

12/23/2024 [ALLUnit] Budget Cuts

Like many of you, we were dismayed to hear that the Provost's Office is requiring a 2% budget cut (double the expected amount) across all units in Academic Affairs for purposes of "strategic reinvestment." Although the Provost says this is "not a budget cut," he provides no guarantee that the funds that are cut will be reallocated within departments or even within colleges. The vast majority of spending in Academic Affairs supports staffing — faculty and staff doing the work of the University — and the only way most units will reach a 2% cut is by reducing faculty and staff. The MSP is watching, and if cuts negatively affect our members' workload or otherwise violate the collective bargaining agreement, we are ready to file grievances or legal charges demanding that the administration negotiate with the union about any change to our working conditions.

We have heard from many department chairs and deans who are unable to cut their budgets by 2% without negatively affecting working conditions for faculty and staff and learning conditions for students. The Provost promised the MSP Executive Committee that no unreasonable cuts would be made, and no programs would be harmed. We urge chairs and deans who cannot "trim the fat" to insist instead on a constructive conversation with the Provost about how to achieve the administration's goals without harming the programs that make UMass excellent. For example, the MSP has identified UMass Amherst's annual surplus of \$100 million each year – more than enough to make the 2% cuts unnecessary, and to expand childcare, and to provide salary increases, promotional increases, and professional development funds for NTT and tenured faculty.

Wishing you a peaceful break and good things for all in the new year,
Sigrid Schmalzer and Marc Liberatore, MSP Co-Presidents