Dear Campus Community,

It was another fast-moving day. Today Governor Evers extended the stay at home order until May 26. We also learned that the NCAA is tentatively looking at mid-June to make a decision about Fall sports.

Tonight, we received the following memo from President Cross about the furlough authorization from the Board of Regents at today’s meeting. I believe that President Cross has a meeting with the governance representatives Friday morning. A copy of the policy can be found at: https://www.wisconsin.edu/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions/:

Good afternoon. I would like to share with you some important information regarding today’s UW System Board of Regents meeting.

The Board’s executive committee approved authority for the UW System and UW-Madison, who have separate human resource policies, to implement furloughs. A furlough is an unpaid, required leave of absence from UW System or UW-Madison employment, either intermittently or for a specified consecutive number of days, where the employee remains an employee of the institution.

Under the new authority, the UW System has prepared the attached draft policy document on furloughs for all UW System institutions except UW-Madison, which will provide its own policy at a later date. We also provide an FAQ about furloughs and how they relate to leave and other employee benefits. It is posted on our COVID-19 website.

Authorizing the use of furloughs is a painful but necessary step as we strive to balance the needs of the organization to deliver on our mission while also protecting our employees. The unbudgeted costs and disruption to revenues of COVID-19 present significant financial challenges to all the universities in the UW System. We believe furloughs are an important tool as part of overall efforts to help reduce our workforce and operational costs in order to protect both our institutions and our employees through this difficult pandemic.

As part of implementing this authority, we have developed a workforce management framework that allows chancellors the flexibility to make the necessary decisions to meet their own immediate financial challenges. This includes the furloughs of employees or other workforce cost reductions, as deemed necessary.
Our policies seek to mitigate negative impacts to employees by preserving benefits (health, life insurance, retirement, etc.) at every opportunity. It should be noted that chancellors can approve up to 10 days of vacation in advance of a consecutive day furlough. Operationally, we will continue to adjust our policies and day-to-day practices to maximize our financial ability to meet this crisis.

In addition to the furlough news, we have received a number of questions regarding COVID-19 leave, and I want to reaffirm the information from my March 31 memo. The COVID-19 leave runs through May 1, 2020 and is not subject to extensions.

Please continue to use the Q&A online tool available on our COVID-19 website to ask any questions you may have (campus credentials login required).

I realize this is difficult news to hear and difficult news to process. As always, I remain proud to work alongside you. We will get through this together. Be safe, be kind, and stay engaged.

Tomorrow and Saturday the UW System President semi-finalist interviews are being held with the search committee.

It the midst of all this swirl, I tried to take a deep breath and have a moment of gratitude. There are good things happening. We learned today that UW-Superior has been selected as a winner in the 35th Annual Educational Advertising Awards for our Find Your Superior campaign!

Past winners of the Educational Advertising Awards include: Purdue, Notre Dame, Temple, Rutgers, University of Texas at Austin, UW-Milwaukee, College of William & Mary, Texas Tech, Carnegie Mellon, Pepperdine University and many more.

We were awarded in the following categories:

- Magazine Advertising – Single Ad: D’Andre Robinson print ad (Silver)
- Total Advertising Campaign: Find Your Superior Brand Campaign (Bronze)
- Outdoor Advertising: Find Your Superior billboards (Merit)

So, a Superior shout out to Jordan Milan and the talented communications team!

Other smaller moments included the warm up in the day, the noticeable increase in daylight before the night comes on, and the sweet song of the robins that have begun again in the morning. I hope you found some of those too and find even more in the coming weekend. I look forward to seeing you next week at our Town Halls.

Renée