

UW System president's state budget update: Furlough implementation plan

The following e-mail message was sent July 3, 2009, to all UW System faculty and staff from system President Kevin Reilly.

Dear UW System Colleagues,

On June 23, I shared with you the State's official plans for implementing mandatory furloughs for all State and University employees, and I outlined efforts to develop UW System's corresponding plans. With the new fiscal year upon us, the compressed timeline allowed for relatively brief consultation with faculty, academic staff, and classified staff members, but those conversations proved very useful in refining and clarifying our plans.

Per the Governor's order, we submitted our proposed implementation plan to the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) on Tuesday, June 30.

A copy of that document is now posted on our new web site:

<http://www.uwsa.edu/furloughs>. This site already contains many other useful resources, and it will be expanded in the coming weeks.

This is a complex issue, to say the least, but let me focus on two main aspects of our proposed plan.

First, you will see that our plan will require different groups of employees to account for their furlough time in different ways. To fully comply with Federal and State laws, some UW professionals who do not normally report their work in hourly increments will be required to do so during weeks in which they use a furlough day. This is a temporary measure, and one that will also apply to me, all my senior staff, and all 14 UW Chancellors.

Second, our plan calls for a mix of "fixed" and "floating" furlough days. You may recall that the State identified four "fixed" furlough days in each of the next two years when most State offices will be closed for normal business. These closures allow for some additional cost savings through reduced energy consumption, and greatly simplify reporting requirements.

Like those other arms of government, UW System institutions will close on the Friday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 27, 2009 and Nov. 26, 2010).

Unlike other State agencies, each UW System institution will specify three additional days on which UW offices will be closed and non-essential employees will record a furlough day. This will minimize conflicts with the established academic calendars, which vary from campus to campus. Like all other State employees, individual UW employees will work with their respective supervisors to schedule and use the remaining mandatory furlough days.

This plan has many other nuances, and I encourage you to review the documents posted online. Each institution's Human Resources office is prepared to address questions you may have, and I'm sure you'll have some. We'll do our best to provide up-to-date information and guidance as the process moves forward.

Thank you.

Kevin P. Reilly
President, UW System