

Robert C. Robbins, President  
Liesl Folks, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost  
Andrea Romero, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs  
Lisa Rulney, Senior, Vice President for business Affairs & Chief Financial Officer  
Helena Rodrigues, Vice President and Chief Human Resources officer  
John Paul Jones III, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Monica J. Casper, Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs and Inclusion

19 May 2020

Dear President Robbins, Senior Leaders, and SBS deans,

We write as concerned members of the Coalition for Academic Justice at the University of Arizona (CAJUA), a newly-formed campus organization comprised of hundreds of UA employees who have been meeting weekly since President Robbins released his original furlough plan. What is special and unprecedented about CAJUA is that we emerged organically and in a grassroots way across a number of structural differences: staff, graduate students, and faculty of all ranks and representing various degrees of job (in)security. Our goal is to work across these differences in order to preserve our ability—stretched though now it is—to carry out our responsibilities as a land-grant institution, as a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution, and as a major RI public flagship University residing on the traditional territory of the Tohono O’odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

We have learned that one area you have targeted for dramatic cuts—in the form of *dozens of layoffs*—is the Department of English’s UA Foundations Writing Program (WP). We wish to go on record as objecting to any efforts to harm the WP as you would should you follow through with these plans. We stand in strong solidarity with our colleagues in the WP, not just because it is the ethical and principled position to take, but because as educators from across the campus, *we rely on the award-winning expertise of the WP instructors to teach our undergraduates a number of invaluable critical thinking and writing skills, including rhetorical analysis and classical argumentation.*

We understand that all institutions of higher education face tough choices about where to cut and how to furlough. We say to you with certainty, however, that the WP is absolutely *not* the place to start. More, we reject the logic by which contingent faculty are seen as expendable. (See the Chronicle’s [“Prominent Scholars Threaten to Boycott Colleges That Don’t Support Contingent Faculty During Pandemic”](#)).

We wish to amplify, therefore, the attached letter sent to Provost Folks on April 30, 2020. As the letter stresses, the decision, made without consulting anyone in the writing program, to lift course caps on the writing program classes is precisely the wrong way to go. Small writing classes are the standard across the nation; our university’s ranking shot up as soon as we capped

those classes at 19. Lifting those caps will not only have a negative impact on the quality of education university-wide; it will also make those classes less safe.

Please let us know if you would like to discuss this matter. In any case, please reply to this letter at [cajua@protonmail.com](mailto:cajua@protonmail.com).

Sincerely,  
The CAJUA Steering Committee