

President Martin T. Meehan
 University of Massachusetts President's Office
 One Beacon Street, 31st Floor
 Boston, MA 02108

Dear President Meehan;

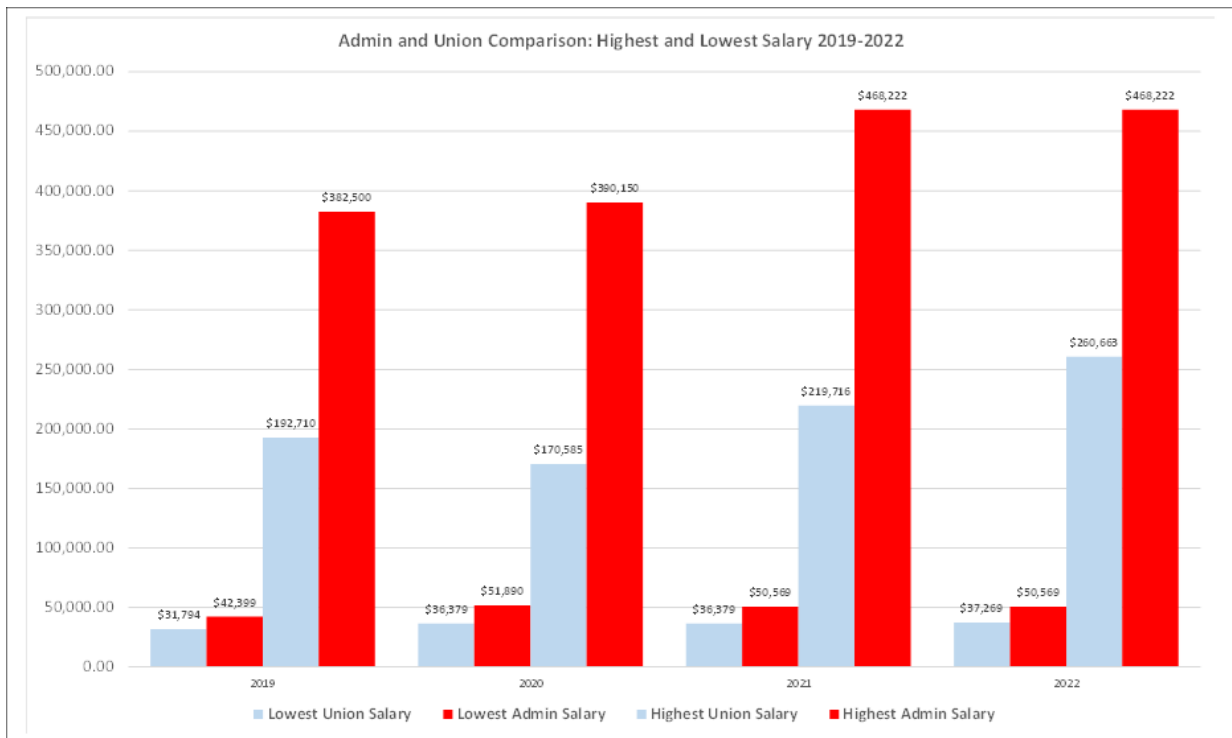
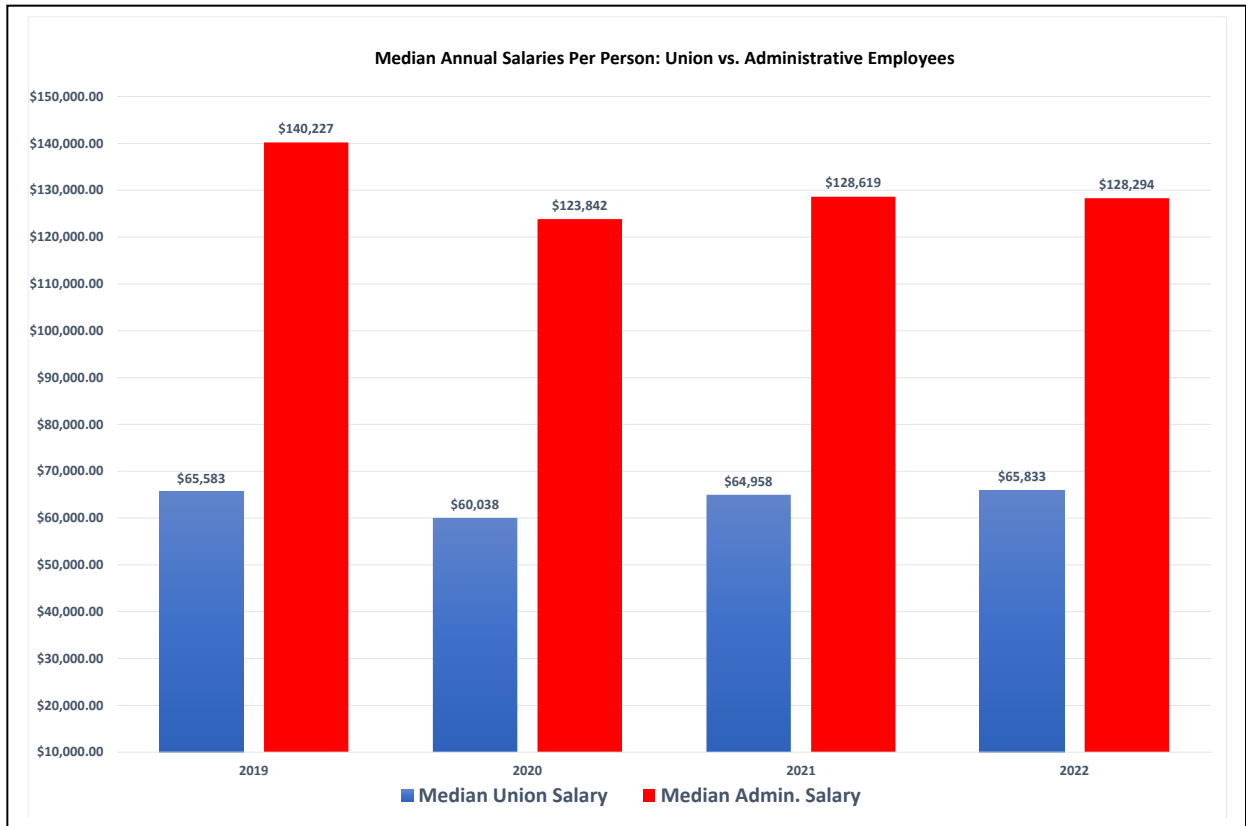
I have signed this letter to join others in expressing extreme disappointment and outrage at the unconscionable decision made on April 13, 2022, to raise tuition at the University of Massachusetts during a time when so many students and their families are experiencing unprecedented financial hardships.

