



July 15, 2020

President Suresh Garimella  
348 Waterman Building

Provost Patricia Prelock  
304 Waterman Building

Dear President Garimella and Provost Prelock,

We, faculty members of the Department of English and the Film & Television Studies Program, write in support of the June 30th, 2020 memo by the Staff Council and the Compensation, Benefits, & Budget Committee's addressing 1) the administration's salary reduction plan; and 2) inclusion of staff input.

We think any cuts to staff salary at this point are ill-advised and unethical. Staff are being asked to shoulder the majority of the organization of courses as well as the new COVID protocols. At the very least, these colleagues should not have their salary reduced during this time they are being asked to do more than ever. Any salary reductions resulting from the extraordinary conditions brought about by COVID-19 should be arrived at with meaningful input from the staff, be temporary and be significantly progressive.

We also take this occasion to stress our objections to the cuts made in the teaching assignments of non-tenure track faculty. These cuts diminish the quality of the education we are able to offer our students and fly in the face of fairness. We are, thus, firmly against the reductions that have been announced.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Alexander, Associate Professor  
Eve Alexandra, Senior Lecturer  
Philip Baruth, Professor  
Emily Bernard, Professor  
Jean Bessette, Associate Professor  
Greg Bottoms, Professor

Sheila Boland Chira, Senior Lecturer  
Stephen Cramer, Senior Lecturer  
Deb Ellis, Professor  
Elizabeth Fenton, Professor  
Daniel Fogel, Professor  
Jenny Grosvenor, Senior Lecturer  
Susanmarie Harrington, Professor  
Jinny Huh, Associate Professor  
Maria Hummel, Associate Professor  
Mary Louise Kete, Professor  
Eric Lindstrom, Associate Professor  
Lokangaka Losambe, Professor  
Libby Miles, Associate Professor  
Todd McGowan  
Sarah Nilsen, Associate Professor  
Hilary Neroni, Professor  
Deb Noel, Sr. Lecturer  
Angela Patten, Senior Lecturer  
Holly Painter, Lecturer  
Val Rohy, Professor  
Helen Scott, Professor  
Lisa Schnell, Associate Professor  
Jenny Sisk, Associate Professor  
Sarah E. Turner, Senior Lecturer  
Christopher Vaccaro, Senior Lecturer  
Nancy Welch, Professor  
Sean A. Witters, Senior Lecturer  
Jamie Williamson, Senior Lecturer  
Hyon Joo Yoo, Associate Professor

Enclosure: Staff Council memo, June 30, 2020

CC:

UVM Staff Council

UVM Board of Trustees

Enclosure:

To: President Suresh Garimella  
Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Richard Cate  
From: UVM Staff Council & the Compensation, Benefits, & Budget Committee  
Re: UVM Budget  
Date: June 30, 2020

The UVM Staff Council would like to respectfully address the following two critically important and interconnected topics, in support of our non-represented staff constituents who have contacted Staff Council regarding these topics and offered alternatives:

1. The salary reduction plan
2. Inclusion of staff input

**1. The Salary Reduction Plan**

We respectfully direct this item to Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Richard Cate and his team.

We understand that these are extraordinary times that have placed an additional burden on an already-strained resource environment. We appreciate that you intended to be equitable by proposing a salary reduction plan that protected our lowest earners while levying a set of increasingly higher salary reductions on different income tiers.

However, we request your consideration of a more equitable, alternative salary reduction plan for immediate implementation. Under the current salary reduction plan, the highest earners would create the least net salary savings for UVM's budget while those earners closer to the middle and bottom would create the most net salary savings. Further, as noted in a separate letter from the Staff Council, this initial salary reduction plan disproportionately affects the salaries of women and our Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) colleagues, however inadvertent that impact may have been.

Our Staff Council salary reduction plan takes these shortcomings of the current plan into consideration while achieving identical cost savings for the University.

**Equitable Salary Reduction Plan Proposal**

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In the June 9th Staff Council meeting with VP Richard Cate, he noted that the imposed wage reductions and (voluntary) contributions would net a \$2.5M return. Many of our colleagues have reached out to propose that the \$2.5M cost savings could be achieved by multiple means, with far less impact on those already earning the least.

By reviewing publicly available data, staff colleagues have learned and shared that UVM has 29 staff/executive employees earning \$200,000 per year or more (this does not include faculty, many of whom earn substantially more):

A 5% salary reduction would net the following salary savings:

\$150,000.00 @ 5% = \$7,500.00  
\$175,000.00 @ 5% = \$8,750.00  
\$200,000.00 @ 5% = \$10,000.00  
\$225,000.00 @ 5% = \$11,250.00  
\$250,000.00 @ 5% = \$12,500.00  
\$275,000.00 @ 5% = \$13,750.00  
\$300,000.00 @ 5% = \$15,000.00

A 10% salary reduction would net the following salary savings:

\$150,000.00 @ 10% = \$15,000.00  
\$175,000.00 @ 10% = \$17,500.00  
\$200,000.00 @ 10% = \$20,000.00  
\$225,000.00 @ 10% = \$22,500.00  
\$250,000.00 @ 10% = \$25,000.00  
\$275,000.00 @ 10% = \$27,500.00  
\$300,000.00 @ 10% = \$30,000.00

So it follows that:

5% of all 29 individuals earning \$200,000 or more will net \$408,636.90

10% of all 29 individuals earning \$200,000 or more will net \$817,273.80

15% of all 29 individuals earning \$200,000 or more will net \$1,225,910.70

20% of all 29 individuals earning \$200,000 or more will net \$1,634,547.60

**25% of all 29 individuals earning \$200,000 or more will net \$2,043,184.50**

**If raising \$2.5M is the goal, a 25% cut to those making \$200,000 or more would net the University most of the salary savings that we need, and the remaining salary savings – approximately \$350,000 -- could be created through a tiered salary reduction that would not affect any staff earning less than \$60,000.**

Another alternative solution could see a permanent 12.5% reduction for those making over \$200K, a 10.0% reduction for those making over \$150K, a 7.5% reduction for those making over \$100K, and 0% for less than \$45K. For those in the middle rankings a more accurate, fair, and equitable percentage decrease could be implemented.

Given that almost 33% of the UVM salary pool lies above \$100K, major financial impact and savings could be created through reductions to these higher salaries. Taking such a step would also demonstrate a deepened commitment from UVM leadership to avert a financial crisis with the least negative impact possible on lower and middle earners. It would also demonstrate a commitment to equitable treatment of BIPOC and women staff.

**We urge UVM leadership to be bold in this crisis by embracing this more equitable and inclusive salary reduction plan by adopting a progressive pay reduction scale with tiers from \$60,000 -> \$200,000, starting at 1% and rising to 10-25%.**

## **2. Inclusion of Staff Input**

We respectfully direct this to President Garimella and his team.

**We ask for a commitment from the President's office to have meaningful representation of staff on all committees and within all processes that affect the entire institution.** Specifically, our colleagues holding positions whose titles include "generalist," "specialist," and "professional" must be included on all committees supporting budgeting processes, adjustments to benefits, and other human resource matters. Staff Council leadership and the Compensation, Benefits and Budget Committee will assist in supporting and staffing these efforts.

UVM staff and Staff Council have always been, and continue to be, committed to the success of our institution. We urge UVM leadership to share the burden of this financial crisis with as much equity and mutual consideration as possible so that UVM might continue to stay true to the Common Ground principles which mean so much to our campus.

Regards,

