



February 24, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

On most every campus there has been a familiar refrain. "Let's complete an exercise where we look at our budget numbers." The same has been true for ACUHO-I. There has been no escaping the financial realities the United States and the world are facing and the impact that they have had – and will continue to have – on our campuses and throughout the association. We certainly know colleagues that are experiencing institutional budget cuts of 25 to 30 percent.

Late last year we surveyed chief housing officers to get a snapshot of how their operations have been affected. An executive summary of those results are available on the ACUHO-I Web site – and we will shortly be sending out another survey to update our information.

One discovery, that reflects the anecdotal evidence we have as well, was that while the overwhelming majority of institutions intend to maintain their ACUHO-I membership, there were cases where travel freezes and budget cuts would likely reduce their level of involvement when it comes to events such as the ACUHO-I annual conference and exposition. This is also consistent with results of the Economic Forecasting study by the Council of Higher Education Management Associations (CHEMA) taken last month. The reporting associations expect campus travel restrictions to reduce attendance at annual conferences while perhaps increasing a demand for online resources.

Taking into consideration this anticipated reduction in revenue, in February, the ACUHO-I Executive Board finance committee, in cooperation with the central office staff leadership, took a good, hard look at budget numbers. Out of that discussion, the ACUHO-I Executive Board approved a budget adjustment of approximately \$350,000, or 11 percent of the budget, to positively affect our current financial position. Final recommendations for either increasing revenue or reducing costs will be submitted in April for consideration.

In the coming weeks, the board, volunteer committees, and central office will all look for ways to increase efficiencies and streamline the association's operational and strategic priorities. Any decision that will have an affect on member services will have to be approved by the Executive Board. Guided by our strategic plan, we will work to ensure ACUHO-I remains an indispensable resource for the campus housing profession.

One of the most immediate ways that members can activate those resources is by joining the ACUHO-I online professional network ([www.acuho-i.net](http://www.acuho-i.net)) to post questions and share strategies. No campus has been immune from the current conditions, so there should be a multitude of potential suggestions available.

The ACUHO-I Executive Board is also proud to announce that complimentary one-year Associate Affiliate memberships will be available for individuals who are displaced from

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their full-time positions within a college housing office due to budget cuts. This membership will allow continued access to the digital version of the *Talking Stick* magazine and registration discounts, as well as access to the ACUHO-I online professional network and other online resources such as the library catalog. The strength of ACUHO-I has always come from the network of professionals and their willingness to support others by sharing news, advice, and knowledge. The decision was made that reliance on that network is more important than ever, and steps should be taken to retain our highly qualified and dedicated professionals.

ACUHO-I will also continue to do everything possible to provide valuable educational opportunities. This year's annual conference is shaping up to be one of the strongest we've offered, as we've secured sustainability and environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as the keynote speaker. We are assembling a panel discussion that will discuss the current situation and future implications from a student affairs, legislative, and economic viewpoint. The program committee has identified dozens of sessions that speak most directly to the needs of college housing professionals. The ACUHO-I Conference Series in October will soon be issuing its call-for-programs that will serve the niches of housing facilities, apartments, living-learning communities, and – new for 2009 – business operations. Plus, members should watch for an increased number of opportunities for online instruction, communication, and networking.

In conclusion, I want to stress that the budget-related decisions we make will be to ensure the economic sustainability of the association. These were not stop-gap measures. We recognize the value that ACUHO-I has for the college housing profession as a whole, and will continue to have into the future. Fortunately, much work has been put into growing ACUHO-I into a position – financially and structurally -- where it can withstand these economic hardships. We will continue to work in a transparent, strategic, and informed manner so that when economic conditions improve – and they will improve – ACUHO-I will be there to assist our members as they continue to provide the high-level campus housing experience that students demand and deserve.

Thank you.

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ACUHO-I President

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