The following practices and ongoing conditions which currently exist and regularly occur at the university's Dartmouth campus make this decision to raise tuition especially troubling:

Administration	Union Employees
Up to 11% raises on mostly 6 figure salaries	2% raises (on pay received during voluntary salary reduction) on mostly 5 figure salaries, while health care premiums have risen more than 3%
Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on the Chancellor's Office and housing renovations.	Leaks in auditorium and academic buildings; mold in students' residential housing remain unrepaired
Hiring support staff for Chancellor's Office (http://careers.umassd.edu/dartmouth/en-us/job/513518/executive-assistantnup)	Reduction of union staff, consolidation of departments, limited back-filling of positions where they are most needed for student support
Work moved from formerly union departments to newly formed non-union departments is not being done accurately or in a timely manner.	Work from non-union departments is being disproportionately assigned to different union staff, causing extreme work overload and stress.
Attempting to save money, the University is transitioning to less expensive software programs and systems.	Union staff now have non-user-friendly, less efficient resources needed to effectively serve the students.
Internal upgrades and promotions are generously awarded without any formal application, interview, and/or search/screen process	Union staff must self-advocate, apply for, prove justification, and interview for upgrades and promotions to be compensated for work they are typically already doing, usually without success.

There is a clear lack of transparency in the decisions and operations of the Administration at UMass Dartmouth. How are Administrators spending available funds? Where did all the COVID relief money go? Who is making the decisions, and who in turn holds them accountable for those decisions? Why do the university's student enrollment and retention rates continue to languish? Is a lack of connection to the local community (which previously existed) partly to blame? According to the students, the absence of recreation, activities, and a sense of community on campus are key reasons they are not enjoying their college experience and are not returning to continue their education at UMassD. If a deficiency in funding is hampering efforts to rectify these and other issues, then why has UMass Dartmouth leadership not more vigorously advocated on behalf of the students and the university to secure additional funding for higher education? While leadership failed, the students and union staff effectively worked together to do just that! They engaged in successful outreach efforts and built meaningful relationships with their legislators to secure level funding from the Legislature in FY '21 and '22. Instead of addressing the real problems, the university Administration compounds them with continued poor decision-making, while selfishly giving themselves incredibly generous raises and promotions, although they are directly responsible for these problems. The decision-makers in Administration continue to financially thrive while the rest of the campus community struggles to survive. The glaring disparity in pay between members of the Administration and the union workers responsible for the successful daily operations of the entire campus is certainly a contributing factor to these cyclical problems. UMassD continues to lose and push out those who directly support students, due to the lack of care from the Administration and the flagging wages.

