

Dear USA Bargaining Unit Employees,

USA along with AFSCME and PSU have been in conversations with the administration over the last week regarding concerns about the budget shortfall projected for FY 2020, and larger concerns about the upcoming FY 2021 budget numbers. The administration has suggested some possible cost-savings measures, including a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) and a furlough of not more than five days.

First, the administration would like to explore creating a VSIP to provide one-time financial payouts to individuals who retire or leave UMass. We are currently exploring this idea with them, as it may benefit some members. In the past, unions on other UMass campuses have bargained VSIPs, which have been capped at \$20,000. We will be bargaining the specifics of any VSIP.

Second, the administration has expressed interest in exploring an unpaid furlough of not more than five days for USA and other staff unions. By law, furloughs must be negotiated with unionized employees. If unions agree to furloughs, the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program may provide some individuals with full pay, but we would need to explore other options, particularly for those who would lose income during a furlough.

We have requested and still need to review the financial data that the administration is basing their concerns on, including cost savings that have already been implemented, and those yet to be applied to the budget.

USA, along with the other staff unions, will continue to discuss these issues with the administration next week, and we will keep you posted on our progress. USA will be scheduling a virtual zoom membership meeting Tuesday, May 12 from Noon to 1 PM so we can update you on any new information and to hear your concerns.

Please stay safe.

In Solidarity,

USA Leadership Team