

UW-Madison announces wide-ranging furloughs

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UW-Madison will furlough nearly all of its faculty, academic and university staff as part of its plan to cope with a \$100 million budget shortfall brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chancellor Rebecca Blank in a letter to employees said mandated unpaid leave for workers would begin by May 15 and run through Oct. 31. UW-Madison employs more than 21,000 people. She said the move should save about \$30 million, and she anticipates that will be enough for the budget.

Blank said the intermittent furlough breakdown by salary is:

- *Employees earning more than \$150,000 get six furlough days.
- *Between \$80,000 and \$150,000 gets five furlough days.
- *Between \$50,000 and \$80,000 take four days.
- *Those earning less than \$50,000 take three days.

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Nine-month employees will also see furloughs, with the days adjusted to reflect a similar reduction in salary. Graduate assistant, post-doctoral, temporary and student workers and non-FTE appointments are exempt.

“The value of a great public university has never been clearer, providing research, information and education related to the pandemic,” Blank said. “Unfortunately, the costs of this crisis to the university are substantial.”

Additionally, Blank, the vice chancellors and other campus leadership are taking a voluntary 15 percent pay reduction for the next six months.

Earlier this week, news emerged on similar plans from UW System schools with thousands of employees affected.

See details in Monday's PM Update:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/mon-pm-update-steineke-questions-why-evers-not-relaxing-restrictions-on-more-businesses-in-latest-order/>

Meanwhile, UW-Madison is developing a work-share program with the Department of Workforce Development to keep staff in particularly vulnerable departments partially employed and avoid any continuous furloughs.

Blank added she thought the UW was lucky enough to be dealing with the fallout "from a relatively sound financial footing" ahead of the 2021-23 budgeting process.

"But we are still facing significant uncertainty about the future," Blank said. "Although we're planning for any number of scenarios, none of us knows exactly how we'll be operating this fall, or the condition of the state's budget headed into the next biennium."

She said a drop in fall attendance or significant cuts in the state budget "could significantly deepen our financial problems" and force more cost reductions.

Spokesmen for Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

A UW System projection previously found there would be a minimum \$168.2 million hit across all campuses in the spring semester alone, with the Madison campus absorbing nearly 60 percent of the total.

All other campuses have said they're either beginning furloughs in the next two months or are still considering their budget stabilization options.

See

more: <https://covid19.wisc.edu/budget-furlough-information-uw-madison-employees/>