

Dear Vice Chancellor Waugh:

You may have gotten the impression at last Thursday's Academic Senate meeting that the faculty would be willing to accept a 7% furlough or salary cut with something like grudging acquiescence, but I can assure you that this is not the case. Many faculty view this prospect with confusion and anger. Young faculty trying to meet house payments are at special risk, but even older faculty, such as myself, who have grown children suddenly moving into our households, are greatly worried by any prospective cut in our salaries. It is especially difficult for us to understand why such a salary cut would be extended to technicians and other support personnel who do not receive one penny of State assistance but are fully supported on our grants. Chancellor Block mentioned that this may have to be done "in the interests of fairness", but how can it be fair for us to ask our personnel, who have worked so hard so that we can obtain our NIH and NSF funding, now to sacrifice part of their salary when they have in no way contributed to the financial problem we face? This wouldn't save the State anything and could conceivably reduce our income by decreasing return from indirect costs.

I would like to make a suggestion which may let us reduce or even avoid the salary cuts altogether. Suppose we ask funded faculty, which include the great majority of medical school faculty and perhaps as many as half of the faculty in the college, to pay 15% of their regular (9-month) salary from their grants. In exchange, they would receive no furlough or salary cut. The money collected would then be used to mitigate furloughs or salary cuts in the rest of our institution. This may make it possible to reduce the cuts in North Campus from 7-10% to only 2-3%, a much more manageable figure, or perhaps even eliminate them completely. You may believe that University regulations would prohibit members of the College from using grant money to pay part of their 9-month salary, but I can assure you that this is not true. I have paid part of my 9-month salary from my NIH grant for many years as a part of a retention package I received from the University, and if I can do this, everyone else could do it as well. Medical School faculty do this as a matter of course. Faculty would have to receive approval from their funding agencies, but it is difficult to believe that the NIH and NSF would not assent to this mechanism under the present financial circumstances.

I implore you to consider the damage we may do, particularly to our technical staff and to the younger faculty, by a global imposition of a salary cut or furlough. Your comment that aggrieved faculty would in any case have nowhere else to go, since all Universities are having financial difficulties, was insensitive and untrue. Faculty have long memories.

Grievances often resurface and can play a critical role in decisions faculty make many years later. I realize that you are under tremendous pressure, and we are all grateful to you for your dedication and effort on our behalf. The faculty are willing to help, but we would be grateful if we as a faculty can together discover solutions to our problems that do not do lasting harm to our institution.

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