

Where have all the physicists gone?

A Report on the demise of Summer Session budgets at PSU

Executive Summary

The PSU chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has conducted a study on the impact of PSU Summer Session budget cuts on PSU faculty and students. The report, entitled, *Where have all the physicists gone? A report on the demise of Summer Session budgets at PSU* uses quantitative data provided by the university budget office and qualitative data collected by AAUP to analyze how administrative changes in the way Summer Session budgets are calculated have affected PSU faculty and students.

As a result of administrative changes in Summer Session budgeting, fewer classes are being offered during Summer Term, and some faculty have experienced deep pay cuts. In 2013, smaller summer session budgets resulted in a rash of class cancellations, more than seventy in total. In 2014, large-scale class cancellations were avoided, but fewer classes were offered, and faculty in some departments were paid significantly less to teach. Many faculty who did teach in summer 2014 were surprised to be offered a flat fee that no way reflected their standard rate of pay, a radical change from past practice. Pay cuts hit the most experienced, tenure-line faculty the hardest. Some of the largest overall cuts occurred in the College of Race, Gender and Nations and in various science departments.

Especially hurt by cancelled classes, some of which were completely full, were PSU students. Many of PSU's working students and student parents have to take classes throughout the year to fit their budgets, or take classes that are prerequisites for programs they plan to enter in fall. Others return home from other institutions and pick up a summer class or two while working a summer job. Smaller budget allocations mean that departments are no longer offering a full array of courses making it difficult for many PSU students to get the classes they need to graduate on time.

Summer Session is a long-standing tradition at PSU, sometimes called "our once award winning program" of the university. While Summer Session is not a part of the AAUP contract, union officials will be looking at ways to help PSU administrators better understand the real impact of Summer Session cuts so that faculty and students are not left in the lurch in the future.

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Faculty members began to express concerns about Summer Session as bargaining was getting underway for the 2013/2015 contract. In Summer 2013, we heard from members whose classes were cancelled just days before they were set to begin, so the Collective Bargaining Team proposed contract language to compensate members whose courses were cancelled with little notice. We also sought language that would ensure historic rates of pay for faculty members teaching Summer Session courses. Despite unprecedented member mobilization, we were unable to win contract language that would protect members' summer term working conditions; however, the PSU administration did agree to report to AAUP about Summer Term 2014 pay rates and offerings. The Collective Bargaining team intended to use what we learned from that report to continue to push for appropriate contract language in our next Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Provost Sona Andrews delivered the administrations' Summer Session report to AAUP leadership in September, 2014. The report provided a global picture of last year's Summer Session, but was lacking in detailed information. We filed an information request with the PSU administration to get adequate data that would enable us to analyze how Summer Session budgets have changed over the past two years and how these changes have impacted our members. While the administration gathered the information we sought, we conducted a survey with our members and held an open coffee hour where we interviewed members who had experienced pay cuts or course cancellations during Summer Term 2014. We also received numerous e-mails from members who were concerned about the changes in summer courses. PSU administration fulfilled our information request in late November 2014.

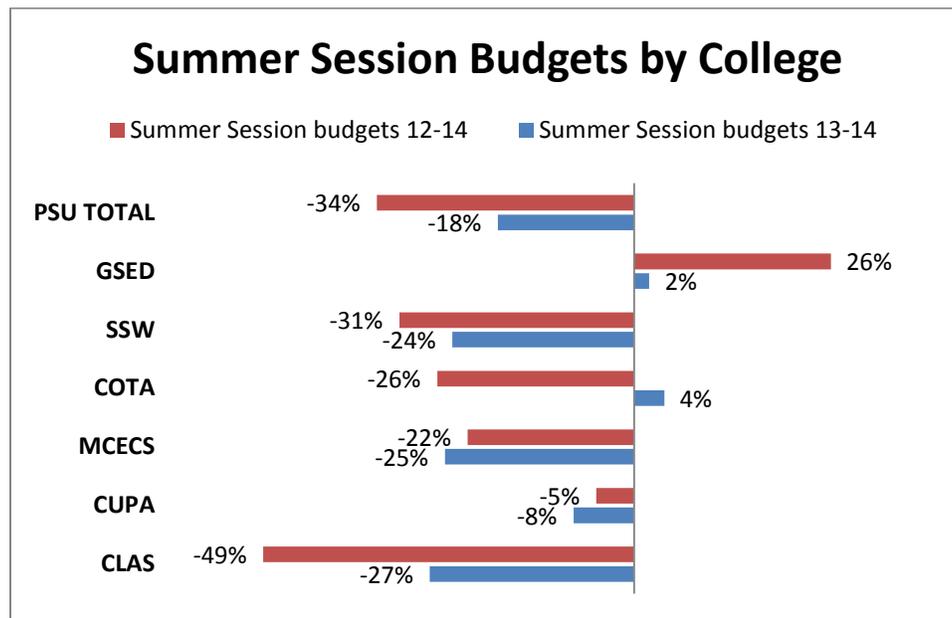
What follows is an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data we received. Starting in Summer 2013, the administration changed the way it calculated and administered budgets for Summer Term. Rather than a centralized program, Summer Session is now part of an annual, four-term, departmental budget allocation, and it is administered at the school/college level. Our analysis shows that this accounting change resulted in deep cuts to Summer Session offerings and to faculty compensation. As a result, fewer students are being served Summer Term, and many of the gains faculty made in our 2013/2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement have been erased by Summer Session pay cuts.

