April 3, 2020

Dear supervisors,

Earlier this week, I shared information about the implementation of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and how it affects leave options for university employees.

The provisions of the act don’t apply to student and temporary employees who are not ordinarily entitled to leave benefits. Earlier in our response to this pandemic, the university created a new kind of administrative leave for employees impacted by community restrictions, school closures and self-quarantine guidelines, and were unable to work from home. At the time, we temporarily extended this administrative leave to student and temporary employees as well.

There have since been many changes in the state’s response to COVID-19 and in the university’s response. Due to those changes, as well as fiscal considerations and this week’s changes in federal law, student and temporary employees will no longer be able to claim leave after April 11.

I would encourage supervisors to meet with temporary and student employees as soon as possible so that they are aware of this change. Part of those conversations should be a discussion about the options available for those positions going forward:

• If there is work that the employee can do at home, the employee would claim regular time.

• If the employee is deemed essential under the university's implementation of public health mandates, working on site may be feasible with appropriate safety measures.

• If the employee is not able to work on site, per state mandates and university guidance, and the employee cannot work from home, then the appropriate action is to...
I know these will be difficult conversations for supervisors, and understand the hardship that students and temporary employees face during this difficult time. Unfortunately, in this financial climate, we are simply unable to continue to pay student and temporary employees who are no longer able to perform their job functions. If you do need to end an employee’s job assignment, I would encourage you to share information about how to apply for unemployment via the State of Alaska unemployment website (https://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/). In addition, each of our universities have an emergency financial support fund for students to help with some emergency expenses. Information is available on the UA coronavirus website resources page.

If you have questions, or want to know more about the resources available, please contact the human resources office at ua-hr@alaska.edu, 907-450-8200.

Steve Patin
Chief Human Resources Officer