May 12, 2020

An open letter to UVM decision makers:

United Academics, the UVM faculty union, are partners in shared governance here at the University of Vermont. As such, we would like to contribute an alternative plan for the financial well-being of the university. The deans and the UVM Strong Committee have been tasked with presenting pared down budgets for their units. These plans were enacted without faculty input despite numerous calls from the Faculty Senate and United Academics to have Faculty representation on this UVM Strong Committee for the very important planning for the fall semester.

Unfortunately, the process resulted in a budget plan that relies overwhelmingly on cuts to our most vulnerable and lowest paid faculty. These full-time non-Tenure Track faculty provide the most classroom teaching. Many of these essential educators are facing a 25% cut to their positions and their pay, and part time faculty who are threatened with job losses. We at United Academics would like to propose a different, more progressive path for your consideration. It begins with commensurate pay cuts to our highest paid administrators and proceeds from there to their lower paid colleagues as needed. We believe that this proposal will provide equal budget relief in these very uncertain times, while sparing those who can least afford pay reductions for as long as possible.

*Restore the inhumane and unwise cuts* to NTT faculty workloads to ensure that UVM will have all hands on deck to meet the challenges posed by socially distanced learning next year and to protect the programs our students have been promised.

*Commit to joining UA and the Faculty Senate in negotiating shared, progressive financial sacrifice* that shows leadership and honors UVM's commitment to shared governance when financial shortfalls due to the pandemic are measurable in enrollment drops.

*Promote transparency* and shared governance at UVM by including faculty on decision-making bodies, starting with the UVM Strong task force, and demonstrating clearly the need for increased funds that mandate crisis planning.

We further request that both United Academics and the Faculty Senate be included in all pandemic-related planning for the university. Although United Academics is forbidden from discussing current negotiations during bargaining, there is no prohibition on including UA in pandemic or any other emergency planning. The core mission of the university as well as the lives and livelihoods of our faculty are on the line. We believe that UVM is a community and
that all community members have a stake in its success and must be included in planning for our mutual future.

Sincerely,

The United Academics Executive Council

Julie Roberts, President
Susan Comerford, Vice President
Joe Kudrle, Treasurer
Yolanda Flores, Member-At-Large
Sean Hurley, Member-At-Large
Katherine Elmer, Part Time Faculty Member-At-Large
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