

Our founder, Lydia Moss Bradley, had a vision for Bradley and saw it through. By bringing our university to fruition, she helped Peoria to grow into a thriving city. Bradley University, like many other universities in the country, is facing financial stress that must be addressed. We as a Bradley University community understand that changes must be made to navigate the current financial gap and that the administration must be fiscally responsible to remain solvent as a University. When faced with this dilemma, one must be very careful to trim fat without cutting into the meat and bones of the University.

A Mathematics department is a part of the core of every respectable University in the country—it's the meat and bones that cannot be cut away. Eliminating core academic programs and degrees such as mathematics certainly undermines our founder Lydia Moss Bradley's vision.

Given I am a Senior Statistics and Biochemistry major, I will speak from that perspective. Originally, I applied to Bradley University as a chemistry major. That soon changed to biochemistry, even before I stepped foot on campus. By sophomore year, I had combined my biochemistry education with a mathematics minor. Then, by the next semester, I declared a double major in Statistics and Biochemistry.

As you've now gathered, I've made a lot of adjustments to my education which were directly related to my access to high quality Professors and the personal attention and advice they shared. Without these adjustments, I would not have had the chance to pursue a career in biostatistics, which is the application of statistics to biology and medicine.

Statistics, as a component of the math department, is one of the fastest growing fields currently, with a high-paying starting salary. If we cut off a student's ability to pursue a career just as it is gaining marketability, what does that say about us as an educational institution to current students, prospective students, and the academic world as a whole?

We have all heard for several years now the importance of education in STEM. Science, Technology, Engineering, and MATH. STEM cannot even be spelled without the M that is Math.

In an environment where college degrees are being questioned as a solid personal investment, we need to think about what we offer as an investment and maximize the good investment opportunities. The payback of a stem degree is toward the top of good investments, returning good pay for an upfront investment in time and tuition money. Math is highly interdisciplinary. Our math department has been cut in half and it has

been proposed that our department become a “service department”. Allow me to translate that for you: overworked professors and large class sizes.

Our department serves almost the entire university, with many professors already teaching close to full course loads. Students will no longer have the personal attention that our university prides itself on. We will no longer be able to attract highly qualified faculty which, again, is a major factor that draws in many prospective students. Once we lose a core program, it is an extremely lengthy, expensive, and difficult process to regain that edge.

Reflecting on this and my personal journey, I would not have attended Bradley University if there were no mathematics program. Even before I had thought of statistics as a career path, I understood that mathematics is the backbone of all STEM fields. How can I trust an education without this backbone?

A handful of our faculty worked tirelessly this semester to address the deficit, and identified cost savings sacrifices adding up to nearly \$5M while maintaining the solvency of our academic organization. We need to reconsider these proposals as a starting point and ensure the final budget decisions do not alter the world-class education that we students are receiving.

We pride ourselves on being a mid-sized university. We offer a personalized education with highly qualified faculty. For this reason, I felt drawn to Bradley over any other post-secondary institution. Many other Current and prospective students are about to decide on which educational institution will best give them advantages in the workforce. When they compare the academic offerings of Bradley to its competitors, they will undoubtedly choose the school with more opportunities.

If you even partially agree with me and have concerns about the proposed academic cuts, I urge you to voice your opinions now rather than later. While you should attend the Student Senate forum on November 27th in which President Standifird will be present, I want you to think about the timeline. If a final decision is to be made by the end of the semester—which is coming up very quickly—do we really believe that will leave enough time for our concerns to be taken into account?

Any concerns or opinions you may have please voice them now. You can scan the QR code on the flier which contains administration and trustee contact information. We need to make our voices heard, and we need to do it now.