

TO: David Silva, Provost and Academic Vice President

FROM: Department Chairpersons

DATE: August 3, 2020

RE: Course Cap Freeze

CC: President John Keenan; Rob Lutts, Chair, Board of Trustees; Emerson (Tad) Baker, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Dean Gail Gasparich, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; Joe Cambone, Dean, School of Education; Sami Ansari, Interim Dean College of Health and Human Services; Raminder Luther, Interim Dean, Bertolon School of Business; Tiffany Chenault, President, MSCA; Meghan Deveau, SGA President; Richie Cadet, Student Trustee; Midge DiSimone, Chair, Academic Affairs, Board of Trustees; Ashley Hames, Olivia Setzer, Simon Schultz, student leaders

URGENT REQUEST: We hereby request that all caps be frozen for the Fall 2020 semester. If the university needs to open up seats to accommodate additional transfer or first-year students, it must open new course sections rather than raising the caps of current courses. No current Fall 2020 course caps can be raised without the agreement of the instructor and department chairperson.

RATIONALE: The administration has already raised course caps beyond any reasonable “best practices” for online learning. Many sections are already running at numbers that will prevent instructors from employing the high impact teaching that ensure student success. The university is jeopardizing the education of its students as well as their tuition dollars that will surely be lost if faculty cannot provide students with the individualized attention they require. The threat is both pedagogical and economic.

BUDGET: The 2020-21 budget was created with worst, middle, and best case enrollment scenarios. Enrollments (as of 7/30/2020) are currently between the middle and best-case scenarios. If there are additional students who would like to enroll this means the university will receive additional tuition dollars that can be spent for additional adjunct hiring.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY: For the second year in a row the Provost’s office has apologized to the Chairs and admitted fault in failing to work with them about course caps and/or cancellations. The PEC and the Deans will need to create long-term policies that prevent this from happening in the future. In the immediate short-term they can act on their stated goodwill by adopting this request.