



**Plymouth State University Chapter of the
American Association of University Professors**

PSU-AAUP PO Box 471, Plymouth, NH 03264

Dear President Birx and Provost McClellan:

The Executive Committee of the PSU-AAUP has reviewed the details of the proposed System-wide Early Retirement and Enhanced Separation Plan provided to us in a meeting on June 18. As you know, Article 16.6 of our Collective Bargaining Agreement addresses "Separation Incentive Programs," and as such, we believe is relevant to the proposed plan.

Upon review of Article 16.6, as well as other areas of our CBA, we find no compelling contractual reasons to oppose the proposed plan. We believe there are some inconsistencies between the dates of announcement and of faculty notification between the proposed plan and Article 16.6. However, we feel that the proposed plan has attempted to meet the "spirit of the law" in its proposed dates. Therefore, we would request that you draft a memorandum of understanding for our signature prior to announcing the plan, stating that, although we agree there may be inconsistencies, both parties will accept the dates given in the proposal.

However, we wish to state clearly that the PSU-AAUP does not endorse this plan. Indeed, we find the likely and foreseeable ramifications of incentivizing widespread and uncontrolled retirement and voluntary separation of tenure track faculty to be repugnant and counter to the best interests of our students, our colleagues and the capital of the University writ large. We fully understand that this plan has been put forth by the Board of Trustees, and therefore view it as a blatant attempt by the BOT to rid the University System of New Hampshire of as many tenure track faculty--and by extension, academic programs--as possible, with little to no concern for the obvious outcomes this will have on Plymouth State University and the other USNH schools.

We expect that a large number of our bargaining unit members will select to end their careers at Plymouth State through this program, and while, as a union, we would not prevent individual faculty from making this choice, we also have no doubt that the collective outcome of those decisions will be the decimation of the faculty, the unplanned cancellation of an untold number of academic programs, and indeed, potentially, the end of the university as we know it. As such, we strongly urge you not to use the term "opportunity" in reference to this program..

As we think back through the 212 year history of our beloved institution, we are filled with awe at the efforts of hundreds of our colleagues that built and maintained our programs and educated thousands of students. Today, we are struck with deep sadness by the thought that within a few short months, many of these programs may be withered to the point of de facto cancellation.

In short, while it may be legal for the Board of Trustees to offer a program like this as a way of reducing the expenditures of the University System, we believe it is deeply unethical for a group of people tasked with the guardianship of the state's higher educational system to orchestrate the uncontrolled dismantling of our university. We are further deeply troubled by the message this sends to faculty about how little the Board of Trustees values the day to day work that faculty do in the pursuit of the academic mission of our university: the education of students. We can only hope that you, the administration of our university, can find a way to counteract the damage that this program will have on our institution and on the morale of those faculty members who choose to stay or are ineligible to leave.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the PSU-AAUP,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeremiah Duncan".

Jeremiah Duncan
President, Plymouth State University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors
(PSU-AAUP).