Our Marquette is deeply dismayed to hear that the university has commenced laying off employees as of today. Some have given decades of service above and beyond their job descriptions, and they hold the institutional memory that makes daily life run smoothly. All provide critical support to our students, faculty, and administration. The consequences of their absence - confused students, exhausted staff, and unsupported faculty - will be felt far and wide.

These actions are especially harmful just before the semester begins, where we begin a new term with less support and heavier workloads for the staff who remain. We draw attention to the $9.7 million in federal funds that Marquette will receive as part of a corona-virus aid package. Some of these funds are clearly intended to save jobs in the midst of a pandemic and an economic crisis. It is unconscionable to fire staff without considering the impact of this, and potentially future, federal funds.

It is also unconscionable to take these actions at a time during which the budget now calls for the building up of a surplus of over $12 million. Finally, many faculty have expressed interest in the potential of a stratified furlough, where the highest paid would take furlough days in lieu of losing valued staff. The decision to march forward with layoffs was adhered to without surveying faculty widely, or presenting our governance bodies with a financial analysis of the savings associated with such furloughs. Are the careers and livelihoods of our colleagues among the staff being sacrificed for the sake of a future budget surplus? We call upon the university to reexamine these decisions, as they are being carried out without fully vetting other financially responsible pathways, and will have a terrible impact on our collective mission of delivering educational excellence to the students. Terminations should cease and terminated staff should be restored to their positions immediately, pending a thorough financial analysis and consultation with faculty and governance bodies.

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