

## FACULTY SALARY AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 6, 2017

**PRESENT:** Marty Abramson, Bonnie Bowen (ex-officio), Neal Buckwalter, Larry Burns, Gregg Dimkoff, Robert Hollister (Chair), Andrew Kalafut, Lori Houghton-Rahrig, Nancy Mack, Paul Murphy, Julia Mason, Len O'Kelly, Jon Rose, Ashley Rosener, Paul Stephenson, Joel Stillerman, Mike Yuhas.

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1. The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm and the Agenda was approved.

2. The Minutes of September 22, 2017 were reviewed and approved.

3. Several announcements with discussion were made.

The faculty salaries information became available, it will be reviewed at a later date, but the average increase for returning faculty over the summer was 4.3% (for reference the previous two years were 3.7%).

Meetings were held between the chair and the Provost to discuss changes to the resource analysis; the Provost is supportive of the committee's proposed plan and steps are being taken to fill in the details, once details are worked out the full committee will re-evaluate the plan before formally enacting it.

The search committee to hire a new vice president met and a draft announcement was circulated. The search committee includes 3 members from FSBC (chair, ex-official, and student rep). Concern was voiced that the draft announcement put too much emphasis on hiring someone with experience outside academia and the committee requested that communication and consultation with faculty governance be explicitly included in the job description.

4. Provost Cimitile led a discussion and answered questions.

The Provost expressed full support for moving faculty salaries to or above the mean of Michigan Public Universities. However she explained some of the financial concerns that the University is facing which may make the process slow. These include potential declining enrollments due to many factors but primarily because the number of high school graduates is declining in Michigan. Another potential looming issue is State funding. The State of Michigan is looking at a long-term budget deficit due to many factors (such as healthcare costs, pension obligations, and costs of prisons). Given that the funding for Higher Education is one of the few discretionary funds that can be cut, funding for Higher Education will likely see significant reductions for the foreseeable future unless the political landscape changes dramatically. There is also concern that the current funding model is not sustainable and that as the University continues to raise tuition we will likely lose students (resulting in fewer revenues); therefore it is critical that the University balance tuition, financial aid, and also the University's reputation.

The Provost foresaw no need for changes to the sabbatical process, but did note that a number of faculty are not taking sabbaticals (either not at all or not as often as they are eligible). This is of concern for the administration because the sabbatical process is vital to maintaining excellence in teaching.

One of the Provost's top priorities is doing a better job of Marketing GVSU. The Provost feels that there is an excellent opportunity for the University to do a better job telling our success stories. While the University has been rated as a best value school in the Midwest numerous times, people are often surprised when they hear how excellent the school is academically. Within this context it is important to stress the liberal education component of all our majors. The critical thinking and effective communication skills are a strong component of all majors and this makes our majors exceptionally marketable, especially those in technical fields.

Concern was raised that the University has not consistently made faculty salaries a priority. The impression amongst members of the committee is that the budget process typically considers all the needs of the University and then determines faculty salaries. There is wide spread concern amongst the committee that determining faculty raises after all other factors are considered will habitually result in further declines in faculty

salaries relative to peer institutions. The Provost responded to this concern by stating that she is new in her role and therefore cannot comment on how decisions were made in the past; however she chairs the budget committee and that she will continue to be an advocate for faculty. The Provost went on to express concern for how salary money is distributed among faculty groups, particularly the balance between tenure-track, affiliate, and adjunct. When specifically asked about the balance between faculty salaries and new facilities the Provost expressed the importance of building and maintaining appealing facilities to attract students. Furthermore it is important to manage the debt load properly to maintain top bond ratings to keep interest rates low.

The Provost expressed a great respect for faculty governance. She herself was active in governance (and was a former chair of FSBC), thus she strongly values the role of governance. This was evidenced by her strong support for FSBC's efforts to monitor program long-term viability. The Provost welcomes shared governance especially at times of uncertainty; she believes that having a variety of viewpoints will ultimately provide the best pathway forward. The University must remain nimble enough to put more resources into growing programs and cut funding for declining programs. The Provost considers finding the right balance between funding declining programs (to stimulate growth) or cutting funding to be one of the biggest challenges for the administration and welcomes input from faculty.

The University must be innovative. The University must continue to find ways to attract the best students. Innovations could include combining majors to better prepare students, engaging corporate entities, or a wide variety of other activities. Most importantly changes should focus on relevance for students. These innovations could involve significant reorganization and reshuffling to reinvigorate programs.

The conversation ended on the importance of teaching excellence. It is important that all faculty set high expectations in the classroom and provide students with the tools to reach their goals. The Provost pointed toward the on-line education council and the writing center as examples of faculty groups working together to better facilitate teaching excellence.

5. The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.