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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | *Contact: Risa Silverman, Amherst Chapter Co-Chair, Professional Staff Union, MTA/NEA* *413-695-7480 (cell)*  *Today, the Amherst Chapter of the*[*Professional Staff Union*](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fumass.us4.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D561fa27799bd9468bec92977c%26id%3D5121ee07b1%26e%3D8610da597e&data=02%7C01%7CMstern%40massteacher.org%7Cf3e2dafdfaaf41d6fa5c08d8536d6446%7C5a965beb25264104b680131e5593c751%7C0%7C0%7C637351076603437293&sdata=JNKTRI64pQ5xSb5AVmqxwdNAGtcsxhKe7d%2BmeR9C7O0%3D&reserved=0)*, MTA/NEA, representing 1,400 workers at UMass Amherst, released this statement addressing Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy's turn towards threats of layoffs and forced furloughs.*  **Union to Chancellor: Slow Down, You Have Choices**  Whoa! Put the brakes on, Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy. Your choices for erasing a projected campus deficit are flat-out wrong. They ignore reasonable alternatives that are far less damaging to the economy, our communities, our hardworking staff and their families, and our students. Your choice to “temporarily” eliminate 1,200 jobs, with more cuts promised in the coming weeks, the Professional Staff Union (PSU) believes, is the behavior one would expect out of a corporate downsizer, not the leader of a public university.  We urge you to live up to our university’s slogan and “Be Revolutionary”—use your popularity as chancellor and partner with campus unions to create a new path forward during these unprecedented times. Build on our university’s rich history as a bedrock for social and economic justice by reversing your decision on painful job cuts. You already made a hard decision when you changed course about students living on campus, and we believe you can do it again.  In May, we worked with you and other campus unions to accept furloughs in exchange for no layoffs, which we did in good faith despite having no financial information to demonstrate need. PSU members shared the pain because we are stronger together—from office clerks earning a median annual salary of $37,830 to administrators paid six-figure salaries. But we can’t be stronger together if we don’t work together, openly and transparently. Unfortunately, you continue to withhold crucial financial data from us, and the public.  One thing is clear—we should not careen into a semester by gutting staff and services for students who see our university as a beacon for quality education and a means to move up the social and economic ladder. We urge you to slow down and make the right decisions for UMass Amherst and the entire region— a recent study from one of our economics professors calculated that losing 1,000 jobs at UMass would cause 1,500 additional job losses. We urge making other choices:   * Lead the university in using both campus and system-wide reserves, and delay or restructure debt payments. * Instead of refusing to bargain in good faith and refusing to share financials with us, work with your employees and reject the fiction that the state will cut 10 percent of our budget in the future when our budget is level-funded by the Massachusetts Legislature for the next three months. * Instead of rushing to furlough and lay off workers, postpone any staff reductions until Congress passes the next round of stimulus funds, which will offset the type of loss our campus faces. This is precisely what the level funding is for. * Instead of focusing on what can’t be done on campus, assign staff to help with contact tracing and deep cleaning of buildings to make them safer, and complete the backlog of deferred maintenance projects, such as retrofitting buildings to improve sustainability and reduce carbon emissions. * Instead of putting the largest burden of the crisis on the university’s lowest paid workers, ensure that everyone, including highly-paid administrators and the multi-million-dollar football and basketball programs, are included in all calculations.   You have choices. Do the right thing. Save our jobs, our university, and our economy.  *Sincerely, The Chapter Board of the Professional Staff Union, MTA/NEA* | | |