



# University of Massachusetts

Amherst • Boston • Dartmouth • Lowell • Medical School • UMassOnline

May 7, 2019

The Honorable Karen Spilka  
President of the Senate  
State House, Room 332  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

***Re: University of Massachusetts line item in the FY20 Senate Budget***

Dear Senate President Spilka:

The Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal released today by the Senate Committee on Ways & Means would be devastating to students, faculty and staff at the University of Massachusetts (7100-0200).

The inclusion of a statutory tuition freeze with no correlated funding to cover the university’s fixed cost increases is unprecedented. The line item language goes further in restricting fees that fund essential programs and services to students. As you know, all but 1 percent of the increase in the appropriation represents the state’s share of mandated collective bargaining costs.

We are extremely concerned that the Senate budget restricts the university’s fiduciaries from setting tuition and fees consistent with its long-term budget planning and development practices. This decision came with no warning or apparent effort to understand its impact on university finances. It is a severe departure from long-standing practice and inconsistent with the Senate’s historic support for public higher education.

If we have a shared goal of freezing tuition for in-state undergraduates, we urge the Senate to amend its budget by increasing the appropriation by \$10.2 million and eliminating the restrictions and mandates. The alternative approach outlined in the current Senate budget would achieve the tuition freeze instead by requiring the campuses to make \$22.2 million in budget reductions, broken down by campus as follows:

Amherst	\$8.27M
Boston	\$7.13M
Dartmouth	\$2.3M
Lowell	\$4.5M

These unanticipated adjustments would result in dramatic impacts on student services and support as well as significant workforce reductions. To the extent that the Senate bill reflects a policy decision intended to mitigate costs for students and their families, it is unclear why only UMass and no other public institutions of higher education are so restricted. It is also misguided given that the university’s neediest students will not benefit. They may in fact be penalized by reduced funding for institutional financial aid.

Based on a transparent five-year projection of the university’s fixed cost increases, which exceed 3% annually, the university traditionally submits to the Legislature a budget request that would allow it to freeze tuition for in-state undergraduate students. When the university must increase tuition to meet its cost obligations and

maintain the quality of academic programming and student services, it has successfully sought to keep those increases at or below the rate of inflation for the last three years.

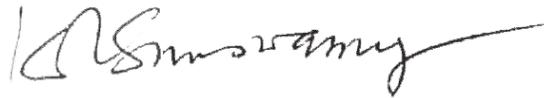
We remain sharply focused on student affordability, which is central to our mission. To that end, we have taken extensive measures in efficiency and effectiveness, shared services, increased transparency, and frameworks for fiscal oversight and accountability to ensure that we are good stewards of resources. We continue to focus on several key areas to ensure we remain affordable for students of all backgrounds, including expanding our digital education offerings, forming new partnerships with private business and nonprofits, and increasing both our financial aid endowment and institutional financial aid commitment to provide more scholarships for deserving students.

Our historic interactions with the Senate have been rooted in a shared belief that a thriving UMass benefits the commonwealth writ large.

Sincerely,



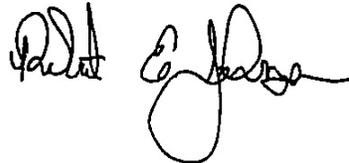
Martin T. Meehan, President  
University of Massachusetts



Kumble R. Subbaswamy, Chancellor  
UMass Amherst



Katherine S. Newman, Interim Chancellor  
UMass Boston



Robert E. Johnson, Chancellor  
UMass Dartmouth



Jacqueline F. Moloney, Chancellor  
UMass Lowell



Michael F. Collins, Chancellor  
UMass Medical School

Cc:

The Honorable Michael Barrett  
The Honorable Joseph Boncore  
The Honorable Michael Brady  
The Honorable William Brownsberger  
The Honorable Harriette Chandler  
The Honorable Sonia Chang-Diaz  
The Honorable Nick Collins  
The Honorable Joanne Comerford  
The Honorable Cynthia Creem  
The Honorable Brendan Crighton  
The Honorable Julian Cyr  
The Honorable Viriato deMacedo  
The Honorable Sal DiDomenico

The Honorable Diana DiZoglio  
The Honorable James Eldridge  
The Honorable Ryan Fattman  
The Honorable Paul Feeney  
The Honorable Barry Finegold  
The Honorable Cindy Friedman  
The Honorable Anne Gobi  
The Honorable Adam Hinds  
The Honorable Donald Humason  
The Honorable Patricia Jehlen  
The Honorable John Keenan  
The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
The Honorable Eric Lesser  
The Honorable Jason Lewis  
The Honorable Joan Lovely  
The Honorable Mark Montigny  
The Honorable Michael Moore  
The Honorable Patrick O'Connor  
The Honorable Marc Pacheco  
The Honorable Rebecca Rausch  
The Honorable Michael Rodrigues  
The Honorable Michael Rush  
The Honorable Bruce Tarr  
The Honorable Walter Timilty  
The Honorable Dean Tran  
The Honorable James Welch