I. Summer Session budgets were cut dramatically over the past two years.

- Summer session budgets decreased by 18% from Summer 2013 to Summer 2014. Starting in 2013, budgeting for Summer Session switched from being a centrally administered program to the school/college level. Summer Session was no longer a stand-alone, self-support program; instead it became part of the annual departmental budget allocation. As a result of those administrative changes, Summer Session budgets decreased by 34% from Summer Term 2012 to 2014.¹

¹ Complied Disaggregated Budget Data and Outside Funding, PSU Administration, 11/28/14, Summer Session Report, Sona Andrews 9/15/14

- Budgets were not cut evenly across schools and colleges. Some colleges, like the Graduate School of Education, saw increases in their budgets, at least on paper (GSE faculty also complained about cuts to workload and wages). Others saw dramatic decreases. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Social Work, and College of Engineering and Computing Sciences (MCECS) faced particularly steep declines. CLAS summer session budgets decreased by 49% between 2012 and 2014. Social Work faced a 31% cut over the same time frame, and MCECS experienced a 22% decrease. The College of the Arts saw a 4% increase in their budget between 2013-2014, but they had taken a 28.5% cut between 2012-2013.²



- A few departments had their Summer Session budgets increased³:

Department	Increase last year (2013-14)	Increase since 2012
Criminology & Criminal Justice	56.5%	355%
Architecture	48%	69%
Center for Science Education	None (19% decrease)	\$24,341 (no budget in 2012)

- Many of the departments that experienced increases offered unique programs or had special circumstances. For example, the Criminology and Criminal Justice department offers fully online Bachelor's and undergraduate certificate programs, and they expanded their online degree program offerings between Summer 2012 and 2014. The School of

² Complied Disaggregated Budget Data and Outside Funding, PSU Administration, 11/28/14

³ Complied Disaggregated Budget Data and Outside Funding, PSU Administration, 11/28/14

Architecture achieved accreditation in 2013 and had been building its graduate program since 2009. The Center for Science Education had no summer budget in 2012; 93% of their \$24.431 summer budget for 2014 was covered by a grant.⁴

Department	Decrease last year (2013-14)	Decrease since 2012
Black Studies	35%	71%
Chemistry	44%	71%
Math	49%	75%
Physics	29.6%	80%
Civil Engineering	56%	56%
Engineering Management	42%	36%
Community Health	14%	31%
Urban Studies and Planning	30%	62%
Music	28%	47%
Social Work	33%	37.7%

- Most departments around campus faced budget cuts, and many dealt with severe cuts. The sciences and ethnic studies departments were especially hard hit. Biology and Chemistry had their summer budgets reduced by 64% and 71% respectively, from 2012-2014. Physics faced some of the deepest cuts. Their summer session budgets were reduced by 80% from 2012-2014. Chicano/Latino Studies summer session was eliminated entirely.⁵
- We received no budget data from the School of Business or University Studies; however, members reported budget cuts in both programs.⁶

II. Summer Session budgets were balanced on the backs of faculty members

- After the administration of summer session budgets changed to the college/school level in 2013, departments responded to their smaller allocations by cutting classes. In 2013, the university cancelled 70 courses, 6% of that summer's offering. Some of these courses had met or even exceeded minimum enrollments. Students, faculty and community members expressed outrage at the administration for cancelling so many courses with such little notice.⁷
- In Summer 2013, schools and colleges were told to cancel classes below or even at minimum enrollment if these courses were going to be offered Fall Term. In 2014, the university moved away from this approach. Instead, they were encouraged to offer a full

⁴ <http://online.ccj.pdx.edu/>,

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2013/04/psu_architecture_wins_accredit.html, Complied Disaggregated Budget Data and Outside Funding, PSU Administration, 11/28/14

⁵ Complied Disaggregated Budget Data and Outside Funding, PSU Administration, 11/28/14

