

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE  
Senate Executive Committee  
(Final;Action)

SC.10.06B Senate Executive Committee Statement on Furloughs

We, the members of the Senate Executive Committee, acknowledge that the decision to implement pay reductions for most University employees reflects the extraordinary severity of the University of Illinois's current financial situation. While the pay reduction is mandatory, faculty can choose to take it either in the form of unpaid furlough days or as a temporary pay cut. Although we believe that either approach to pay reduction will adversely affect the University's teaching, research, and public service operations, we also believe that it is in the interest of the entire University community to contain the damage. A key part of this consideration is maintaining quality and continuity in our professional responsibilities. Our obligations to our students are paramount among these responsibilities.

The University has specified that, in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, all furloughed employees must refrain from working on furlough days. However, the notion that we can or should stop being professors for a day does not fit the reality of our professional lives. During vacation days and summer months, when most of us are not being paid, we continue to work on our research, plan and prepare for our courses, and advise our students. Both furlough days and temporary pay cuts constitute a financial sacrifice made for the sake of the University's short-term fiscal survival. Those of us who are faculty accept the necessity of this shared sacrifice, especially when we know that other university employees who do not have our protections might lose their jobs entirely.

The University's current financial emergency comes on the heels of a steady decline over the past few years in the percentage of our operating budget supplied by the State. Students have been paying higher and higher tuition rates, even as their state-provided financial aid has been jeopardized. As a result, the University's students, and those who work hard to pay their tuition, have already borne much of the burden of making up for state budget shortfalls. They remain entitled to the education they have been promised by this University, and for which they have paid the tuition required of them. Our current difficulties must not be allowed to compromise the good-faith relationship between them and the University.

Therefore, we strongly urge our colleagues among the faculty to weigh these considerations of professional responsibility and fairness as they decide whether to take a straightforward pay cut or unpaid furlough days, and, in the latter case, when and how to do so. At the same time, we urge the campus and university administration to continue to impress upon the leadership of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, our state legislators, and Governor Quinn, the critical need for the State to generate adequate revenue to pay for the professional services we and other public employees across the state continue to provide.

**Senate Executive Committee**  
Joyce Tolliver, Chair