

I have some serious misgivings about implementing the furlough option because of a potential threat to the integrity of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

If we VOLUNTARILY abrogate Article 33, then in a possible future scenario this might be used as a precedent for the Chancellor, acting on behalf of the Governor, to unilaterally impose furloughs. Once we "agree in principle" that furloughs are an appropriate means of addressing budgetary issues, then we may be in an untenable position if at a later time we try to assert that the CBA takes precedence, should future budget shortfalls occur. Even if our understanding is that we had a "one-time-only" side agreement in response to an unprecedented emergency budget situation, we might have some possible difficulty maintaining the absolute primacy of the actual contract language.

The CSU is constantly hammering us with the issue of union approval being given due to "past practice." They often contend that if we knowingly or unknowingly allowed something to occur in the past and didn't fight it, then we have provided our implied consent that it can go on indefinitely. Agreeing to furloughs would actually be "one step beyond" tacit approval because we are actively agreeing to something that could have severe implications for the unknown future.

Additionally, I feel that there are too few guarantees and far too many unknowns about the current Barnes proposal. We may still face draconian cuts and massive layoffs in ADDITION to the agreed upon furloughs.

This agreement might very well be extended beyond this year and possibly sometime into the future, destroying most of our "hard-fought and rarely-won" salary increases over the past decade, or even longer.

Furloughs greatly limit our ability to be actively involved and creatively develop some unique and workable campus-specific options to layoff, because it is predicated on a "one size fits all" approach that doesn't take into account the great differences in campus situations across a system that has rarely been unified in its approach to any major issue or problem.

We presently have absolutely no guarantees that the pain will be shared equally, nor will the underlying budget issue of a massively bloated CSU administrative bureaucracy and obscene executive compensation be adequately addressed. If they really wanted to sell this plan to us (and I strongly believe that it has been in the works for months) then reducing management salaries should be the first step. Have the CSU implement the furlough process with those employees who don't have union representation and then let us know how it works.

I still remember attending a meeting of Board of Trustees where the Chancellor, for the first time since the inception of the CSU, denied admission for up to 10,000 qualified students; while at the same time granting hefty pay raises to top administrators. These are the people we bargain with in "good faith"? Is there no sense of shame for such a reprehensible "greed-driven" decision making process? Trust is not automatically given, it is earned.

Anyway, "for what it's worth" these are my most pressing concerns, although I readily admit that they are based on a lack of solid information and fully adequate research on my part, as we have not been given enough time to make a fully informed and intelligent decision about this crucial issue affecting the lives and livelihoods of our members.

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