The Administration represents approximately 7% of the total workforce on campus; the graphs below reflect the significantly disproportionate amount of money that is being spent on that 7%!



The data provided in the tables above are public and can be found at: <https://cthrupayroll.mass.gov/>

Raising tuition and continuing the previously mentioned practices will absolutely NOT help improve enrollment or retention rates; in fact, it will achieve the opposite effect. This will not only deter students from returning, as well as potential new recruits from enrolling but will set up those students who choose to stay for academic and economic failure. Fifty percent of our students are Pell-eligible, which means they have high financial needs and must work to fund their education. The tuition increase will force students who are already working multiple jobs to increase their work hours, assume additional debt, or find other sources to pay. Many families are still suffering or have yet to recover from the financial hardships imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the federal relief funds awarded to the university during the pandemic, there is no justification for increasing tuition and fees at this time. Many students can't even afford the current tuition rates: This past year, the university had to bail out many students using HEERF funds so that they could enroll for the next semester. This will cause a major problem next year because those funds won't be available and tuition rates are rising. On average, UMass students typically graduate with \$30k in debt. Causing them to incur more is not morally or logically acceptable.

There is a clear and appropriate path that can and should be taken to begin correcting the University's downhill course:

- Implement a systemwide tuition freeze
- Provide the tools, resources, and support necessary for students to be successful
- Increase union salaries to attract competitive applicants to fill vacancies needed to maintain the campus and support the students
- Enact a change of leadership at the Dartmouth campus, incorporating input and feedback from the union employees and students, since current leadership has not met the conditions of appointment or the needs and expectation of the campus community
- Invest in providing a vast array of recreational activities for students ON CAMPUS to incentivize enrollment and improve retention

“If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.”

~Lao Tzu

c: Governor Charlie Baker
Senator Mark Montigny
Senator Michael Rodrigues
Senator Marc Pacheco
Senator Elizabeth Warren
Senator Ed Markey
Senator Julian Cyr
Senator John Keenan
Senator Becca Rausch
Senator Paul Feeney
Senator Susan Moran
Senator Michael Brady
Senator Edward Philips
Senator Ed Markey
Senator Patrick O'Connor
Senator Walter Timilty
Senator Jamie Eldridge
Senator Karen Spilka
Senator Anne Gobi
Senator Jo Comerford
Senator Adam Hinds
Senator John Velis
Senator Diana DiZoglio

Senator Eric Lesser
Senator Michael Moore
Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator Brendan Crighton
Senator Patricia Jehlen
Representative Paul Schmid, III
Representative Christopher Markey
Representative Christopher Hendricks
Representative Alan Silvia
Representative Antonio Cabral
Representative Pat Haddad
Representative Carol Doherty
Representative Alyson Sullivan
Representative Kathleen LaNatra
Representative Claire Cronin
Representative Normal Orrall
Representative Paul Schmid
Representative Carole Fiola
Representative Alan Silvia
Representative Josh Cutler
Representative Kipp A. Diggs
Representative Sarah Peake
Representative Michelle Dubois
Representative Steven Howitt
Representative Susan Gifford
Representative Joan Meschino
Representative David Vieira
Representative Dylan Fernandes
Representative Matthew Muratore
Representative F. Jay Barrows
Representative Patrick Kearney
Representative James Murphy
Representative James Hawkins
Representative David DeCoste
Representative William Straus
Representative Timothy Whelan
Representative Adam Scanlon
Representative Steven Xiarhos
Representative Angelo D'Emilia
Representative Gerard Cassidy
Representative Smitty Pignatelli
Congressman William Keating
Chancellor Mark Fuller
Trustee Robert Manning
Trustee Joshua Bates
Trustee Mary Burns
Trustee Robert Epstein
Trustee Steve Karam
Trustee Narcisse Kunda
Trustee Michael O'Brien
Trustee Kerri Osterhaus-Houle
Trustee Jim Peyser
Trustee Victor Wooldridge

Trustee Norman Peters
Trustee Barkha Bhandari
Trustee Derek Houle
Trustee Richard Kelleher
Trustee Robert Lewis
Trustee Noreen Okwara
Trustee Imari K. Paris Jeffries
Trustee Julie Ramos Gagliardi
Trustee Steve Tolman
Trustee Charles Wu
Trustee Betsy Scheibel