

MSP MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 1, 2020

GROUND RULES

- This meeting is for MSP members only. Please be respectful of everyone's point of view.
- Please do not record or photograph the meeting in any way.
- Please stay on mute so that everyone can hear.
- Please type questions or comments into the Chat box, and send feedback to MSP later.
- This PowerPoint will be posted on the MSP website: umassmsp.org
- If you have questions about your individual situation, please email them directly to msp@umass.edu. All queries to the union are confidential.
- Everything is stressful and hard right now. We are all doing our best, for our students, our research, our families. We all want UMass to be the best it possibly can be.

SPRING CALENDAR CHANGES

- Faculty Senate passed a revised calendar for the spring semester
 - Originally was going to begin on January 19 – moved two weeks to February 1
 - Spring break eliminated
 - President’s Day and Patriot’s Day holidays are class days; no class on two “Wellbeing Wednesdays”
 - Semester ends one week later than planned – classes end 5/4; exams end 5/12
- Academic year (9-month) faculty still have 80 days “responsible time”
- Administration says they don’t know if further furloughs will be necessary or desirable

MSP CONCERNS

- Eliminating spring break must be negotiated. One-year contract stated:
“The parties agree to bargain negotiable impacts of any changes to the academic calendar for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021.”
- We’re willing to take the high road but put them on notice about obligation to bargain.
- Not going to file charges at this time (without setting precedent) but going forward, all decisions must be consistent with the CBA
- Hybrid or multi-modal classes for spring semester? Face-to-face teaching? Must be negotiated.
- Workload adjustments for spring semester? The one-year agreement ends 6/30/21.
- New surge of COVID cases is concerning: 25 cases in one day, 69 total as of 9/30, weekly positivity rate almost 3% (had been 0.1%), one faculty member infected

THE UMASS AMHERST BUDGET

- So far we only have budget projections for AY2020-21
- Projections have fluctuated greatly over time. Chancellor projected:
 - \$30.6 million loss of tuition revenue
 - \$36.7 million loss of state funds
- Undergrad enrollment is 250 down from last year, but 700 over projections
- State budget is level until November and expected to continue level funded
- Loss of room and board revenue: approximately \$90 million
 - Savings on food (\$25 million), other Auxiliary Services costs (\$20 million)
 - Savings on utilities, events, travel, other non-personnel costs (~\$43 million) – total ~\$88 million
 - Original FY21 budget had a \$24 million surplus
- Staff furloughs “saved” about \$20 million – no longer seems necessary

THE UMASS SYSTEM BUDGET

- President's office numbers show an overall shortfall for the system of \$37 million – savings from cuts made so far (non-rehiring NTTs, furloughs, layoffs) is \$85 million
- \$231 million has been taken out of the operating budget for depreciation – Trustees pointed out this is unrestricted and could be used now
- \$700 million “excess operating cash” was put in reserves and invested by UMass Foundation
- \$151 million savings from non-personnel savings, VSIPs, vacant positions/hiring freeze – AFTER COVID-related expenses
- Different expectations for various campuses
 - No cuts at all for UMass Medical School (highest paid administrators and faculty)
 - No cuts at all for the President's Office (highly paid administrators)

STAFF FURLOUGHS

- AFSCME agreement
 - 800 long-term furloughs for staff whose work is gone
 - No furloughs for other 800 members
- PSU and USA agreements
 - 140 long-term furloughs
 - 60 reduced time (33% - 50% cuts)
 - Two-week furloughs for all members
- All keep their health insurance and seniority
- No promises that these sacrifices will save jobs – layoffs possible in January
- Divisive messages from administration: MSP did not “offer” furloughs
- Unions are using the 30-day notice period to try to stop the worst cuts – voluntary furloughs/reductions are on the table now to replace other cuts

JOINT UNION PRINCIPLES

- Slow down – wait until we know the state and federal budget/stimulus
- Open the books – show us the real expenses and revenue figures
- Negotiate in good faith – quid pro quo – furloughs must save jobs
- Full employment is the goal – there is enough work for everyone
 - Deferred maintenance on empty buildings
 - Retrofitting to reduce carbon emissions toward campus goals
- Voluntary cost-saving measures must be tried first
 - PSU and USA have this language in their contracts and offered \$10 million savings
 - The administration refused to consider their proposals – unions filed charges

WHAT IS MOTIVATING THE UMASS ADMINISTRATION?

- President Meehan and the Board of Trustees (appointed by Governor Baker) passed a budget with huge cuts, up to 15 percent – but not mandatory
- Chancellors are responding differently but trying to please Meehan – focus on “efficiency and effectiveness” per Trustees – corporate model of layoffs first
- UMass is counting on the unions to feel pain and lobby the legislature to restore funds
- Cutting now is easier than cutting later – spread the pain over a year
- “Never let a good crisis go to waste” – use the moment to make cuts that would never be acceptable in normal times (e.g. STCC programs, targeted staff cuts)
- When federal funds arrive, the administration has new money to allocate as they like – experience from 2008 recession

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

- Slow down
- Early cuts inflict unnecessary pain – see what stimulus funds are coming
- If the process is not transparent and accountable, cuts may be discriminatory and the damage can be long-lasting
- It's easy for cuts to start as short-term and become permanent
- Don't give up contractual rights (bargaining, retrenchment, layoffs)
- Voluntary give-backs lead to more voluntary give-backs
 - Other universities agreed to furloughs/layoffs and now asked for more layoffs/cuts
 - Some of these give-backs become permanent

TWO WAYS TO RESPOND

“Shared sacrifice” model:

- Some are suffering so we all should suffer
- Some have more power than others – therefore, those with more power should be willing to give up some of their power to equalize the pain

Solidarity model:

- With staff unions, reject the administration’s projected budget crisis
- Some have more power than others – therefore, those with more power should use our power to fight to reverse the furloughs and layoffs
- Stick to the unions’ shared principles: transparency, democracy, accountability, mutual aid, and demand solutions from the state...we’re making progress here

MSP FINANCIAL ANALYSIS COMMITTEE

- Vice Chancellor Andy Mangels has offered to meet with a small MSP committee to go over the budget numbers in detail
- MTA hired a researcher to analyze the UMass system finances, including system-level reserves, endowment(s), foundation(s), and unrestricted funds
- Analyze current expenditures and revenue, as well as budget projections
- Make proposals for cost savings if necessary
- Consider any proposals for furloughs/pay cuts for faculty and librarians

NEXT STEPS

- Bargaining – MSP is always ready to negotiate in good faith
- Action plan with MTA and UMass Unions United – talking with every legislator
- Stand-out tomorrow to demand no furloughs or layoffs – Friday 4:30 pm at corner of King Street and Main Street in Northampton
- Target President Meehan and Board of Trustees – see massachusettsagrees.org
- Oversight hearing sponsored by Massachusetts legislature Higher Education Committee – October 6 at 11:00 am
- Raise Up Mass campaign: Invest in Our Recovery – demand progressive taxes
- Phonebanking – textbanking – letter-writing – GOTV for labor candidates in

QUESTIONS?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Tomorrow: come to the stand-out in Northampton tomorrow – 4:30 pm
- Next week: call your legislators demanding a level budget to fully fund public higher education!
- Support the UMass Unions United mutual aid and solidarity fund:
<https://sites.google.com/view/umass-mutual-aid-network/home>
- Send your ideas and questions to the MSP at msp@umass.edu