

GEO Impact Bargaining New Proposals (7.15.20)

Expansion of FMLA-Qualifying Events to include paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specific reasons related to COVID-19:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or
- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a *bona fide* need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor; and
- Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a *bona fide* need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

COVID-19 Suspension of wage reduction for housing costs for live-in GEO members: For all bargaining unit members who live on campus as required by their appointment (e.g. ARDs/LCGs), the University shall not garnish wages for the cost of their live/work spaces in the residential halls for the duration of the Fall 2020 semester.

Release of UMass Community Agreement signing requirement for GEO members: On the basis that it shifts the liability for onsite workers away from the employer and onto the employee, no member of the bargaining unit shall be coerced, as a condition of employment, to sign the UMass Community Agreement.

COVID-19 Additional PPE for Reslife employees: All ResLife graduate employees will have ongoing access to sufficient PPE, supplied by the University, for all facets of their jobs. This means PPE that is appropriate for both home and office type spaces / duties. Further, the University shall provide spare masks for ResLife employees to give to residents who lose or forget their masks. This shall continue until the University deems PPE unnecessary for the general campus population.

COVID-19 ResLife Employee Door Access: In order to minimize exposure upon entry and exit, all ResLife graduate employees, not just ARDs, will have unrestricted access to emergency doors in the building(s) in which they work for the Fall 2020 semester.

COVID-19 ResLife Lounge Space Closure: All residential lounge spaces will be closed off to student access, without exception, for the duration of the Fall 2020 semester.

COVID-19 Testing for Graduate Employees: Due to the pandemic, the University has mandated that all who return to campus must be tested for COVID. Thus, the University shall arrange and cover the cost of COVID-19 testing for all graduate employees who return to campus to complete on-site work. Furthermore, graduate employees shall not be required to interact with any individual until it has been confirmed that they have tested negative for COVID-19.

Visa-related International Summer Pay adjustments: Given the adjusted early start date of the Fall 2020 semester and loss of income: any international graduate student worker who has both summer and fall employment on campus and who faces a reduction in the number of hours worked as a result of visa restrictions that differ between the summer and fall semesters will be compensated, *via* adjusted hourly wages, to make up the lost wages, over the winter session.

ResLife Office Space: In order to uphold the possibility of social distancing in the performance of bargaining unit members' job duties, the University shall ensure all bargaining unit members in ResLife are given discrete/detached/individual offices. Further, to minimize the spread of COVID across Residential buildings, the University shall ensure that assignments are such that bargaining unit members are able to live and work in the same building.

Campus Safety from Police & ICE: To ensure the health and safety of the campus community, UMPD shall not be involved in any COVID-19/social distancing response protocol. Policing is inherently violent, anti-Black, and provides a pathway for ICE to access the campus community, so UMass Amherst shall begin to cut ties with UMPD while finding alternatives to using police to enforce the UMass Community Agreement, Residential Community Guidelines, and prevent the policing of students and workers on campus altogether. UMass Amherst shall also advocate for the defunding and eventual abolition of UMPD and adhere to the following timeline for UMPD's defunding:

- FY 22 - Reduce FY20 UMPD budget by 50% (3.2M),
- FY 24 - Reduce FY20 UMPD budget by 75% (1.6M),
- FY 25 - Reduce FY20 UMPD budget by 90% (640k)

Financial Stability Proposal: Ensuring the University has the funds to properly provide for the health, safety, and dignity of its workers during this time is paramount. To provide financial stability for itself and its workers, and to fully fund all necessary expenses related to the compensation and safety of its workers, the University of Massachusetts system shall pursue the following:

- The UMass system can self-finance its activities by issuing credits called “Unis.” The term “Unis” is derived from the more widely known municipal debts called “Munis.” Unis will be issued as University Payment Anticipation Notes and have value as circulating money by virtue of the university’s willingness to accept them in later payments. To fully establish the Uni’s liquidity will require UMass to petition the Federal Reserve to accommodate and monetize Uni credits just as they do banknotes in the financial sector.
- Unis are based off of the Munis issued by the Fed’s new Municipal Liquidity Facility--essentially, this allows for the Fed to back the establishment of municipal lines of credit. Likewise, the University of Massachusetts system shall propose that the Fed back a University line of credit--the Uni.
- UMass system leadership will complete the Fed’s Municipal Liquidity Facility Notice of Interest to formalize their own direct purchasing relationship with the Fed. This relationship with the Fed will allow for critical investment in key University infrastructure including but not limited to the payment of all workers, covering the costs of COVID-19-related safety measures, and freezing if not reducing tuition and fees for students.
- Once the Uni system has been approved and backed by the Fed, all distribution of Unis to cover necessary operating costs shall be done so democratically, with the UMass administration consulting all UMass Unions and appropriate student governance bodies to determine where funding might best be allocated.

The significance of Fed experimentation for universities like UMass will be determined largely by their ability to be as politically and rhetorically effective as banks, insurance companies, automakers, and the fossil fuel industry at adjusting the Fed’s terms and conditions to meet their own needs. At present, the Fed is framing its assistance as “loans,” meant to be paid back later at interest. Under this rubric, the Fed is now accommodating the State of Illinois, the Port Authorities of New York and New Jersey, and New York’s Municipal Transit Authority. As the economic crisis from Covid-19 deepens, however, these alleged “loans” are likely to become effective grants, as was the case with trillions in Quantitative Easing in the wake of the Great Financial Crisis.

What we are proposing is that UMass aggressively negotiate with the Fed such that Unis are not loans, but are instead the Federal Reserve’s support for UMass’ ability to

issue credit. The Uni model will revolutionize the way Universities are funded. This model is not only a reaction to the current crisis, but also a bold way forward which will end the privately-funded model of higher education and usher in a new era of affordable, accessible, and dignified institutions of higher learning which are self-financed due to the Fed's support. **Just as the Federal Reserve gives banks the authority to issue credit, it is time the UMass system pressures the Federal Reserve to give public institutions the same liquidity authority.**