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With this issue of the Goessmann Gazette, the chemistry department at the University of Massachusetts sends its greetings and best wishes to all of you alumni, wherever you may be. In spite of difficulties, we are still alive and functioning. What might be called a "State of the Department" message, prepared by Professor George Richason, Associate Department Head, follows.

FISCAL 1976

Much has been said and written about the impact of the Commonwealth's F'76 budgetary gyrations on the University and its programs. Assessments have varied from the naively unrealistic ("we've cut out the fat" -- Executive approach) to the "Doom's Day" prophesying by students. Somewhere in between, and quite different for each department, lies the real impact. This is an attempt to evaluate the effect of severe budget cuts on the program in the Department of Chemistry.

Operationally, the most difficult task was planning in a vacuum -- we didn't receive a budget until December, five plus months into the fiscal year. If you know how bad things are, at least you can try to accommodate. By mandate of the legislature, positions that became vacant could not be filled, and so we lost a secretarial and a stockroom position -- and both vacancies have caused severe problems. We started the academic year with the same number of Teaching Assistants as the previous year, because we were lucky enough to have all of our slots filled before the freeze hit. We started the academic year with two less faculty members than the previous year, one because of a frozen vacancy, and one because of extended illness. And we started the academic year with 806 more students enrolled in Chemistry courses than the previous year. The interest in our service courses has been rapidly increasing over the last several years. This last fall we had over 2400 enrolled in five different General Chemistry courses, and had to turn significant numbers away. In this climate, we didn't need the extra problems of budget cuts.

As soon as it was evident that it was going to be a bad year financially, the Personnel Committee appointed two Budget sub-committees to plan and implement. One committee looked at our dollar problem, the other at our people problem. As a consequence of recommendations made by these committees, a number of changes were implemented early in the fall semester. Telephone instrumentation was removed or modified, individual quotas were placed on toll calls and xerox charges, our "open stockroom" was changed to a "drawing account" approach for all faculty and graduate students, departmental financing of travel was eliminated, etc. After every other account had been cut to survival level, the remaining money was placed in the "supplies" or "stockroom" account. This remainder turned out to be far below the survival level, but, fortunately, we had an adequate inventory on which to draw. We'll run out of a few items before June 30, but we don't foresee any major problems.

In summation, we expect to survive until the end of the current fiscal year in June without any appreciable diminishment of the scope or quality of our offerings. There are inconveniences and inefficiencies and inequities as a consequence of a hand-to-mouth operation, but we're in business. Next year, however, is another matter. Our stockroom inventory will be badly depleted by June, and there's no way we can get through next year without a considerable increase in logistic support.

