

9-10-2010

Welfare Committee Recommendations Regarding Dismissed Employees

USM Faculty Senate

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Recommended Citation

USM Faculty Senate, "Welfare Committee Recommendations Regarding Dismissed Employees" (2010). *Faculty Senate Resolutions*. Paper 2.
http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_resolutions/2

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Resolution: Welfare Committee Recommendations regarding Dismissed Employees.

Approved by Committee on September 8, 2010

Whereas, we of the Faculty Senate are deeply grieved by the dismissal of our fellow faculty and staff as part of the ongoing effort to reconcile the University's budget, and . . .

Whereas, we of the Faculty Senate were instrumental in the establishment of the University Priorities Committee (UPC) and feel it is our responsibility to see that the UPC's decisions are fairly and justly administered, we . . .

Therefore, resolve that the University administration, with direction from the University President, should provide guidance and support for all terminated employees. We offer the following recommendations:

1. Information

- a. We urge the University President to take the lead in providing clear, precise information to the campus community. We urge the President to work with the University Priorities Committee and University Counsel to provide a full and quick release of the information that lead to the recent dismissals;
- b. We urge the University President to immediately provide clear guidelines in conjunction with the University Priorities Committee on how to appeal the recent budget cuts and dismissals; and
- c. We urge the University President to take the lead in providing resources for current employees facing dismissal as outlined below.

2. Services

We believe that the University should publically recommit to services it currently offers dismissed faculty and staff. We remind the University administration that many of the faculty and staff facing dismissal are still working with us and will continue to work with us for the coming year and that this provides us with a unique opportunity to help them as they transition to new jobs and new lives.

- a. Existing Services. The University should remind dismissed employees that the following services are available.
 - i. Affected employees may apply for any open position on campus.
 - ii. Dismissed employees are qualified to apply for unemployment benefits with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.
 - iii. Dismissed employees can elect to stay on the state's health insurance through COBRA for up to 18 months.
 - iv. Dismissed employees can elect to enroll, free of charge, in academic courses offered by the University (limited to two semesters and one summer term beginning with the semester following the notification of layoff, and cannot exceed a full academic load per semester).

- v. Employees are eligible for payment of 240 hours of unused personal leave (this will apply only to faculty who are or were in a position that was eligible for personal leave accruals).
- b. New Services. The University should extend the following services to dismissed employees and their families.
 - i. Career Services should provide support for dismissed employees for up to one year after they are dismissed. Career Services is currently informally offering support to dismissed faculty and supports efforts to provide additional resources to faculty.
 - ii. The Counseling Service should provide support for dismissed employees. Currently, the Counseling Service is available only to students. These services should be extended to dismissed faculty and staff and should be provided for up to one year after dismissal.
 - iii. In acknowledgement that downsizing can be stressful for both those who lose their jobs and those who remain, all faculty and staff should have access to the Counseling Service during current academic year.
 - iv. Currently, dismissed employees can elect to enroll, free of charge, in academic courses offered by the University for a year after they are notified of a layoff. This benefit should be extended for an additional year and the revised benefit should be provided to the partners and spouses of dismissed employees.