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UW-Green Bay extends furloughs, plans to reopen campuses on July 1 to prepare for fall semester

Green Bay, Wis.—Campus leaders of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay announced today (Thursday, May 14, 2020) extended furlough plans through December 2020 as the University continues to manage the financial impacts brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. The plan requires University faculty and staff to take unpaid leave and will result in approximately $826,830 in savings for the University from June-December 2020.

In a message to campuses, Chancellor Michael Alexander said that University leaders were "deliberately slow in announcing additional furloughs in the hopes that our path through the crisis would become clearer. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that we must take some preventative measures to be able to better ensure the long-term health of our institution," he said. "These are painful decisions, particularly because of the immense work that everyone on this campus has done to put us on solid financial footing before COVID-19."

Like other institutions across the state and country, UW-Green Bay is working to offset a series of financial challenges as a result of the pandemic, including housing and related refunds, revenue losses due to the cancellation of on-campus programs, events and spring sports and a five percent budget lapse (approximately $1.4 million) that needs to be returned to the state of Wisconsin by June 30, 2020.

In May, the University conserved $250,000 through furlough efforts focused on employees unable to perform work remotely. The June-December plan widens the scope of furloughs to additional staff and includes faculty when they are back on contract in August. The newly announced plan reflects 4,645 days of furlough, impacts 697 employees on the University’s four campuses and delivers approximately $826,830 in cost savings. Alexander noted the furloughs are tiered to protect the University’s lowest paid employees as much as possible from additional financial harm.

"I know I am asking you all to sacrifice due to no fault of your own," Alexander told faculty and staff. "However, the potential consequences of not being able to navigate successfully through the current crisis are immense, not just to UW-Green Bay, but to our capacity to support a more equitable and sustainable future for our students and our region. I say this knowing that we have the people to get us to the other side of this. We will do so united, and with determination, empathy, and the fierce belief that our mission and vision matters to our students and to the future of our region and state."

Campus to Reopen July 1

Chancellor Alexander also shared an update on plans to reopen campuses in Green Bay, Marinette, Manitowoc and Sheboygan.

"As a result of our work leading up to the virus, furloughs in May and June, promising signs on the enrollment front, and the work of our task force groups, we intend to reopen our campuses on July 1 to continue preparing for the fall semester," he said. "We will still encourage telecommuting where possible and will have protocols in place for those employees working on site, but will lift general restrictions on faculty and staff being on campus."
The Cofrin Memorial Arboretum is also expected to be open for public use on July 1.