

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY LAYOFFS

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Higher education is going to end up doing without a lot of its staff in the year to come, at least on the campus of West Virginia State University where university officials are planning not one, but two, rounds of budget cuts for the 2012 fiscal year. Those cuts are going to result in the loss of jobs for at least some of the employees at the school. While the details are going to be a little bit sketchy, at least until the results of today's Board of Governors meeting that will likely lay out some, though probably not all, of the cuts that are to come in the next year. This meeting is dedicated exclusively to the cuts. Larry Rowe, the Chairman for the Board of Governors for the school, told a local reporter for the Charleston Daily Mail that West Virginia State University is currently facing an estimated budget deficit for the fiscal year that will begin on the first of July of 2012. The layoffs will be needed to shore up the debt. His exact words will, "It's pretty clear that there's no way we can balance the budget next year with a \$2 million shortfall standing on our own unless we do actual layoff." Though, he did make it clear that it was too early to know exactly how many layoffs would be needed, or which of the workers will lose their jobs. Rowe told a local reporter that, "As far as numbers, we don't have that because you've always got attrition, and you can't just sort of reduce across the board." In addition the university has also placed a hiring freeze that will keep any new workers from being added to the university staff while the layoffs are in place. Of course, layoffs are not the only item on the chopping block. The non-layoff cuts made to the university budget will also be made to one-time expenditures. This is really should not be a shock to the people at the university. Last month the Higher Education Policy Commission released a report that stated that West Virginia State University had serious problems. The report cited leadership failures and financial challenges as two of the schools biggest problems. Though, they did not give any mention of whether or not one of those problems was caused by the other. The report chronicled two events of recent months, both of which indicated that there were serious problems for the school, a vote of no confidence by the faculty and the removal of the president of finance. Hazo Carter, the current university president is set to retire by next summer, just in time to leave this issue in the hands of a new president. He told the following to a local journalist, "We still, on our own, want to balance the budget and reduce the deficit so our new president coming in July of next year can have a budget that will balance — that's our goal and these aren't easy matters to do, but our financial team has advised us that's their plan."

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