

\$100s of Millions

On Tuesday, together with leaders from University Staff Association (USA) and Massachusetts Society of Professors, we met with Chancellor Subbaswamy to share statements from UMass staff members who have been impacted by furloughs and hours reductions. On Thursday, Risa Silverman, PSU co-chair testified at the quarterly UMass Board of Trustees meeting along with Leslie Marsland, president of USA, to get the same message across.

We told the chancellor and the board that we need to Bring Staff Back now. Staff and our families are suffering. Students are being negatively impacted, and departments across UMass are struggling under the burden.

As Risa said to the board when she testified, "Budgets are moral documents and they state our priorities ... it is your job to protect the flagship campus from any further damage."

Now that we have an assurance of level funding from the state, and now that we can expect Congress to pass an additional relief bill in the near future, we know that the money is there.

In fact, a new financial analysis by the MTA has discovered that the UMass system

has \$125,000,000 in reserves that are held specifically for emergencies. But Michael O'Brien, a representative from the Board of Trustees' finance committee, told the public last Thursday that these funds should only be used for an event like "an asteroid hitting the earth." Are they serious? A once-in-a-lifetime pandemic doesn't qualify?

In addition, there are hundreds of millions of dollars of further funds that can be made

available, including \$323,000,000 in "excess operating cash" built up from campus budgets over a number of years, all of which can help get us through the end of this pandemic ([see the response to Assertion #3 of the administration on this fact sheet from the MTA](#)).

As USA President Leslie Marsland told the board, "There is something wrong when our campus workers cannot pay their bills, and must stand in food lines ... **put yourself in the shoes of someone [who] makes \$35,000 to \$50,000 a year and then has their income cut in half, if not more.**"



Photo: NASA Hubble Space Telescope

This is unacceptable, and we need to make our voices heard loud and clear. If you haven't already, help us get through to the chancellor by sharing the impacts that these damaging cuts have had on you, your families, and the university:

- [Take the survey—Impacts of Staff Layoffs At UMass Amherst](#)

In addition, help share the facts on social media and watch a compelling new video from the Massachusetts Agrees campaign:

- [Read and share the post on Facebook.](#)
- [Watch: "Defend Public Higher Ed Now"](#)

Now, as we watch the first doses of coronavirus vaccine roll out in the United States, is a time to recognize that there's been enough pain—at UMass, and across the country. At this moment, we are at a moral inflection point. Our world's medical researchers and scientists have done their part to meet this crisis—and now it's time for UMass administrators to do their part with a firm commitment to stop the cuts and bring every staff member back.

In Solidarity,

Leslie Marsland, USA President

Risa Silverman and Brad Turner, PSU Amherst Co-Chairs