



Dear USA Members,

By now, you've probably seen the [message from Chancellor Subbaswamy](#) regarding a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases in the UMass Amherst community, and the resulting change in status of the campus's operational posture to "High Risk."

We support the measures that are currently being implemented to protect our campus community, which includes the return of several more employees from reductions and furloughs to respond to the High Risk operational posture. We have been advocating during impact bargaining for full staffing for months and believe that the rise in cases might have been significantly diminished with a fully-staffed campus, instead of one focused on short-term cost reduction.

We must also recognize that all workers on our campus will be at increased risk for serious illness. This is especially true for residential staff and other onsite workers, particularly those who are student-facing. As LeeAnn Robinson, the president of AFSCME 1776 put it in a message to the campus, "The hardest working and lowest paid employees at the university ... should not have to put themselves and their families in grave danger just to put food on the table and a roof over their head." We join AFSCME and the other campus unions in asking all members of the community to scrupulously follow proper health and safety protocols the rest of the semester. OSHA says that employers, including UMass, has a general duty to provide a safe working environment. If you have concerns about your work, share your questions and concerns with your supervisor. If the issues are not resolved satisfactorily, please reach out to your union.

The administration **must not** use this rise in COVID-19 cases to re-furlough staff brought back to work in the last few weeks, or delay the return of staff from furlough. Now, more than ever, UMass Amherst students need the support of ALL our staff and faculty. That's why the Massachusetts Legislature worked hard to provide level funding this year, while Congress delivered millions in direct relief funds—so that universities like UMass wouldn't have to choose between public safety and employment security during this crisis. Thanks to this funding from the Commonwealth and federal government, we are looking at a fiscal year SURPLUS for our campus. Chancellor Subbaswamy needs to honor the purpose of this funding and bring ALL staff back to full pay status NOW.

If you haven't done so already, please take a moment and **ADD YOUR SIGNATURE NOW** to our letter to Chancellor Subbaswamy. In this moment, we need to speak with a united voice:

[Chancellor: Now That There's Federal Aid and State Level Funding, It's Time To Bring All Staff Back](#)

In Solidarity,

Leslie Marsland, President