

University to announce 4.48 percent budget recall from its colleges

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Anderson Hall on Kansas State campus in Manhattan Kan. on Sept. 12, 2016. (Archive photo by Nick Horvath | Collegian Media Group)

A 4.48 percent budget callback to each of Kansas State's colleges is expected to be announced today or Thursday. The one-time cut, a roughly \$10 million total funding reduction across the entire university, was first floated to department heads last week.

"We will just be emphasizing that we're still estimating the spring [semester enrollment], and we won't really know final estimates for projections until February," Cindy Bontrager, vice president for administration and finance, said Monday.

Amit Chakrabarti, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, announced the final budget callback size in an email to department heads within the college.

The callback is expected to be carried out in December, Bontrager said.

"It's going to decimate our college," Chakrabarti said Friday.

Chakrabarti said the potential \$2.5 million slash in Arts and Sciences funding is equivalent to the total cost to employ 25 faculty members.

Ethan Erickson, assistant vice president for budget and planning, and Cindy Hollingsworth, director of K-State News and Communications, declined to offer any specifics about the callback Monday except that it would be disclosed this week.

Chakrabarti was among the university leaders to give preliminary budget cut estimates to department heads last week.

"[Department heads] should look at the number and say, 'Woah, this is going to be ... very hard,'" Chakrabarti said. "I want them to prepare. There is no good way to handle budget cuts at this proportion."

The philosophy department was given a callback estimate of over \$40,000, almost double the approximately \$17,000 operating budget allocated.

"In effect, they're charging departments to exist," Bruce Glymour, head of the philosophy department, said.

Chakrabarti said the current semester's enrollment decrease has been "very destructive" for the college he leads. Fall enrollment for the College of Arts and Sciences fell 5.08 percent this year, while freshman enrollment plunged 9.8 percent.

K-State had a 4.14 percent decline in fall enrollment this semester, [the biggest drop](#) in fall enrollment in over 30 years. The university conducted a week-long search in mid-October to [hire an enrollment consultant](#) to assist the administration starting Nov. 17.

The magnitude of the enrollment drop — nearly 1,000 students — exceeded what was expected by several university administration officials at the end of the spring 2017 semester, as [previously reported](#) by the Collegian.

Bontrager said in May that the university budget for the 2017-2018 academic year would "very likely" face cuts, as it was constructed without any accommodations for lower enrollment whatsoever.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story referenced an approximate budget reduction of 4.50 percent. The article now reflects new information that the precise number is 4.48 percent.