


MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 13, 2021
TO: Kayle Skorupski, chair, CALS Faculty Council
FROM: Shane C. Burgess 
SUBJECT: Response to Memo re: University Furlough of 2020-2021

Thank you for your memorandum of October 26, 2021. I appreciate your concern about this very serious issue. I empathize with your concerns, and I do recognize the associated morale issues. I will summarize below material that I and others have presented since the pandemic began. This information is available to all ALVSCE personnel as recorded presentations, memoranda, letters and presentation slides.

Your statement that *"the salary savings resulting from the furlough and furlough-based salary reduction plans were distributed to each CALS unit"* suggests that cash was distributed to each unit. In fact, **no cash** was distributed to units as a result of the furlough program – there were simply *less personnel costs* to be paid by the revenue that CALS earns. CALS salary furlough and furlough-based reduction plans resulted in the following decrease in costs:

- \$1.34M from 239 faculty FTE (15,900 hours).
- \$408K from 268 staff FTE (12,100 hours).

To repeat information shared many times, perhaps most explicitly at my recorded December 8, 2020, Semiannual Update and by Janis Rutherford at the February 19, 2021, Business Retreat attended by Faculty Council representatives: Compared with FY2019, CALS core costs decreased by \$1.745M and CALS FY2020 revenue decreased by \$1.6M. The college also provided \$3M to the university's central budget to help shore up operations across campus. Meanwhile, because CALS degree programs grew, we needed to fund instruction for an additional 6,000 undergraduate and graduate credit hours. Consequently, even with the salary savings, net revenue decreased and costs increased.

Many other measures were taken by the university and CALS centrally, and in our academic units, to save costs so we could preserve employment. I applaud all of those who made those additional sacrifices, large and small, for our common good. I hope that you will join me in doing so.

Regardless, I require each unit head and business officer to be transparent with all unit finances.

You have made very serious, though non-specific, allegations of a failure to message the situation clearly within the academic units. The seriousness of your allegation requires that I institute an investigation with potentially serious personnel actions. Please immediately provide me with the names of the unit heads and business officers you are referring to.

Regarding your serious allegation of unit head and/or business officer management failure to repay employees who inadvertently took too many unpaid hours: Our records show that UA Payroll took very specific action in December 2020 to reimburse employees who took too much time. You may of course access these records. So that I can act on your allegation, please provide the evidence you have to the contrary immediately.

Jeff Ratje explicitly communicated with all academic business officers that they must remind employees who took their time to take no further time and to correct their timesheets if too much time was taken. Resolution should have been completed in the academic units' business offices in January 2021. I required a thorough search and there is no record of any employee who "overpaid" not being reimbursed. I will investigate your allegation further and to do so I need you to provide me the names of the employees who believe they are still owed reimbursement. For such cases, I will ensure the academic unit business offices correct this error and will then take appropriate personnel action.

Regarding *"Specifically, if our requests are not met at the university level, CALS should consider returning furloughed funds to employees"*: As described above, there are no *"furloughed funds"* to return and, *even if there were*, I have neither the authority nor a mechanism to do so.

cc: Sabrina Helm
Barry Brummund
Parker Antin
Jeff Ratje
Mike Staten
Jean McLain
CALS Unit Heads