

Dear Colleagues:

I write on behalf of UIC United Faculty. We have asked the provost to place at least one member of the UICUF leadership on the Fall 2020 Planning Task Force. So far that has not happened, although we continue to hope, and expect, that the provost will reconsider.

Including at least one member of the UICUF leadership (preferably from each bargaining unit) is, in our eyes, crucial to the planning that you are all undertaking for reasons that include:

*UICUF is the voice of the faculty in most of UIC's colleges and is thus a major stakeholder in the most significant decisions in the university. We are an institution that seeks—in a collegial and respectful way—to both represent our faculty and serve as a primary institution in making UIC the best public university possible. We should be at all major tables—not just the bargaining table. And, indeed, as the union works together with the administration in these other venues, bargaining might well—we can hope—become more cordial and productive.

*Your committee currently lacks any formal means of soliciting the grassroots viewpoints and concerns of faculty, whereas we hear every day from our members about their worries about their students, the university, and themselves. Our faculty have terrific ideas for how to move forward—some of which you may have already considered, but some of which you may not have as of yet.

UICUF has thus decided that we will write to you all as needed to report on the most important issues that come up as a result of our multitude of conversations we have with faculty. This first message came to us from a faculty member voicing a broad set of concerns that we have heard from many of our members (and students as well) about the advisability of re-opening the campus in the fall. You may not agree with the perspective, and the union as yet does not have specific policy recommendations on these issues. That said, we very much hope that you recognize what follows as a serious point of view that must be reckoned with, especially as the provost's memo of today did not at all touch on such crucial matters.

Dear Union leaders: I am a faculty member at UIC. I am increasingly concerned by the messages coming from the Administration concerning Fall 2020 planning.

Considering that the CDC is expecting even more fatalities in a second and third wave of the virus in Fall, who decides if a class should be given in person or online?

What is the university's liability in terms of faculty and staff healthy and safety? Will exceptions be allowed?

Also, while a previous Administration email mentioned making plans for immuno-compromised students, no mention was made in the same email or subsequent ones of the same situation affecting faculty and staff, as well as other variables (age, for example) that may put a person in a vulnerable category.

Many of us travel to work in often more than two forms of public transportation, putting us at greater risk still.

We at UICUF do very much appreciate the extremely important tasks that you are engaged with on this committee—especially, of course, if you are also a UICUF member! We look forward to working with you in making sure that the planning for this crisis is as thoughtful, inclusive, and equitable as possible. And if you can advocate on our behalf for putting at least one member of the UICUF leadership on your committee, all the better!

Finally, please don't hesitate to be in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns for us. We pledge to be as responsive as we are asking for from the administration.

And, of course, the UIC community will soon be hearing from us directly in response to the provost's memo of today (5/7/20).

With best wishes,

Robert

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