

Senate Recommendation to the President

Originating Body: Faculty Senate

Originator: Senator Anita Brown

Date Submitted: 10/1/2025

Requested Effective Date: 10/1/2025

Recommendation:

The Faculty Senate recommends that, should furloughs or terminations become necessary, these will be applied to both Administration and Faculty, in accordance with the attached motion.

Please note that this recommendation was submitted informally (i.e. not on a form like this) by FS President Tuske in Spring 2025.

Date Approved by the Faculty Senate: 5/13/2025

David Keifer

President, Faculty Senate

10/1/2025

Date

Action Taken by President

Date:

10/24/25

☐ Recommendation Accepted

☐ Recommendation Not Accepted*

☒ Recommendation returned to the Originating Body for further review (see attached)

Disposition for Approved Recommendation:

☐ President

☐ VP Student Affairs

☐ Faculty Senate President

☐ VP Finance

☐ Consortium Chair

☐ School Deans

☐ Webmaster

☐ Graduate Council

☐ Catalogue Editor

☐ Provost Council

President

Date

10/24/25

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MOTION

Submit this form to the Faculty Senate President

SUBJECT: Mutual budget challenge considerations

SENATOR PROPOSING MOTION: Anita Brown

SENATOR SECONDING MOTION: Elizabeth Ragan

MOTION (this section alone will be recorded in the minutes):

In order to reduce spending, unless a mandate from the state or USM directs otherwise, or there are other extenuating circumstances, if SU reaches the point where furloughs or terminations are deemed necessary, the upper administration will not furlough faculty without also furloughing upper administrative positions, nor will the upper administration terminate faculty positions without also terminating administrative positions. Should the President of the University determine either step is necessary, significant feedback from the faculty will be solicited before any decisions are enacted.

JUSTIFICATION:

Salisbury University has long had a strong sense of community. The faculty, staff, and administration are working together to survive loss of revenue. Should we reach a point where loss of positions or reduction in salaries is necessary, the losses should be equitable.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

Negative:

Positive:

Is this a recommendation to the Provost? Yes ☒ No ☐

Is this a recommendation to someone else? No ☐ Yes, President

VOTE: Number of Senators Present:

Motion Passes or Fails:

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. David Keifer, President, Faculty Senate
From: Dr. Carolyn Lepre, President
Date: October 24, 2025
Subject: Response to Faculty Senate Motion on Mutual Budget Challenge Considerations



Thank you for submitting the Faculty Senate's recommendation regarding furloughs and terminations dated October 1, 2025. I appreciate the Senate's thoughtful consideration of these difficult matters and the spirit of shared sacrifice that I believe motivates this recommendation. After careful review and consultation, I must respectfully decline to accept this recommendation as written and return it to the originating body for further review.

While I deeply value the Faculty Senate's commitment to equity and shared responsibility during challenging times, I cannot accept this recommendation for several important reasons related to shared governance best practices, operational realities, and the ambiguity in the recommendation's language.

First, the recommendation uses the term "administrative positions" without clear definition, creating significant interpretive challenges. Typically, "administrative positions" typically refers to a small number of senior leadership roles (President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans).

If the intent is to ensure equitable burden-sharing across the entire university community, the recommendation should reference "staff positions" rather than "administrative positions." Staff members constitute the majority of non-faculty employees and include essential personnel across all divisions who support our institutional mission. Limiting the scope to only upper administration would create a false equivalency and would not reflect the broader principle of shared sacrifice that I believe the Senate intends.

Second, university personnel decisions are governed by complex legal, contractual, and regulatory frameworks that differ significantly across employee classifications. For instance, faculty positions are subject to tenure protections and other specific contractual obligations. Staff positions operate under different personnel policies, often with distinct collective bargaining agreements or state employment regulations. Administrative positions may have other contractual arrangements entirely.

A blanket policy mandating parallel actions across these diverse employee categories could conflict with:

- University System of Maryland policies
- Collective bargaining agreements
- State personnel regulations
- Contractual obligations specific to individual positions
- Accreditation requirements for faculty-to-student ratios

- Federal regulations governing specific programs or positions

Any budgetary actions must be legally defensible, operationally sound, and aligned with our obligations as a public institution within the USM system.

Third, budget reduction decisions must be guided by strategic priorities, mission alignment, and the specific operational needs of the institution at any given moment. A predetermined formula, regardless of how well-intentioned, could force decisions that undermine our core academic mission or operational capacity.

For example, if administrative or staff restructuring creates efficiencies, those savings should not automatically trigger faculty reductions if academic programs remain viable and necessary. Alternatively, if enrollment declines in a specific academic program necessitate faculty reductions in that area, it would not serve the university's mission to simultaneously eliminate critical student support staff, financial aid personnel, or facilities positions that serve the entire campus.

I am fully committed to seeking significant feedback from faculty before any such decisions would be enacted, as the recommendation requests. At the same time, our accreditation standards make clear that the President retains ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the institution. The Faculty Senate provides essential perspective and feedback, which will make our decisions more robust. But binding the President's hands with predetermined formulas would represent an inappropriate shift in governance authority that conflicts with established practices and the President's executive responsibilities.

While I cannot accept this recommendation as written, I want to add that we will continue to be committed to seeking ways to allow for meaningful faculty consultation, transparent communication about priorities, and seeking alternative solutions before moving to anything related to furloughs or layoffs.

To that end, if we were to see such personnel measures being necessary, we will strive to provide early and transparent communication with the Faculty Senate about the financial situation, soliciting input from the Faculty Senate before final decisions are made, providing clear justification for any proposed actions, considering faculty feedback seriously in final decision-making, and explaining how faculty input influenced final decisions.

I remain committed to working collaboratively with the Faculty Senate during these challenging times. As you noted in your recommendation, our university's strength has always been our sense of community and shared purpose. Should we face difficult decisions ahead, we will face them together, with transparency, equity, and respect for all members of our campus community.

Thank you for your continued leadership and partnership.

cc: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Vice President for Administration and Finance