



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.

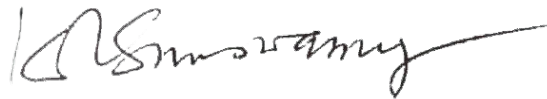
We remain sharply focused on student affordability, which is central to our mission. To that end, we have taken extensive measures in efficiency and effectiveness, shared services, increased transparency, and frameworks for fiscal oversight and accountability to ensure that we are good stewards of resources. 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,



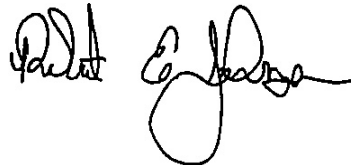
Martin T. Meehan, President
University of Massachusetts



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