

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

May 9, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Terry Curry, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President, Academic Human Resources

FROM: 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Academic Specialist Advisory Committee (ASAC)

SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Budgetary Considerations for Academic Specialists

Michigan State University's Academic Specialists work alongside the ranked faculty to achieve the University's mission through teaching, advising, research, curriculum development, and outreach. The Academic Specialist Advisory Committee (ASAC) met with Academic Human Resources to discuss the evolving discussion surrounding budgetary changes that are to occur for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year. Based on our discussion, we would like to respond with some comments and considerations.

As the representative voice for Academic Specialists within Academic Governance, we want to state that we are in solidarity with the University and its commitment to bring MSU through this time of crisis. We recognize that the 2019-2020 Academic Year has been one of the most challenging of any in recent memory. With the international COVID-19 outbreak and the international civil rights movement to permanently address systemic inequalities, there has been tremendous stress to our community and this University. We acknowledge that our University's survival requires a shared sacrifice and firmly believe that every effort should be made to ensure that positions are kept safe so the most vulnerable Specialists are protected.

Given the significant financial challenges we currently face and other costs yet unrealized, we put forth the following recommendations to be considered to ensure that the least amount of burden is put on those least able to absorb the impact. ASAC recommends the following:

- No pay reduction should be put in place that would lower an Academic Specialist's salary below \$35,000. While this is a policy for Advising Specialists, this is not the case for Specialists in the other functional areas. We want to ensure and protect a sustainable and livable wage for the Specialist community.
  - In the future, those at the lower levels of the graduated scale will be prioritized to ensure that their salary is the first to be restored.
- Other options - as they relate to the graduated model of salary reduction - should be considered, including a less linear approach or consideration of smaller graduated salary band levels for the lowest tiered salary levels.
  - We fully support a graduated salary plan and trust that multiple scenarios have been considered. We request that a transparent statement articulating the multiple scenarios that were considered and the current plan's rationale be provided at the announcement of any reductions.



## Academic Specialist Advisory Committee

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**U N I V E R S I T Y**

- The reduction in retirement contributions is temporary. Frequent updates on the progress toward the reinstatement of this benefit should be given to the University community on at least an annual basis.
- The continued contributions of Academic Specialists should be strongly considered before any further cuts are made, in any form. Academic Specialists are increasing their workloads in many areas and would be highly impacted if any further cuts to salaries or benefits were implemented. However, ASAC firmly supports that these types of measures, while not ideal, would be preferred to the loss of jobs.

This is an unprecedented time in MSU history, and Academic Specialists are ready to continue using skill, creativity, and dedication in carrying out the University mission and facing any new challenges that appear. We understand the diversity of thought needed to implement such measures and we appreciate your consideration of these recommendations for the Academic Specialist community. Thank you for all of the time and energy that has been contributed to addressing this matter thus far.

Sincerely,



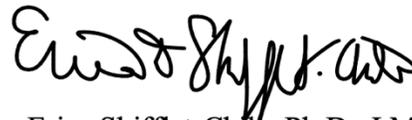
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