

OUR VIEW: Something has to give in Parma closure issue

By Sandra Kelly, for the editorial board

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On Wednesday it was revealed the University of Idaho will delay a decision on closing its Parma Research and Extension Center.

That's great for the 16 people whose positions were going to be cut, and good for the faculty and staff in Parma who were going to have to move to the Caldwell extension center. But it sets a bad precedence for any other cuts UI will try to make.

We don't have anything against Parma or those who have served so diligently at the research center there. But when the UI said it needed to cut 11.5 percent (about \$3 million) of its budget from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for the fiscal year 2010, the Parma center seemed like a logical choice.

The UI also planned to cut an additional extension station, but now everything is back on the table until Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and UI President Duane Nellis can review the UI's entire research and extension operation.

That doesn't make any sense.

The time to make cuts passed long ago, and any more delays are going to hurt the entire university.

The decision to close the Parma extension center was agonized over and deemed the best center to cut. No one wanted to close the center, nor does anyone want to eliminate other centers. The problem is, that's the best way to meet the \$3.2 million budget gap.

The reality of the times indicates that something has to close. It's not going to be easy. In fact, it's going to be pretty painful, but the money has to come from somewhere, and it needs to be done quickly.

We don't know how many other decisions are going to be revisited now that the UI has a new president. And we don't know how much time it will take to make the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences fiscally sound.

The UI needs to stick to the decisions it made and move on.

