

Shelton Explains Furlough Decision

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Mandatory furloughs for University of Arizona employees could save the University at least \$6 million to help with anticipated future budget cuts, President Robert N. Shelton told the Faculty Senate on Monday.

In a memo sent to the campus community earlier in the day, Shelton and Provost Meredith Hay announced that all employees in positions funded by state or locally allocated funds will be required to take five days off without pay in the next fiscal year, between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010.

Shelton explained the decision at Monday's Faculty Senate meeting, where some questioned the measure.

Shelton said he opted not to implement furloughs this year in the face of a \$142 million state cut to higher education, because the immediate, temporary savings would not have been significant enough in addressing the UA's estimated \$57 million share of the cut.

However, with more cuts likely on the horizon, Shelton called furloughs a hedge that could help the University to bridge a gap between fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

"You have to keep in mind the magnitude of the problem we're dealing with," Shelton said, reiterating the message in his campus memo that the budget crisis must be looked at in a two-year time frame.

Shelton said the decision to mandate furloughs was a difficult one, but said he feels it's a "minimally destructive" savings measure.

Employees will not need to take the unpaid days consecutively, and details about the logistics of the furloughs will be forthcoming.

Shelton said it's his understanding that the furlough will not affect employee benefits.

While some have questioned the fairness of across-the-board furloughs, Shelton said setting boundaries or varying levels of furloughs based on individuals' or families' salaries would be complicated.

Faculty Chair Wanda Howell asked if employees could choose to share furlough days with co-workers to benefit lower paid workers. That way, an employee with a higher salary could offer to take extra furlough days, allowing an employee who can't afford the lost pay to take fewer days. Shelton said he would have to think about the idea.

While the employee furloughs will offer some temporary relief, permanent savings will come from eliminating positions, Shelton said.

Some at Monday's meeting voiced concerns that valuable faculty members will leave the University as morale declines. In response, Hay said in order to sustain the quality of the University and its faculty, students will ultimately have to bear more of the financial burden.

Hay urged forward thinking in regards to the budget, saying, "2010 is where the fight is. Put '09 behind you."

The memo sent Monday outlined some of the measures being taken in response to budget cuts this year, including the elimination of approximately 600 positions on campus and significant reductions to outreach and community-based activities, resulting in the closure of Flandrau Science Center to the public, a reduction in hours and programming at the Arizona State Museum and the UA Museum of Art, suspension of 75 percent of University funding for UApresents and suspension of many extension and outreach operations across the state. You can read the full [memo](#) ^[1] online.

Howell suggested the suspension of community programs might inspire the public to get more involved in supporting the UA as people begin to recognize what they'll be missing.

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[1] http://www.president.arizona.edu/prescomm_more.cfm?f_ID=97