

October 1, 2020

Dear campus community,

This week has been bittersweet. The joy of welcoming back students has been mitigated by the fact that, during the past few days, we have notified 46 employees that their positions are being eliminated or their hours reduced. Even though we knew these difficult financial decisions were on the horizon, the very real human impact on our colleagues remains significant. The cuts were made across all divisions of the university, eliminating approximately 10% of each divisions' staff salary budget for a potential total of about \$2 million in salary savings over a complete budget cycle.

Out of respect for privacy and consideration of time to process this news, I will not be sharing a list of the affected employees; however, the general details are below. During the past several months, I have shared information on WOU's financial situation and work to balance the budget with the campus, so I am leaving that out of today's message. Those messages can be [found here](#).

Classified Employees

In accordance with the collective bargaining agreement and most recent letter of agreement with SEIU, all affected classified employees have been notified of layoff as outlined in Article 44. This process includes a 30-day layoff notice during which qualifying individuals may exercise bumping rights according to seniority and classification. That process begins immediately and may result in qualifying employees bumping into positions or choosing layoff. Employees who move to layoff have access to being placed on a recall list for two years.

Additionally, many classified employees will continue on the Extended Benefits Program/Leave Without Pay through Dec. 31, retaining their health insurance until Jan. 31, 2021.

Unclassified Employees

In accordance with our Unclassified Employees Conditions of Employment policy, unclassified employees affected have received 90-day non-renewal (not-for-cause) notices. Employees will remain in their positions until Dec. 31, 2020. Depending on a variety of factors, some employees will be on administrative leave, have work reassigned or work reduced hours during this period. Others will maintain a regular work schedule. This timeline also allows for health insurance coverage through Jan. 31, 2021.

Office of the President



Other affected employees

Employees who have had their FTE status (weekly hours) reduced will see changes in their schedules between Nov. 1, 2020 and Jan. 1, 2021.

What comes next?

As I mentioned in my [State of the University address](#), between now and December we expect to announce additional cuts in faculty personnel resulting from program curtailment in accord with provisions of the faculty contract. In the end, this work will align faculty resources with enrollment trends to reduce faculty expenses in academic programs that have experienced longer-term enrollment declines.

Communication

Supervisors will be talking to each work group about what this means for their teams. Because this is a delicate time, I ask for your patience and understanding as our colleagues have time to process and adjust to these decisions. Moreover, some layoffs may lead to bumping as outlined in the classified contract. If you have any questions, please start with your supervisor. Cabinet members will attend any staff meeting they are invited to. If you have additional questions, please send them to Judy Vanderburg at vanderj@wou.edu.

I know this is a tough time, and I encourage you to reach out to colleagues to provide support for one another. After we take time to appreciate and consider the contributions of our colleagues affected by these decisions, we will need to return to our work and our unyielding focus on student success in support of our mission.

With a heavy heart,

Rex Fuller, President