

August 2, 2020

Dear Barry,

I am writing on behalf of the Whitman College chapter of the AAUP. We commend the College for moving to online instruction to protect the health and safety of all on campus and in the wider Walla Walla community. We recognize that this decision puts a serious financial strain on our institution. We also recognize that the principles and standards of shared governance apply no matter how exigent the situation. As stipulated by the AAUP (<https://www.aaup.org/aaup-principles-and-standards-covid-19-crisis>, point #8), faculty consultation on measures that affect the mission of the College is essential right now. Therefore, we are forwarding to you our prioritized list of appeals during this difficult moment. Please share them in full with President Murray and the cabinet as soon as possible.

- We urge the highest paid members of the College to take a 15-20% salary cut *prior* to imposing any salary cuts on any other Whitman employee, especially given the inequitable hardship already imposed by the elimination of all retirement contributions. We are looking at the examples of, for instance, President Wingenbach of Hampshire College, who took a 50% reduction in pay for 2020-21, saying the commitment was a way to approach shared problems in good faith (<https://universitybusiness.com/hampshire-faculty-agree-to-salary-reductions/>). At Johns Hopkins University, President Daniels and the University Provost have taken 20% salary cuts starting in July, with 10% cuts planned for other senior administrators (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/23/rising-expenses-falling-revenues-budget-cuts-universities-face-looming-financial-crisis/>).
- We recommend increasing the payout rate from the endowment with an understanding that the College will return to 5% as quickly as possible, *rather than* resorting to staff and faculty layoffs and furloughs. The College has already acknowledged that we need to draw on long term resources, such as retirement benefits, to ensure the short term financial stability of the College. We believe the same logic should be applied to the endowment.
- We ask that the College modify the universal elimination of retirement benefits with a progressive structure that implements a higher percentage of cuts at higher salary levels. In addition, we ask that the College commit to restore retirement benefits to their previous level after certain financial conditions are met, and that these commitments and benchmarks be stated publicly.

We understand that this time of crisis calls for shared sacrifice within our community. But we also believe that any cuts in compensation and/or benefits should be made equitably, based on a sliding scale that takes into account the differential capacity of Whitman employees to absorb these losses. By taking the steps above, the College can minimize disparity and protect the lifeblood of the Whitman student experience.

With respect and appreciation,  
Lisa Uddin for the Whitman College chapter of the American Association of University Professors