⁶ PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey, November 2014

⁷ Portland State University Drops more than 50 Classes Angering Some Students and Faculty, by Betsy Hammond, 6/21/2013, http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2013/06/portland_state_university_drop_1.html

array of classes, but they were not provided with budgets that would enable them to do so. For example, in 2013, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, instituted a policy where any course with fewer than 20 students and/or any fully enrolled course that was offered in the fall would be cancelled. In 2014, CLAS policies changed. Courses with at least 10 students enrolled could not be cancelled by chairs without the Dean's approval.⁸

- Working with smaller budget allocations, many departments chose to cut faculty pay or to offer fewer courses in Summer 2014. Departments dealt with the issue in different ways. Many departments, such as Math, Physics, History, Geography, University Studies, the School of Business, Civil and Environmental Engineering, offered faculty members a flat per credit hour rate of pay rather than the percentage of their base salary that professors had historically received, resulting in large pay cuts. A faculty member in the Math department reported a 72% summer pay cut.⁹

"My compensation was roughly \$7,000 less."

"When I was hired in 2005, I was told we could teach two courses every summer with pay based on current salary. Now, we are told that we will be getting one course to teach at a fixed salary of \$5,000."

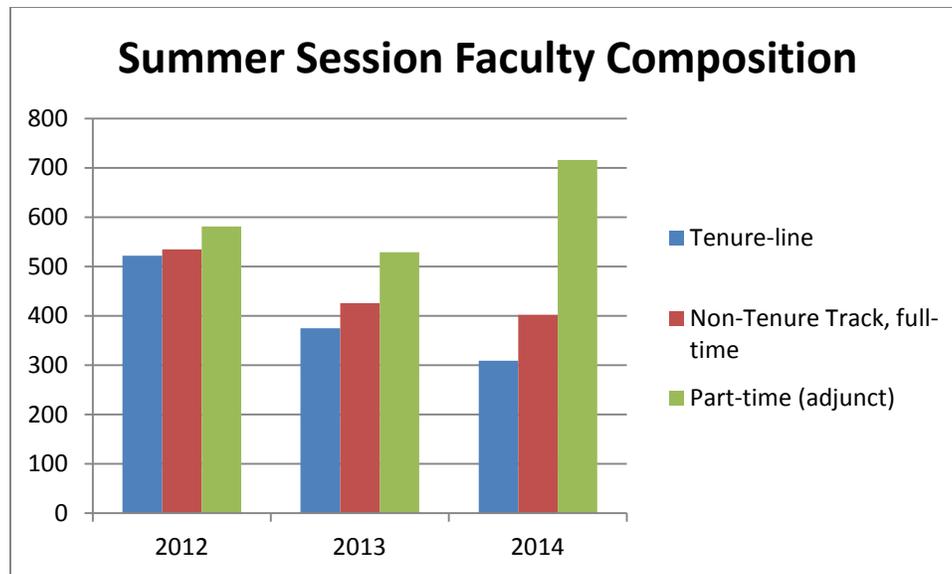
"I was paid 25% less, for teaching the same number of credits and having more administrative duties" - Faculty responses to PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey

- The switch to flat-rate salaries hit tenure-line faculty the hardest. Higher ranked faculty members saw some of the biggest pay cuts. 41% of the faculty members who reported taking summer pay cuts on our survey were full professors. From 2012 to 2014, there was a 40% reduction in number of tenure-line faculty members teaching summer courses, and a 27% decrease in the number of fixed-term faculty teaching. During the same time period, there was a 31% increase in the number of part-time faculty (adjunct) who were teaching during summer term.¹⁰

⁸ Minimum Course Enrollment Policies, PSU Administration 11/28/2014

⁹ Faculty Pay Rate Policies, PSU Administration, 11/28/2014, PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey, November 2014

¹⁰ Summer Session Report, Sona Andrews 9/15/14, PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey, November 2014



- Fixed-term faculty members also saw their salaries decrease. As one member commented, “I was just re-ranked. While I was happy for this decision, the canceling of summer courses voids any benefit I receive from the re-ranking. It pretty much puts me in the exact same place I was prior to the re-ranking.”¹¹

III. Summer Session budget cuts harm students.

- There was a 9.3% decrease in the student credit hours taught between 2012 and 2014.¹²

Department	Percentage decrease in students served from 2013-14
World Languages	31.5%
Physics	18%
Chemistry	17.7%
Civil Engineering	31.9%
Finance	19%
University Studies	25.7%

- As with the budget and pay cuts, some departments suffered more than others. Civil Engineering, World Languages and University Studies served significantly fewer students in 2014 than they had in 2013.¹³
- Faced with a lack of adequate resources, many departments only offered classes that they knew would “fill” during Summer Session 2014, often ignoring student curricular needs. An education professor commented that the lack of course offerings “hurt some cohorts

