward. Clearly, today's colleges and universities are not like those I attended 40 years ago, 20 years ago, even 10 years ago. There are so many choices out there. There are alternative delivery methods that seem radical for what we are being asked to do here today. Again, I

think it's identifying what the students want. I think if you look at the conversion of people that come in and declare a major, for example, in biology, where you have 150 or 160 students and you are only graduating 16; ultimately, you've got to figure out what they want and where they serve. You cannot be just a cafeteria and serve the same menu over and over and expect the students to adapt to your behavior. You have to be able to be flexible. This right-sizing, or whatever you want to call it on the corporate side of the world, is what brings us here today. Is cutting curriculum what I, or any of these Board members want to do? Absolutely not. Is it our responsibility as Trustees to do that if it's deemed in the best interest of the University going forward and for the viability of the University? Absolutely, in my opinion, it is. The plan provides for a transition and teach-out. It's doing its best to not leave anybody hanging or somebody unserved. At the end of the day, does this give Henderson State the best opportunity to be viable and successful going forward and self-sustaining? I believe it does. For that reason, I would support the plan that Dr. Ambrose has put forth before the Board. Finally, for those of you who sent emails and comments and reached out to us, I respect and appreciate every one of those comments. I do assign value to that and don't want anybody to feel slighted. Again, I know Henderson's best interest is in everyone's heart, even though we may disagree about how to get there. Thanks to everybody who has been involved in this process. At this time, I would ask for a vote to approve the Chancellor's recommendations for addressing Henderson State University's financial exigency, as put forth in Dr. Ambrose's plan presented to the Board.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rowton, seconded by Bishop Rudolph, the Board of Trustees approved the Chancellor's recommendations for addressing Henderson State University's financial exigency, Resolution 22-18

Ayes: Clark, Gardner, Crowson, Eddington, Rudolph, Rowton, Morgan

Nays: None

**Dr. Welch:** I feel compelled to make a couple of comments. This is obviously an incredibly difficult day for all of us and, certainly, for those being impacted, and we feel and hurt for them. As I said before, I lived on that campus; my young children played on the south lawn. Many of these individuals, or a number of these individuals on this list, were so good to my family and me. And it's painful, but I feel compelled to say that, when Henderson's issues were first brought forth three years ago, this Board had

no responsibility to respond to that, or to assist the University, or to do anything. We could have simply stood idly by and let it play out, as it likely would have, which probably would not have been a good finish. I felt that it was very important, because of the role that I know that Henderson plays in Southwest Arkansas, and the countless lives that it has touched through the years. In visiting with Governor Hutchinson, he made it very clear that he wanted to also see the University survive and would work with us. And he's done that and has been supportive of our efforts to make that happen. What the Board just did, while very difficult, is not something they had to do, but it's something that I think they did because of their shared belief in the value of higher education in our state and the value of this institution. And Chuck Ambrose, when the committee recommended to me that we extend and offer him to be Chancellor and I asked him to do that, he also did not have to come. He could have said, at this point in my career this is not something that I'm interested in doing, because we knew it was going to be tough. But he believed it was worth it. And he came, and the decisions he made have been because he believes it is worth it. We realize that this is not going to be popular in all corners. We realize that not everyone will understand, and we also understand that it's a difficult process, where we will make mistakes and things won't be done perfectly. But I want the parents of Henderson students to know, I want current and prospective students of Henderson to know, I want alumni of Henderson to know, and I want the people of the state of Arkansas to know that we are making these very tough decisions because we believe in this University. We believe in the students that it serves. We believe in the alumni, who still hold that place dear. We want to make sure that this University is here for another 132 years. We are going to do everything that we can to make sure that we continue to move forward, that we find ways to ensure our students have the services that they need, that students have the educational level and that complete comprehensive experience that they deserve. And that Henderson State University is a major benefit to Arkadelphia, Clark County, and the entire region. It is too important not to. That is what we are focused on, and as bad as this hurts today, I hope and I pray and I believe that when we look back ten years from now, we will realize that we are a stronger University moving our students forward and serving the state. We may not have asked to have done this, but it was the right thing to do - to step in and assist. Henderson means a lot to me and always will, and we are going to do everything we can to make sure that it prospers moving forward.

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Mr. Eddington, seconded by Mrs. Clark, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Ayes: Clark, Gardner, Crowson, Eddington, Rudolph, Rowton, Morgan

Nays: None

  
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Niel Crowson, Secretary

  
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Christy Clark, Chair

  
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Price Gardner, Vice Chair