UW-Superior likely to begin intermittent furloughs on July 1

SUPERIOR, Wis. – In the first of a series of four town hall meetings with more than 160 staff and faculty joining remotely, University of Wisconsin-Superior administration announced on April 21 that it anticipates introducing intermittent furloughs for all staff and faculty beginning July 1.

“The magnitude of what we’re facing is truly unprecedented,” said chancellor Renée Wachter. “I know how hard everyone has been working and I so very greatly appreciate that effort. We truly have the most dedicated and amazing people, and that’s what makes this so very hard, but things are moving quickly, and we must take action now.”

Under the intermittent plan being considered, every UW-Superior employee would forfeit one paid day per two-week pay period. Employees were also given the option of opting into voluntary furloughs beginning immediately and lasting through June 2020.

By definition, furloughs are unpaid leave periods that allow employees to keep benefits such as health insurance, vacation and sick-leave accrual. Furloughs also preserve employees’ jobs.

The furloughs would come as a result of anticipated revenue losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes expected changes in enrollment, housing, dining and other fee refunds, along with losses from other revenue sources. The university estimates that the intermittent furloughs could save the campus approximately a million dollars in expenditures against its operating budget.

“We want to be cautious not knowing what these next few months may hold,” said Wachter. “Our overarching goals are to continue to serve our students in the best possible way and to do all that we can to protect our campus community. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and make adjustments as needed.”

UW-Superior will finalize plans for furloughs within the coming weeks. Any furlough plans for the university need to be reviewed by UW System.