

Greetings,

We are well aware of how stressful, confusing, and frustrating this past week has been, and we wanted to thank all of you for your patience, flexibility, and spirit of service in the face of a global pandemic.

Together with the other unions on campus, we have spent the past 8 days or so:

- meeting regularly with UMass Labor Relations to seek guidance, to share your concerns and questions, and to suggest flexible worker-friendly, safety-oriented, student-aware operations and plans.
- having numerous conversations and email exchanges with Labor Relations, Business Partners, and campus leaders
  - demanding shorter on-site lists with rotations, safety protections, and minimal time on campus,
  - addressing specific situations where supervisors have sent conflicting messages or been unreasonable or where people with high risks have been denied remote work assignments,
  - raising concerns over IT and Residence Life staffing situations, among other areas, and
  - trying to square away pay issues and essential personnel questions.
- demanding more centralized communications from management and fewer confusing or contradictory or unreasonable messages from supervisors and departments
- answering myriad questions and concerns from you, our members, and sending what we hope have been clear and informative communications, especially because the University has not

In addition to the daily calls and emails, USA and PSU have also been negotiating with management over an agreement for this Covid 19 era so that we can have a clear understanding over bargaining unit member rights, protections, and obligations during this unprecedented time. We had hoped to have an agreement by Friday, but we are still waiting for a reply to our latest proposal to management. AFSCME has also been in negotiations for an agreement and still has not reached one. An erroneous message went out from Residence Life on Friday indicating that agreements had been reached. They have not.

Finally, we want to stress that people come together during hard times, and the feeling of union solidarity has not felt stronger in a long time. We have heard in our conversations how much the university appreciates the many ways that all of you have come together to continue the work of the University and look out for the students, the research, and the service to society that makes UMass Amherst great—and we have also pressed for them to tell you that directly. But you also deserve heaps of praise for the ways that you have come together to support each other within departments, across bargaining units, and as advocates, friends, and partners in both safety and the work. Solidarity is necessary and rewarded in times like these--our big build up to major contract negotiations has taken a

necessary pause while we work together to get through this crisis stronger and more united.

Please let us know if you have problems or pushback when following any of the advice below. Email exchanges with documentation makes it easier for the Union to address your concerns. When contacting Central HR, we recommend emailing [Covid19HR@umass.edu](mailto:Covid19HR@umass.edu) so you can document that you contacted them. Of course, you can also call Central HR at [413-687-2283](tel:413-687-2283).

In Solidarity

Leslie