

Passed unanimously by an email vote of the Faculty Senate, announced December 18, 2020

December 5, 2020

Faculty Senate Compensation Proposal Draft

The Executive Committee moves that:

The Faculty Senate recommends that the last three years' (2019, 2020, and 2021) current [Salary Card](#) annual step increases (\$546) be added to the base salary of all eligible faculty, beginning in Fall, 2021. The Faculty Senate asks that this recommendation be received and agreed to as an initial step in a sincere and intentional collaborative effort with the administration to:

- Establish an annual cost of living adjustment for faculty, codified in an updated Salary Card.
- Increase the base pay for faculty at all ranks in an updated Salary Card.
- Develop and codify a reasonable and intentional process to systematically adjust faculty salaries in the future.

History, Context, Rationale

In 2015-2016, faculty compensation was cut in four ways: annual step increases were suspended, summer teaching pay was cut 40 to 60%, Incentive pay was discontinued, and seven furlough days were imposed. Historic state budget cuts to higher education and declining enrollment depleted the university's cash reserves. Faculty, Administration, and Staff worked together to climb out of that hole.

Agreements forged in 2017-2018 led to some improvements in fall of 2018: a 3.5% increase in faculty salary, retro-active addition of three-years' step increases to base salary for eligible faculty, increased pay for adjunct faculty, and the University's decision to fund OTRS contributions for faculty and for staff. In the interim between President Burrage's departure and President Newsom's arrival, no progress was made in terms of a systematic plan to address faculty compensation, to establish annual salary adjustments, or to update the Salary Card.

At the same time, we have enjoyed record enrollment, and the University's cash reserves are at least at 15%. This fortunate state of affairs was announced by President Newsom, "From a revenue and budget standpoint, we are fortunate to be in a good position due to our sustained enrollment growth over the last three years."

Faculty workload has increased, and our compensation has decreased. This was confirmed and illustrated with some force at the Shared Governance Forum of November 10, [Faculty Salary Compensation: It's the Right Thing to Do](#). Two salient points:

- The budget percentage spent by the university on instructional salaries is HALF of what it was 27 years ago! (In 1993 41% of the university budget, in 2020 21.8% of cash budget and 18.1% of raw budget)
- The buying power of professors' salary has declined over 27 years. (Full professors in 1993 \$83,464, in 2020 \$77,694; Associate Professors in 1993 \$76,074, in 2020 \$69,639)

Key take-aways:

- The university is spending too little on instructional salaries
 - The university should dedicate a larger portion of its budget to faculty salaries
- The real salaries of tenured professors have been going down
 - Annual raises must at a minimum keep up with inflation, and ideally provide an incentive for our experienced professors to stay
- Faculty pay is not equitable
 - The salary card needs to be updated so that it is a realistic representation of most salaries, or a different compensation system must be developed. The current system does not work.

Sources:

[A Look at Inflation-Adjusted Faculty Salaries](#), a document updated in 2020, originally prepared by Dr. Chris Moretti, for the Faculty Senate in 2018.

[Forum Presentation Slideshow](#) by Dr. Meg Cotter-Lynch

Given our situation, the Faculty Senate's priority this year is to initiate a collaborative effort with the administration to:

- Establish an annual cost of living adjustment for faculty, codified in an updated Salary Card.
- Increase the base pay for faculty at all ranks in an updated Salary Card.
- Develop and codify a reasonable and intentional process to systematically adjust faculty salaries in the future.

The Faculty Senate also recommends and supports annual cost of living adjustments and raising the base salary of part-time faculty and staff.

Now is the time to intentionally address the issue of faculty salary compensation, in order to:

- Recognize faculty success and support faculty's work.
- To retain and recruit quality faculty.
- To improve faculty morale and create the working conditions that empower faculty to provide the academic excellence our students deserve.

A worthy goal for our University: Southeastern Oklahoma State University has developed a well-earned reputation as Oklahoma's premiere regional university in the way it supports and pays its faculty and staff.