

Why I'm holding firm on enrollment caps (template letter for faculty to students):

I'd like you to know that my decision to hold firm on enrollment caps is not arbitrary. It is a collective one made by a large group of faculty who have pledged to hold the line. This pledge was made in solidarity with over 300 colleagues who were laid off this Spring due to the pandemic and UMass system-wide budget cuts. We are doing so to increase the chances that our laid-off colleagues will be hired back and to prevent the erosion of educational quality for our students.

When course caps are raised, each individual student receives less one-on-one attention, while faculty workloads are increased, and other laid-off faculty become less likely to be hired back. This holds true even with remote classes, especially since some students find it more difficult to engage as they normally would in face-to-face classes.

As you may know, UMass Boston has been subjected to serious budget cuts in recent years, and this Spring we had another major round of faculty and staff layoffs. This has resulted in *hundreds* of fewer class sections being staffed than needed. Stuffing larger numbers of students into smaller numbers of courses makes fulfilling requirements more difficult and delays graduation.

I'm telling you this because I believe you should know what is going on at our university at this difficult time. I hope you can understand that this is a predicament thousands of students, faculty, and staff are facing right now. Unfortunately, faculty ourselves do not control the purse-strings and the hiring decisions at our institution, but we are working together to try and at least reduce the damage to our educational mission at UMass Boston. Our goal is to make sure that every student gets not only a virtual seat in a class, but the personalized, quality instruction that you need and deserve.

If you'd like to be more involved in this effort, please let me know and I'd be happy to provide you with more information.