

COVID-19 updates

See our [health and safety guidelines](#), and our plan to [return to campus](#).

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Redesigning The University of Akron – Update #3

Dear members of The University of Akron community,

I would like to update you on the progress that is being made on several fronts as we work to redesign The University of Akron, address the financial challenges we face and prepare for our anticipated return to campus this fall.

Academic redesign

Last Friday, Faculty Senate held a very productive meeting to discuss the updated proposal to create a different administrative structure for the University’s academic division, consolidating our current eleven colleges into five. (This proposal did not address any changes in degree program offerings; the new colleges will organize around their assigned collection of degree programs. This next step in the redesign may result in mergers or closures of relatively few programs.)

The meeting generated numerous comments and suggestions. We are reviewing them carefully and working to incorporate as many as we can. Provost Wiencek will provide a more detailed update as we prepare to bring the final recommendations to the UA Board of Trustees at a special meeting this Friday, May 29.

Fiscal year 2021 budget preparation

Following Board consideration of the proposed University redesign this Friday, we will be in a position to provide to the colleges and vice-presidential units the target budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. As I have previously shared, we face an approximately \$65 million gap next year between expected revenues and anticipated expenditures if we take no action. Obviously, that is not an option. We have already taken steps to significantly reduce the University’s support for Athletics next year and will be identifying areas for reduction and investment throughout the rest of the University, with a goal of recommending a budget to the Board of Trustees at its June 10th meeting. While initial guidance was provided to the deans and vice presidents to prepare a

25% budget reduction compared to this current year, we intend to build our new budget in a differential and strategic fashion rather than simply implement across-the-board reductions.

Work rules

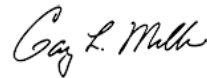
The 30-day comment period has now closed concerning the proposed work rule changes affecting employees who are not members of a bargaining unit. I appreciate the opinions that were expressed and the thoughtful responses from both the Contract Professional Advisory Committee (CPAC) and the Staff Employee Advisory Committee (SEAC). We are reviewing those suggestions to see which ones might be incorporated in the final version that will be presented to the Board of Trustees on Friday. Both CPAC and SEAC recommended that tiered salary reductions be considered to help reduce the number of potential job losses and we intend to follow that recommendation. Details are still being finalized. We continue to have discussions with the Akron-AAUP on a variety of related matters.

Return to campus

As I stated in [my communication last week](#), a large, University-wide group is working to develop the protocols and procedures to enable students to return to campus this fall. I am very impressed with the comprehensive nature of this work as they now start to implement the various plans that have been developed. In keeping with guidelines from various health agencies and the Inter-University Council of Ohio, the group will be rearranging classrooms to provide for appropriate physical distancing, preparing additional spaces on campus to hold course instruction, modifying lab spaces, working with faculty on a range of teaching options and many, many more details. There are still many questions to be answered and the team is hard at work on identifying them and developing our best answers.

Once again, I extend my thanks to you for the dedicated manner in which everyone is coping with an incredibly challenging set of circumstances. Your positive spirit and energy will carry us forward.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Miller
President
The University of Akron

See [all messages and multimedia for Redesigning UA](#) →

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