



**Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost**

Akron, OH 44325-4703

August 25, 2020

To: Academic Deans

Re: Initiation of Retrenchment Process

Dear Colleagues,

As we have discussed frequently in public and in our weekly meetings, the planned reduction in the number of faculty may be negated by the arbitration process that is currently underway. The Akron-AAUP disagrees with The University of Akron's interpretation and implementation of a catastrophic circumstance as described in Article 15, Section 12 of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and has filed a grievance. The grievance is subject to binding arbitration and will be decided by September 18, 2020. If the recent faculty reduction in force is reversed by the arbitration, The University of Akron will have even greater financial distress and we must invoke faculty retrenchment via the process articulated in Sections 1-11 of Article 15.

Although Gary and I believe that the catastrophic circumstances approach was implemented properly and was justified, we continue to focus on The University of Akron's future sustainability. We are in uncertain times and we must be prepared for a variety of scenarios, many of which we hope will never come to pass. Such readiness and preparation are vital if we are to pull through the COVID-19 crisis in a positive way. We realize that implementing this retrenchment process causes anxiety and stress for our faculty colleagues in a time that is already extremely uncertain, but we are forced to begin this process if we are to maximize our chances for maintaining a healthy financial future for The University of Akron. Unfortunately, the recent rejection by the Akron-AAUP of the tentative agreement and losing the arbitration, should that occur, will consume our precious reserves while we pursue retrenchment. Nevertheless, we must be prepared to complete this process, if needed, and do so in a timely manner.

Article 15 of the AAUP CBA is attached as well as President Miller's letter to me about this matter. The president's letter outlines the facts and basis that The University of Akron has utilized to satisfy Sections 1 and 2 of Article 15. This communication to you as well as another to the AAUP initiate the process as outlined in Article 15, Section 3.

Our budget reduction plan has been approved by The University of Akron Board of Trustees and built into The University of Akron's FY21 operating budget. This current year budget plan

included a reduction in the instructional budget via the faculty reduction in force. We worked as a team to build that budget in a manner that allows us to continue to meet our commitments to our students and with limited impact on program and degree offerings. We utilized a mix of benchmarking data and program specific needs assessment to arrive at a final instructional budget. In sum, the retrenchment process needs to assure we will meet the reduced budget allocated for faculty salaries.

For this reason, I will be asking each college to find the funding (via alternative tenured/tenure-track faculty retrenchments) that would be required to reinstate the faculty from the original RIF list (who have not already retired) within their college as enumerated below:

Location	Count	Salary	Salary Plus Fringe
Buchtel College of Arts & Sci	25	\$1,936,554	\$2,498,155
College of Business Admin.	3	\$423,769	\$546,662
College of Engineering	7	\$665,943	\$859,066
College of Health Professions	13	\$1,032,218	\$1,331,561
Office of Academic Affairs	8	\$403,429	\$520,423
University Libraries	4	\$299,870	\$386,832
Wayne Campus	6	\$452,748	\$584,045
Grand Total	66	\$5,214,531	\$6,726,745

Consistent with Section 3(C) of Article 15, I am asking each of you to develop a plan to carry out the retrenchment that satisfies the requirements of Article 15, Sections 6-8 that meets your college's financial target in the above table. You are required to obtain recommendations from the faculty currently in the academic units, including alternative proposals, which shall be forwarded to me and the Joint Committee on Retrenchment within 10 working days (September 9, 2020).

If the arbitrator rules in favor of The University of Akron and the current faculty reductions are upheld, this retrenchment process will cease. At the other extreme, if the AAUP's position is supported by the arbitrator, then the process of retrenchment will already be in motion by virtue of this letter and the formation of the Joint Committee on Retrenchment. The process will require a minimum of six weeks beyond the work assigned here before any notices would be prepared and sent to individual faculty.

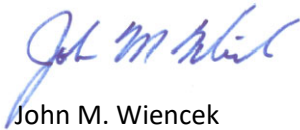
This already lengthy and untested process will have both anticipated and unanticipated delays as we work with the AAUP to invoke retrenchment. We anticipate that this new reduction will result in a larger number of bargaining-unit faculty positions being eliminated than shown in

the table above. Given that tenured faculty receive three full semesters of notice, we remain deeply concerned that we may deplete our reserves as we will be paying for the recalled faculty without having the savings from a new alternative set of faculty identified via the retrenchment process contemplated here. This process of retrenchment is about permanent salary savings and needs to go as quickly as possible; thus, we need to start it now.

It should also be noted that the Akron-AAUP disagrees with our interpretation of Article 15, Sections 1-11. It is the administration's position that only tenure-track (i.e. probationary) and tenured faculty are subject to retrenchment. Non-tenure-track faculty can only be reduced in force by Article 15, Section 12, or if the University's needs have changed, as articulated in Article 29, which allows for termination of NTT positions that the University does not need.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Time is of the essence, so please forward this information to your faculty by tomorrow, August 26, 2020.

Best Wishes,



John M. Wiencek  
Executive Vice President and Provost  
The University of Akron

CC: Pamela Schulze, President, Akron-AAUP