

Senator Zeiders Open Session Remarks to UA Faculty Senate, Monday, Nov. 6th, 2023

I'm Katie Zeiders, Faculty Senator from CALES. In September, I spoke about the financial position of CALES under the new AIB model; that we have done everything right—yet we faced a \$10-million-dollar deficit. This is because our university's central administration has decided to take more of the money that my colleagues and I worked so incredibly hard to generate and use it for the so-called strategic investments, as they see fit to spend.

Now 2 months later, CFO Lisa Rulney's report to ABOR clearly indicates how our university's senior leadership team has so badly drained our central reserves of cash on hand with "loans" to athletics and other strategic initiatives, mismanaging our university's finances.

To understand this financial mismanagement, look no further than the metric by which the university is using as an indicator of the "crisis"—days of cash on hand. As presented to ABOR, we are currently at 97 days, and a significant plummet to this number started with the hiring of both President Robins and CFO Lisa Rulney in 2017 and 18 respectively. In 2017, we had 182 days of cash on hand and we've seen a linear decline in this number year after year, except the years after the university took 30 million dollars from employees (with furloughs) and received 73 million in Higher Education Emergency Relief funds).

What is astonishing about this plummet in the cash on hand, is that in the last 3 years in particular, we've seen the steepest drop, **yet the university (not just CALES) has had record years of success**—You and I, and all of our colleagues have grown enrollment to record numbers and increased our research dollars to record amounts. In fact, as President Robins points out, we generated a 79.4 million net surplus for the university this past year.

The Regents have called for across the board actions that ignore the failures of administration, and instead punish the employees who have been committed to our land-grant institution and serving our students.

Fellow senators, faculty, directors, unit heads, staff, deans and students, I urge us all to begin to ask the tough questions and commit to standing with one another to ensure that no programs in your colleges are eliminated, that no salaries are cut, and that no one loses their jobs. We must make it very clear that our colleges, our workers, and our students will not be punished for the administration's COMPLETE mismanagement of our university's finances.