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UVM administration says it has no money then suddenly finds \$2 million

Burlington, Vermont. Last week, in the wake of bad publicity, UVM's administration suddenly found \$2 million to support its largest college, when a few weeks before it had insisted no money was available. In a Nov. 30 email to all faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (almost half of UVM's represented faculty), CAS Dean William Falls reported that "the President and Provost have agreed to increase the permanent support to the College by \$2M beginning in FY18."

Only weeks before, a supposed budget crunch had caused the College of Arts and Sciences to cancel 11 classes the day before students began registering for the spring term. Assuming the standard pay for part time faculty who would have taught those classes, the cancellations saved about \$70K, and left students scrambling to find replacement classes.

United Academics President and Professor of Sociology Tom Streeter remarked, "within a few weeks of publicly proclaiming in multiple places that there was no extra money for the College of Arts and Sciences or for faculty raises, the administration suddenly found \$2 million in their back pocket. We find this very curious."

United Academics has noted that the administration regularly finds money for matters not directly related to teaching or research, such as \$1.6 million for a branding consultant, and believes a modest adjustment in priorities could free up money for faculty salaries, reduced tuition costs, and funding for struggling but necessary parts of the University. (For details see: <http://www.unitedacademics.org/facts-about-uvm-spending/>)

The administration's negotiations with United Academics were forced to fact finding on Nov. 17 largely because of a less than one percent difference over raises. In a press release, the administration claimed that United Academic's proposals would create a "need for numerous layoffs of personnel due to increased costs over present and future budgets." [1] The money suddenly found last week amounts to more than double the cost of a one percent raise for the entire full time faculty.

Streeter remarked, "United Academics advocates for all faculty and colleges throughout the University. The whole of UVM is much larger than the sum of its parts. That's what makes it a university. Our point is merely that, in light of the administration's recent actions, the statements about a perfectly tuned budget ring hollow, and claims of poverty fall flat. They make judgment calls about large sums of money every day. They can and should direct more of the university's funds to academics."

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[1] <http://www.uvm.edu/hrs/?Page=news&storyID=25297&category=hrs>