

October 30, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we approached Labor Day, I was able to share some welcome news — that what you had been doing operationally was spectacular and that we could embark on the first phase of reversing some of the difficult compensation decisions that were made in April to assure our continued viability.

With paychecks this week we will have

- Restored (retroactively to the date of promotion) raises for promotions
- Restored (retroactively to July 1) base salary reductions for faculty and staff (to FY20 levels)
- Begun to pay out FY 21 bonuses as they are earned based upon performance
- Paid out 'earned but withheld' FY 20 incentive payments

On Wednesday, Chancellor Martin was happy to announce he was initiating a second phase of the restoration — that the university contribution to your retirement accounts will resume with the November payroll.

You should all feel proud of the role you have played in making this possible. Your ability to maintain clinical activity while also caring for COVID patients, as well your ability to ramp up and push ahead in our laboratories and clinical research programs amid so much uncertainty and change in protocol was key, in addition to the CARES act support received by our faculty practice and affiliated hospitals, in allowing us to weather the spring and summer better than we had expected and feared.

Later this winter or early spring it is our hope and intention to be able to continue on this trajectory and initiate a phase three in the process of trying to recover for you from the suspension of merit raises and retirement contribution.

When we started the fiscal year on July 1, we were projecting a budget deficit of \$95 million. We have now turned that into a \$15 million positive margin while providing a total of \$88 million to achieve the phase one and two restoration initiatives.

Thank you for the phenomenal work you have done since St. Patrick's Day when the reality of COVID became manifest. And thank you in advance for what I know you will do in the weeks and months ahead as the challenges no doubt continue.

I sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the deep fatigue we are all working through, as well as the societal stresses and strains that confound the pandemic. Someone recently described it in the following way:

Building day to day, week to week, month to month — first wave, second wave. Who knows anymore? In many ways we've been dulled to it — our minds, our bodies, and our spirits.

... Imagine that you were transported directly from last year to this moment in time, with no knowledge of what had happened since the beginning of 2020. Walking around you'd see people wearing face shields and masks. Restaurants have set up tables in tents and in parking lots. Hand sanitizer stations, circles and arrows of where to stand and where to go. ... And yet, here we are. Fatigue has no respect for boundaries or organizational level.

Feeling discouraged, people often ask, "Why are we even doing this?" Indeed — why? What sounds like a complaint is actually an invitation to go deeper into the why — the meaning, the ultimate antidote to fatigue.

Purpose precedes the first step of every journey, both personal and professional. To connect with purpose, we go within, asking ourselves, "Why am I doing this?" When our purpose is about others — and the gifts of time, talent and treasure that we give generously to others — it makes our "why" all the more enduring.

That, in someone else's words, encapsulates what I see in all of you. You are engaged in a noble calling of patient care, discovery and training. We have asked you to sacrifice personally and financially and go the extra mile, and you have unfailingly stayed committed to purpose.

We have important challenges ahead and much to do for our medical center, for St Louis, for Missouri, and for our country. Your Executive Faculty and I are committed to doing everything we can to support you as we navigate this moment in our history. And we look forward to sharing more good news in the future.

Stay Safe.

Sincerely,

David H. Perlmutter, MD
Executive Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs
Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Distinguished Professor
George and Carol Bauer Dean, School of Medicine