

August 13, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We found the Provost's Town Hall on August 5th shocking and demoralizing. After all of the work we have done to preserve LMU's future, under impossible conditions, it was dispiriting to hear that faculty and staff will have their compensation reduced by nearly 10%, and not receive this news from the President. It was dispiriting to be talked to, but not really heard. It was dispiriting to hear several major errors in fact and judgment from our executive leadership.

We would like to briefly address a few of them here:

- The AAUP has defined and defended the principles and practices of shared governance in higher education for a hundred years. Shared governance is thus not, as was asserted by Provost Poon, "in the eye of the beholder." LMU has an objective framework for shared governance as laid out in the Faculty Handbook, and through policies adopted by the Faculty Senate. Insofar as shared governance is in the eye of the beholder, if the beholder is executive leadership, too frequently it is viewed as merely optional or entirely unnecessary—as was indicated by the decision to bypass the University Comprehensive Benefits Committee, and thus abrogate the contractual requirements of the Faculty Handbook, in order to suspend contractual obligations of deferred compensation.
- The Provost was mistaken in claiming that only executive leadership's pay has been cut; this statement erases the immense sacrifice that has already been made of hundreds of staff who have had been partially or fully furloughed, or who have been laid off entirely.
- There seems to be significant confusion about the meaning of an equity budget. An across the board cut is not an equity budget. A flat rate cut is not an equity budget. These cuts are not progressive; they are regressive in effect, in that they harm those most vulnerable and protect those least vulnerable. This is not a matter of opinion, but a statement of fact. To mischaracterize publicly, and in written communications, these cuts as "progressive" is especially dispiriting at

an institution of learning. Moreover, such an approach is not in keeping with our values as a university in the Jesuit and Marymount traditions.

- And while it is the case that public universities have a higher degree of budget transparency than private universities, this alone is not sufficient reason for LMU to keep its faculty in the dark about the tough decisions we must make. There has been no meaningful effort to justify how and why these decisions have been made. The goalposts keep changing, the relevant decisions are always made elsewhere, and the faculty are told that we must cut educational resources, but grow management. Transparency is necessary for trust and for confidence in our university; increasingly, as a faculty, we have none.

We look forward to working together as #OneFaculty for greater budget transparency, an equity budget that accords with our values as a university and that preserves the educational mission of LMU, and for a stronger, more democratic governance.

With our respect and solidarity,
The Executive Committee of your LMU AAUP