Dear President Caret, Chancellors, and UMass Board of Trustees,

This is how UMass employees feel about your attacks on our negotiated benefits and personnel policies:

Lauren Brackett (Dorchester, MA): I have been employed at UMass for 13 years and I am disappointed that the administration consistently talks about what a great university this is, but they never consider our contributions to making this campus the great place that it is today. All we are asking for is fairness.

Melissa Morse (Watertown, MA): I've worked many places before this and I've never seen a place so boldly and actively undervalue those that give 110% to their jobs. You are asking people to put forth their every effort for the Greater Good but providing less and less resources. It is truly mystifying how we are all seen as less than human, instead of being seen as the essential and valuable fabric of this university.

Peter Barrios-Lech (Boston, MA): Many families need sick leave; this is one benefit that makes UMass stand out from other institutions. Let's maintain our campus' reputation as progressive, humane institutions.

Martin Hansen (Boston, MA): UMass should be a leader working to overcome wealth disparity and improve working conditions, not a follower of the exploitative corporate model, blinded by dollar signs.

Tammy Hughes (Carver, MA): We are not drones—lifeless robots without feeling. We deserve flexibility to care for our families, respect for the dedication and commitment we have made working understaffed with an ever-increasing student population.

Elena Stone (Cambridge, MA): This university is in a phase of growth and expanding influence—but we can't let that be at the expense of the workers who make it all possible. If the university can afford to grow, then it can afford to treat its employees with the dignity and respect they deserve. Otherwise the heart and soul will shrivel, despite the external trappings of success.

Kathryn Kogan (Hingham, MA): I am a dedicated instructor at UMASS Boston for over 20 years. I have worked shoulder to shoulder with my fellow employees and have never seen a more dedicated and hard working group of professionals. It is time for the university to begin valuing its employees!

Robert Fata (Dorchester, MA): It would appear the lessons of the recent Market Basket struggle have not been learned! If you treat your employees with dignity, respect and fairness, they will reciprocate 10-fold! I have been employed here for 32 years and in that time the university has seen momentous upheavals and change. The employees have weathered each storm and made compromises, but never losing sight of the fact that we are here for the students! As the university continues to evolve, the staff needs the support of its stewards to continue to serve our growing student body not opposition!

Jackson Lam (Braintree, MA): President Caret and Chancellor Motley: If you believe you deserved the raise you got, don't you believe that we, the employees, deserve what we currently have and a raise even just close to the percentage of yours? Do you really mean it when you say UMass employees are the best?!

Leah Livingstone (Quincy, MA): It is the faculty and staff of UMass who make up the day-to-day function of the university, without them (us) the university would not be the institution that it is. Punitive cut backs and policy changes tell us all that our service to UMB is undervalued and that we are all viewed as disposable. We are not disposable. We are valuable and worthy of dignity and respect. To treat us as "less than" is shameful.

Amy Todd (Cambridge, MA): Cutting staff and faculty benefits is no way to develop "a public research university with a dynamic culture of teaching and learning, and a special commitment to urban and global engagement." It runs counter to our mission and the cultivation of a strong learning community.
Andrea Macone (Somerville, MA): I love my job here at UMB and plan to stay until retirement; however, if the proposed changes are made I may not be able to do so, as I need to support myself and young son and need a salary that grows with the cost of living and benefits that balance my work life with my personal life. Please acknowledge the hard work we employees do to run this university.

Anita Thompson (Weymouth, MA): The Classified Staff are among the lowest paid employees on this campus. We are the 'front line' of 'go to' people when the Administration wants to make things happen, but you don't want to acknowledge us! Instead, you want to cut the benefits we have. You came to us when the Great Recession hit and asked if we could 'work with you' because the state had hardly any revenue. We did that and more. NOW it's time to make us right!

Kenneth Campbell (Manville, RI): For 32 years I have watched University Administration while serving on the Faculty. Too often Faculty and Staff ideas, input, and effort have been ignored or blithely assumed even as they go well beyond actual job descriptions. We are the people who deliver the goods to students, contractors, funding agencies, and the community at large; the real constituencies of the University. Yet so often the fiscal and physical sacrifices on campus are imposed on us, often without any discussion. Respect and real recognition for institutional work and service are long overdue. Those are certainly not represented by the cut-backs put forward by Administration currently.

We call upon you to withdraw all punitive proposals, including:

• restricting employees’ access to sick leave banks, forcing some workers to chose between taking care of themselves and their families and getting a pay check
• eliminating comp time for nearly all professional staff, denying them paid time off for working beyond their regularly scheduled work week
• restricting the definition of over-time work, forcing classified staff to work beyond their regularly scheduled work week without over-time compensation
• eliminating the professional staff’s Salary Administration Program, removing all procedures that ensure pay equity, fair job grading, and reasonable promotional increases
• eliminating on-call pay for over half of the employees required to be on-call, denying these individuals this meager compensation for making themselves immediately available for any emergencies that arise
• reducing sick and vacation leave for new employees, denying them the well-documented benefits—to them and to their employer—of paid time off

Instead, work with us—your employees—to make all the UMass campuses great places to learn and great places to work.