

November 10, 2009

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Senate Executive Committee
RE: Faculty Senate Statements Concerning Furloughs

On October 1, 2009, Faculty Senate approved a motion to have SEC revise a TAUWP statement concerning furloughs. In particular, SEC was asked to address the following three issues, and then bring the revised document to Senate for discussion.

1. Modify the language suggesting that furloughs be called pay cuts. Pay cuts are permanent and result in a commensurate loss of benefits, while furloughs are temporary and have no such loss in benefits.
2. Modify the more heated language in the document (such as “political cowardice”) without reducing the strength of the message.
3. Add language concerning the current salary compensation problem and the associated difficulty in retaining and recruiting quality faculty.

SEC has discussed revisions to the furlough letter at every SEC meeting since this motion was passed (6 meetings). Despite every good faith effort made and multiple revisions, SEC could not come to a consensus regarding a new draft of the letter. After lengthy discussions, the source of conflict was identified as primarily the following:

A single letter is not an effective route to addressing two different bodies (UW System and Wisconsin Legislators) that have different responsibilities and authorities in creating and implementing the furlough policy. UW System is responsible for the implementation policy, but not for mandating the furloughs or setting the budget, which is the Legislators' responsibility.

Thus, with all due respect to Faculty Senators, SEC feels that we can make a stronger case if the response is targeted to the specific audience. Therefore, we present to the Senate for discussion an alternate set of documents: **two letters, one specifically targeted to UW System, and one targeted towards Wisconsin Legislators**. SEC also documented the sources for data cited, and added several additional arguments that we feel strengthen the responses. In drafting the letters, a concerted effort was made to keep the **language strong**, to **address the concerns of Senate**, and to be **more concise** in sending the message.

UW-L Faculty Senate Statement Concerning Furloughs (Elected Officials)

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Faculty Senate holds Wisconsin elected officials accountable for mandating a furlough policy that exacerbates the problems created by the State's ongoing disinvestment in higher education. In particular,

- Students are asked to pay the **same, or higher, tuition** for their education while faculty are **available fewer days**.
- Faculty must prepare the same courses, conduct the same scholarly activities, and participate in the same service activities, but have reduced time to do so. Thus unlike State workers in other sectors, under the furlough plan UW faculty and staff are **paid less for the same amount of work**.
- In combination with the pay cut associated with the rescinded 2 % raise, the 3% loss in salary represented by the furlough plan results in a **5% decrease overall in take home pay for UW faculty and staff** over this biennium.
- The 5% loss in pay compounds an **ongoing severe compensation problem for faculty and staff at UW System schools**. Faculty have systematically received salary increases that lag behind the rate of inflation. As of December 2008, UW faculty salaries were still at least 10% behind those at comparable institutions,¹ making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain quality faculty.
- Over the past three decades, State funding for the UW System has decreased from 52% of the institution's budget in 1974 to 26% in 2005 (check #'s & add footnote), while at the same time, tuition at the four-year comprehensives has increased by over 100%. The State's disinvestment in higher education has resulted in a **steady decrease in tenured faculty lines relative to an increase in contingent, academic staff positions that have little or no job security**. For example, UW-La Crosse faculty to instructional academic staff ratios have decreased from 83%:17% in 1995 to 63%:35% in 2007.

If quality faculty and staff cannot be recruited to and retained at the UW campuses, the educational mission of the University of Wisconsin will suffer. If faculty and instructional academic staff have fewer office hours, spend fewer hours preparing for class, and have fewer work hours to devote to staying current in their discipline, the students' educational experience will suffer. The real and adverse effects on the quality of education offered by the UW System schools must not be underestimated. Yet, Wisconsin elected officials have yet to acknowledge the reduction in teaching, research, and service that will accrue from these furloughs.

Ultimately, we feel that the current furlough mandate in combination with the ongoing reduction in funding for UW campuses are acts of political convenience which reflect a profound failure of both leadership and imagination to think about the long-term consequences of these acts.

In light of all the above, we call upon UW System officials to undertake the following future actions:

1. Reverse the true, long-term problem of which the latest furlough policy is one small piece: decades-long inadequate state-level funding for the University of Wisconsin System;
2. Recognize that recent legislative actions have caused UW faculty to fall even farther behind comparable institutions in compensation, and work towards a solution that is broader and more far-reaching than the inadequate pool of monies supplied in the form of recruitment and retention funds.

¹ <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/35220724.html> and <http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/35605129.html>

UW-L Faculty Senate Statement Concerning Furloughs (UW System)

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Faculty Senate holds University of Wisconsin System and the Board of Regents accountable for failing to uphold the basic mission of the University of Wisconsin and for compromising the integrity of all faculty and staff who must now implement a fundamentally flawed furlough policy that exacerbates the problems created by the State's ongoing disinvestment in higher education. In particular,

- Students are asked to pay the **same, or higher, tuition** for their education while faculty are **available fewer days**.
- Faculty must prepare the same courses, conduct the same scholarly activities, and participate in the same service activities, but have reduced time to do so. Thus unlike State workers in other sectors, under the furlough plan UW faculty and staff are **paid less for the same amount of work**.
- The UW System has mandated that furlough days for faculty and instructional academic staff take place on non-instructional days. However, **teaching work takes place even on days that classes do not meet**.
- The decision of how to implement the furlough policy was made by UW System **without the full and equal participation of the faculty and staff** - both in defining the details of these policies and in determining how they are to be implemented.
- The UW System furlough implementation policy ultimately results in little visible impact on our educational efforts. This lack of visible impact **leaves little disincentive for the Legislature to implement furloughs** in future years as a budget balancing method. Additional furloughs will further erode the already serious salary problem cited by two UW System studies showing that *before furlough and pay cut implementations in this biennium*, faculty were 10% behind comparable institutions in salary.²

As you well know, the ongoing compensation problem makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality faculty and staff. If quality faculty and staff cannot be recruited to and retained at UW campuses, the educational mission of the University of Wisconsin will suffer. If faculty and instructional academic staff have fewer office hours, spend fewer hours preparing for class, and have fewer work hours to devote to staying current in their discipline, then the students educational experience will suffer. The real and adverse effects on the quality of education offered by the UW System schools must not be underestimated.

Ultimately, we feel that the current furlough mandate in combination with the ongoing reduction in funding for UW campuses are acts of political convenience which reflect a profound failure of both leadership and imagination to think about the long-term consequences of these acts.

In light of all the above, we call upon UW System officials to undertake the following future actions:

3. Acknowledge the real reduction in teaching, scholarship and service that will accrue from these furloughs;
4. Argue against recruitment and retention funds as a stopgap measure for mediating salary problems and instead lobby for broad spectrum salary solutions;
5. Fully engage faculty governance groups at UW System schools in the implementation of any future furlough mandates.

² <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/35220724.html> and <http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/35605129.html>