



Service Employees
International Union
Local 503

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Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Dear Members of the Board and University Leadership,

I write today to follow up on the concerns I raised in my October 18, 2024 letter and to respond to the most recent communications from President Bailey on June 6 and June 20, 2025, outlining the severity of our university's budget crisis.

As acknowledged in those messages, we are collectively facing unprecedented fiscal pressures—from under-enrollment and inadequate state support to potentially devastating federal cuts to TRIO, work-study, Pell Grants, and financial aid accessibility. The situation is undeniably serious.

Yet, while the structural deficit demands action, I must again raise the urgent and recurring concern voiced by staff across campus: it is always faculty and staff who are asked to bear the burden of sacrifice. We are once again facing a potential reduction of 45 positions or more—on top of the 82 positions that were eliminated in June 2024. These are real people with families, not line items. They are the backbone of this institution—the ones who absorb the impact of every cut, who take on extra responsibilities, and who continue to uphold SOU's mission under mounting strain.

We've done our part. SEIU has fought hard to bring in millions in funding through lobbying efforts and public advocacy. We have consistently shown up for this university, and we continue to do so. But partnership must be mutual.

To that end, as the elected President of the union representing classified staff at SOU, I offer this challenge directly to university leadership: if the administration commits to a matching sacrifice, I will voluntarily take a 50% reduction in salary in an effort to preserve as many positions as possible. This is not a symbolic gesture—it is a sincere call for shared responsibility. The real question is: what is the administration willing to give up to protect the people who make this university run?

We understand the reality of this moment. But we also know that we cannot cut our way to prosperity. Eliminating the very people who support students, manage operations, and make this university function will not solve the deeper issues driving this crisis. It will, however, further erode morale, trust, and the long-term capacity of the university to recover.

We must stop repeating this cycle. We need transparency in where cuts are made, why certain positions are preserved while others are eliminated, and how the administration is holding itself accountable. We call on the Board of Trustees to ask not just what the staff can sacrifice, but what leadership is willing to forgo for the

greater good.

We must meet this moment with courage, fairness, and above all, integrity.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sage TeBeest". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sage TeBeest
President, SEIU 503 Sublocal 84