¹¹ PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey, November 2014

¹² Summer Session Report, Sona Andrews 9/15/14

¹³ Summary Course Data, PSU Administration 11/24/2014

who didn't get the pre-requisite knowledge they needed for next courses in their sequence."¹⁴

- Some departments refused to offer any electives, which is a departure from the historic purposes of Summer Term. Summer Session used to provide an opportunity for faculty members to pilot new courses or to offer electives that highlighted their research interests. Students were able to take unique classes that offered them access to cutting-edge scholarship.¹⁵
- Deep cuts to science programs made it difficult for students to get the prerequisites they need for their majors. The elimination of Chicano/Latino Studies summer course and the cuts made to Black Studies (71%), Native American Studies (66%), International Studies (37%), and Gender and Sexuality (41%) programs undercut the university's commitment to diversity.

Course Level	Percentage decrease in students served from 2013-14
Lower Division (1-200)	10.4%
Upper Division (3-400)	7.9%
Graduate (5-600)	1.4%
Doctoral (700)	10.9%

- Freshmen, sophomores and doctoral students were hit the hardest by the lack of summer offerings. Students often rely on summer session to take courses that they could not schedule during the regular term. Many PSU students have to spread their education out over four terms to accommodate their time and financial constraints. The lack of offerings in Summer Term 2014 made it difficult for students to take the classes they need to finish their degrees. Programs offering general studies requirements saw major drops in their summer enrollment in 2014. University Studies enrollment dropped by 25%, and World Languages' enrollment decreased by 31.5%. One foreign language professor commented, "It became harder for our majors to learn the language in a reasonable time without the summer options."¹⁶
- One of the few growth areas during Summer Term 2014 was in online class delivery. Student enrollment in fully online courses increased by 13.4% from Summer 2013. Eighteen more online courses were offered in Summer 2014. While online courses provide much needed flexibility for our non-traditional student population, these courses often have lower student success rates than those offered face-to-face. To be effective, these courses must be taught by a faculty member trained in online pedagogy. Having a strong faculty presence in an online course increases students' rates of success. However, PSU currently has no training requirements for online faculty members and no limits on class sizes. Although more online courses were offered in 2014, class size in

¹⁴ PSU AAUP Summer Session Member Survey, November 2014

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

these courses also increased from 15.17 to 16.37 students per course. This increase in class size coupled with the extra strain placed on faculty members who experienced pay cuts, made it difficult for online instructors to provide the one-on-one attention their students need.¹⁷

Conclusions:

- Over the past two years, the purpose of Summer Session at PSU has changed dramatically. Instead of providing students with innovative courses where faculty members showcase their teaching and research, Summer Term offerings are now limited to classes that are in high demand.
- By focusing solely on providing high demand courses that are sure to “fill,” Summer Term has become a risk-adverse venture that only factors in the revenue-making potential of a particular offering.
- Schools/Colleges faced with declining budgets are pressured to provide large numbers of courses with inadequate resources. As a result, faculty members are given fewer teaching opportunities and/ or are forced to take pay cuts.
- The result of this shift is a heavier reliance on part-time faculty during summer session. Part-time faculty members are poorly compensated and often aren’t given adequate support.
- Tenure-line faculty, many of whom were promised summer courses when they accepted their comparatively, low-paying positions at PSU, have experienced the deepest pay cuts and sharpest decline in summer, teaching opportunities. Higher paid full professors were hit the hardest.
- Non-tenure track faculty members who earn extremely low wages rely upon Summer Session to pay their bills. While their pay cuts were not as deep as some tenure-line faculty members, given the low level of base pay they earn, these faculty members were also harmed by summer pay cuts.
- The shift to a high-revenue, low-cost Summer Session hurts students. Students are unable to take the courses they need to complete their degrees. Many non-traditional students do not view summer as a “bonus term,” instead they rely upon this condensed time frame to fit-in classes that they are unable to complete during the regular school year.
- While this report documents the changes that have occurred over the past two summers and measures the impacts these changes have had on our members and the students we serve, many questions still remain. None of the data we received answer the big question: Why? Why were these changes necessary? Why did the shift from a centrally administered program to more local control have to result in smaller, summer budget

¹⁷ Summary Course Data, PSU Administration, 11/14/2014, Saltmarsh & Stherland-Smith, “S(t)imulating learning: Pedagogy, subjectivity and teacher education in online environments,” *London Review of Education*, March, 2010, 8, 1: 15-24.

allocations? Why was this change necessary? And perhaps most importantly, where is this revenue going?