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**To:** Maureen Walsh (Associate Vice President for Human Resources)

**From:** AP Executive and AP Salary and Benefit Committees

**Subject:** AP Reflections on Covid -19 Uncertainties

**Date:** June 8, 2020

**CC:** Greg Sanial (Vice President for Finance and Administration) Deb Sanders (Director of Staff Relations)

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The Administrative and Professional employee group is committed to our role in helping further the GVSU mission of educating students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing uncertainties surrounding university budget shortfalls, particularly for the coming year. As the leadership body representing and advocating for AP employees, the AP Executive Committee and the AP Salary & Benefits Subcommittee have an interest in elevating the concerns and perspectives of AP staff. With that in mind, we offer the following reflections and aspirations for GVSU's response:

- AP staff touch all aspects of university services and operations from student facing to non-student facing. Everyone's work matters.
- Depending on the level of budget reductions necessary in the coming months, it seems likely that changes to our work are inevitable. As a group, we represent the greatest diversity of positions and skill sets of all employee groups at GVSU. As such we can serve as an important part of the solution as we navigate these challenging times.
- Prioritizing the retention of employees and recognizing that most units are already operating with very lean staffing and resources is essential to our success.
- Remaining steadfast in our commitment to GVSU employees and maintaining our status as an employer of choice is dependent upon maintaining competitive health, retirement, education, and wellness benefits. Such benefits also are key to supporting a healthy campus and to retaining talented staff.
- Maintaining and nurturing the GVSU reputation as a community partner, generator of economic prosperity, and leader in innovation and in inclusion and equity, is facilitated by maintaining a high priority on community outreach, alumni and donor relations, and recruitment and outreach efforts.

- Continued openness and transparent communications about decisions impacting students, faculty, and staff, as well as the processes by which those decisions are made, is essential.
- Offering AP staff a formal “seat at the table” to represent the collective interests and ideas of this group in discussions related to budgetary constraints is a priority. The challenges we now face can serve as an opportunity to solidify a structure for AP input that parallels the input that faculty and unionized employees appear to enjoy. Such a change in shared governance at the university will continue to be of benefit even after the COVID crisis has passed.
- Based on feedback solicited mid-May of all AP staff, we value maintaining jobs and avoiding layoffs or mandatory furloughs as the highest priority. This is important to our individual families as well as collectively for GVSU, West Michigan communities, and for maintaining the positive economic impact GVSU has on this region.

AP employees represent an invaluable pool of talent at the university, delivering high-quality services across our campuses in support of all Lakers. It is our hope that the university will look for creative ways to leverage our talents and expertise to address current challenges. Though times of austerity can produce a scarcity mindset in which we feel ourselves in competition with other employee groups, we want to highlight the important fact that all of us matter and all of our work matters. We recognize that budget cuts inevitably mean pain--reductions in programming, resources, professional development opportunities, and perhaps even in positions. In this, we want to reiterate the FSBC’s position that whatever austerity measures are undertaken, transparency, equity, and a focus on preserving and enhancing our core university mission are essential.

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