

June 26, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

The Nevada State Legislature concluded its work on June 2. While the final budget is certainly not what we desire and need for the future, we are nonetheless grateful to the legislators for their efforts which will allow the Nevada System of Higher Education to continue serving the basic needs of the state. Although the legislature and regents have given us substantial freedom in how we manage the 15 percent budget cut (\$33 million in each of the next two fiscal years), they did mandate salary reductions through the use of classified furloughs and unpaid leave for professional staff. While we regret the use of a mandate, we must follow the law. As we go into the next year, we will continue to count on the advice and support you have provided us during the past few years.

With the passage of Senate Bill 433, the mandatory furloughs for classified State employees will begin July 1, 2009. In recognition of contractual commitments, the enabling legislation states that the Board of Regents will determine and implement the methods by which professional employees (academic faculty and administrative faculty) will participate in the mandate.

The Nevada State Legislature, with refinement from the State Department of Personnel, set the rules and guidelines for classified furloughs. For the period beginning on July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2011, each fulltime classified employee will be required to take 96 hours of unpaid furlough leave each year. This amounts to eight hours per day for 12 days per year. If the employee is employed less than fulltime, the number of hours worked each day should be multiplied by 12 to determine how many hours of furlough a part-time employee will be required to take. The University will be allowing classified employees, with the approval of their supervisor, to take these furloughs in four- or eight-hour increments.

During last week's Board of Regents meeting in Las Vegas, many of the mechanisms needed to implement the mandatory unpaid leave for faculty were set in place. Let me briefly explain them to you.

The Board of Regents has determined that all fulltime faculty that are not tenured (this includes administrative faculty and tenure-track faculty) will be mandated to take 96 hours of unpaid leave effective July 1, 2010.

The Board of Regents has also determined, through a legal opinion, that tenured faculty members have certain property rights associated with their employment which precludes them from being subject to the unpaid leave mandate. The Board is instead asking tenured faculty to increase their "workload" by 4.6 percent, which is approximately the same amount as the reduction in take-home pay that employees on unpaid leave will experience. I understand that faculty workload is multifaceted, but for tenured faculty we would look to increase, on average, student credit hours taught by 4.6%. This effort will be managed within each college by the dean. Provost Marc Johnson will be working closely with the deans to enact this effort.

Although we are still ironing out the details, the University will be offering a voluntary option under the unpaid leave program. Under the voluntary program, non-tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty would be allowed to spread the 4.6% reduction in pay over two years (2.3% each year) rather than one year, 2011. When the particulars of the program are finally determined, Human Resources will inform the campus. This announcement should be coming in early July.

As we near July 1, there are a few other points to keep in mind. First, and very importantly, is that benefits will not be affected by mandatory or voluntary furloughs/unpaid leaves, up to a maximum of 24 days over the biennium. Individual retirement plans will also remain whole; the University will continue to contribute at the same percentage rate of your base salary. The furlough/unpaid leaves do not reduce base salary; it reduces the amount one would actually receive in take-home pay. Furlough/unpaid leaves will not affect eligibility for health insurance and leave accruals.

A second point worth noting: there are triggers in the legislation that could be to the University's benefit if the economy improves. The legislation expressly states that for Fiscal Year 2011, if additional revenues exceed \$350 million by the state, furlough/unpaid leave days would be reduced from 12 to 9. I would be remiss if I did not mention that, with the support of our student leaders, tuition will be increased 10% in each of the next years and a fee will be added to support the Integrate Student Information System.

Starting this week and continuing through next week, Human Resources is holding a series of informational meetings for all of our classified staff regarding the furlough program. Meeting times and location will be posted on the HR website, as well as specific information regarding the furlough program, including a Frequently Asked Questions section. The HR website is at: www.unr.edu/hr

In closing, I would like to pass along my heartfelt thanks to our entire University community. As stated earlier, there have been numerous instances of shared sacrifice for more than a year now, and each time these instances occur, I am further reminded of the strong sense of collegiality and resilience that exists. As the University nears the implementation of the furlough and unpaid leave programs, I am struck by how many of you have expressed concern not for yourselves, but for the welfare and well-being of your friends and colleagues. It is this sense of generosity of spirit and abiding investment in our University community that will help us through this difficult time.

I welcome your thoughts, questions and concerns. You can email me at glick@unr.edu

I also highly encourage you to attend the informational meetings that HR will be presenting, or to visit the new web resources that the HR homepage will soon be offering.

Sincerely,

Milton D. Glick