Dear Students,

Welcome back to campus! I hope you all had an enjoyable break.

While you were away, my leadership team and I spent a great deal of time working on our plan to realign the University’s workforce with our current enrollment. You may recall that I announced a series of steps in mid-November to reduce our workforce and invited comments about those proposals. Before sharing the details, I want to express my deep thanks to those among you who played a role in this challenging exercise and submitted comments. We spent much of the break reviewing the feedback and adjusting the plan accordingly.

Here are key points about our decisions:

- We will reduce our employee numbers paid through the general fund by the equivalent of 192 full-time positions before July 1. We’ve been able to capture a number of those positions through retirements or because they are open right now. That means we will make 27 layoffs in total, which take effect over the next five months.
- We still will have a workforce paid by the general fund of 1,463, which is larger than several years ago when we had a similar number of students.
- We have worked hard to protect the academic core of the University. No current tenure/tenure-track faculty members will see their positions eliminated, and many non-tenure-track faculty will continue to teach on a semester-by-semester basis.
- Courses that students need for graduation will continue to be offered. I expect students overall will see little change since, on a per-student basis, we will have more faculty members than we had in 2004, when we had a similar enrollment level.
- One of the issues of greatest concern expressed during the comment period was the potential loss of graduate student assistantships. In response, we adjusted that number, so we can keep more student GTAs.

You can see additional details about the FTE decisions on my Budget Communications page, where you will find several charts outlining the decisions we made and FAQs.

I assure you that UM remains strong. Every day and every week, the achievements of our students, staff, and faculty demonstrate that. We take on challenges, we are resilient, and we have made UM the institution in this state that embraces collaboration, community, and creativity. These are the values that move us forward and that you as students will embody as our future alumni.

I wish you the best of luck for the spring semester.

Sincerely,
Royce C. Engstrom, President
please write to prestalk@umontana.edu