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*David Zuckerman, Lieutenant Governor*

May 28, 2020

## **Letter in Support of Educators**

### **To President Garimella and the Board of Trustees:**

We certainly find ourselves in an unprecedented situation. In none of our lifetimes have we seen such sweeping and rapid change in the social, economic, and educational arenas of society. There is tremendous uncertainty, and the uncertainty for the next few months to a year is weighted towards more challenges rather than fewer.

Although I understand the University must present a balanced budget based on anticipated enrollment, I believe there are ways to reduce the economic pain on our middle and working class. We have lived in an era (my whole life) where the solutions to challenges have been cut from the bottom rather than trim from the top. This method has caused a deeper and deeper chasm of wealth inequality.

All forecasts are suggesting that cuts will last for a year or more. These cuts could be more easily sustained by those making the highest salaries, rather than those at the lowest pay levels. Instead of cutting salaries of the lowest paid educators, the UVM administration should consider cuts to those who can most afford it. We're told the \$1.1 million the administration is proposing to save through 25% salary cuts of non-tenure track (NTT) faculty could be saved by an approximately 6% cut in the highest paid Faculty and Administrators. Even with those cuts, every affected person would retain income over \$215,000. The highest paid workers should be able to absorb such a salary adjustment without a negative impact on their ability to pay their bills. In a state with progressive leaders, I am confident we can find alternative methods to budget shortfalls.

I urge you to address budget challenges in ways that do not cut lowest paid workers' salaries.

I hope that any relief funds that are appropriated are tied to a prohibition on lower paid educator salary cuts. I know these are difficult and challenging times, but I would caution against budget cuts that fall disproportionately on those with the least ability to endure them.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Zuckerman".

Lt. Governor David Zuckerman