

5.12.2020

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

I am disappointed that the Council of Presidents has decided to cancel our next bargaining session. We are, of course, aware of the fiscal uncertainties you note in your letter. This was, as we have already stated, why we proposed a one-year contract with no incremental cost items.

The law states that only “incremental cost items” require a supplemental appropriation. Your letter seems to indicate that university presidents must seek DHE approval to spend any university funds, roughly 75% of which are not state appropriations. Clarification on this point is necessary for us to better understand the situation.

The CO`P’s cancellation of this meeting means that we currently have no bargaining sessions scheduled. As you correctly note, the mutually agreed to ground rules require scheduling at least three meetings in advance. So, we once again request that your team consider the dates that we have already provided so that you can comply with the ground rules. You suggest in your letter a desire to revise ground rules, but this would need to be done at the bargaining table, for which a meeting must be scheduled. For your recollection we offered the following dates to meet between the hours of noon and 4:00pm: May 11th, 13th, 15th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th and 29th.

Regarding the composition of our bargaining team, we note again that the composition of our team was communicated clearly in advance of negotiations beginning and that the team is consistent with that composition. You may not be aware, but the MSCA represents well over 2,000 day-unit union members.

Finally, you suggest that should “immediate and pressing” issues arise that the ERC would be the appropriate place to address these. However, as clearly stated in Article II.C.2, the Employee Relations Committee has no authority to “alter, amend, extend, or revise” any part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Our proposal addresses both the current and future crises the universities and our faculty and librarians may face. The items in our one-year proposal are properly the subject for negotiations, not implementation or interpretation.

We expect to hear soon from you about the bargaining dates we have proposed as well as a clarification of the role of the DHE in assessing the finances of the universities.

Sincerely,

Maria Hegbloom