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## St. John's Slashes Budget To Cope With Downturn

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SANTA FE — In an effort to ride out the current economic downturn, St. John's College is slashing department budgets, freezing salaries and imposing the school's lowest tuition increase in 20 years, school officials say.

Although casualties of the tanking economy include the school's endowment, which has declined by a steep 19 percent, the college's Santa Fe campus President Michael Peters said that St. John's is committed to maintaining full funding for financial aid, classroom instruction and student support, all deemed priorities.

"We're trying to concentrate on the things that are most important, and, obviously, the classroom is at the center of what we do. We're determined to protect that," he said.

Leaders at St. John's aren't planning on layoffs or staff furloughs, though compensation has been frozen and open positions are being carefully scrutinized. No new tutors — the school's term for professors — will be hired for next fall.

College departments are being asked to cut spending by 15 percent each, excluding costs related to instruction.

"I think the message is, we live in the same economy as everyone else," Peters said.

The school's endowment — for both the Santa Fe and Annapolis, Md., campuses, now roughly about \$106 million — is "pretty much tied to the market," Peters said. He noted that the draw made on the endowment for each July 1 to June 30 fiscal year is based on numbers from the previous Dec. 31 and, "while these (current market) ups and downs are important, we're not having to worry about the numbers for next year."

St. John's is better positioned now because of its successful capital campaign, noted a letter recently sent to alumni.

About a quarter of the money raised from the campaign, \$32.3 million, can be used for unrestricted purposes or for the school's annual fund, which covers operational expenses and could theoretically be used in planning for next year's \$28 million budget.

St. John's is notoriously pricey — among the most expensive colleges in the country — and the cost of attendance next year is pegged at \$39,992 for undergraduate tuition and other fees; \$9,600 for room and board; and \$400 in student association fees.