

Dear USA Members,

Thank you for joining us in large numbers for our online meeting last week to discuss the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) and five-day unpaid furlough proposals.

Based on your feedback and support, the three staff bargaining units—PSU, USA/MTA and AFSCME—have reached agreements with the UMass Amherst (UMA) administration on the VSIP and furlough. Provisions in the agreements include:

- Five furlough days without pay to be taken between May 31 and June 20.
- Because the furlough days are related to COVID-19, this will be a temporary period of unemployment and all employees are considered in standby status and expected to return to work after the temporary absence of five days.
- The university will not contest any claims of unemployment related to this time period and furlough action.
- The VSIP will provide cash incentives to those who voluntarily resign or retire from UMass Amherst. Interested staff may apply between now and June 12, 2020.

In the face of the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to standing together to protect each other and our university against the looming threats of job cuts. We will continue to meet with the UMA administration in the coming weeks to demand transparency concerning the fiscal crisis that Marty Meehan and the UMass system have declared, and to find a path forward that puts safety and employment security first.

It continues to be our belief that the way out of the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic is to INVEST IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, not to dismantle it with harmful cuts. USA remains in coalition and united with other UMass system unions in rejecting austerity measures that Marty Meehan and the UMass system have begun to implement, including laying off staff at UMass Lowell, issuing notices of non-renewal of contracts to adjunct faculty, and refusing to guarantee graduate student summer employment. These steps only add to the economic crisis in our Commonwealth and communities.

The facts are that the UMass system has enough resources, and they should be taking every possible step to ensure that their staff, student workers, and faculty remain employed during this crisis. Both UMass administrators and our elected officials need to know that we expect them to do what's right and protect our university. Please take a few minutes to take the actions listed below:

- [Sign onto the letter](#) to President Meehan.

- [Send an email](#) to your state senator and representative, calling on them to fight against the elimination of public sector jobs in Massachusetts, and to fight for federal aid for public higher education.
- [Send a message to your U.S. representative and senators](#) urging them to support the HEROES Act and improve on it. See more information below.
- And [sign onto this petition](#) to tell UMass Lowell to stop laying off its staff.

Thank you for making sure your voice is heard! Join us and other UMass workers for a town hall this Thursday on how we can stand against austerity myths, cuts, and layoffs. If you have ideas of your own, please share them by responding to usa@umass.edu.

In Solidarity,

Leslie Marsland, President
Mary Malinowski, Vice President
Linda Fish, Grievance Officer
Donna Vanasse, Treasurer
Sheila Gilmour, Chief Steward

UMass Unions United Town Hall — Busting the Austerity Myths, Fighting Cuts and Layoffs

They say:

- “We’re out of money.”
- “We need to make cuts.”
- “It’s time for everyone to share the pain.”

Join union workers from across UMass Amherst for a town hall to learn the **facts**— and get ready to fight attempts at layoffs and the privatization of our university.

UMass Unions United Town Hall
 Thursday, May 21, 7:00–8:00pm

UMASS UNIONS UNITED



**BUSTING THE AUSTERITY MYTHS,
 FIGHTING CUTS AND LAYOFFS**

