

To: Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Concerns

From: Dr. Lyn Lepre, President

Date: April 12, 2024

RE: Ad Hoc Committee Report on Faculty Concerns

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the faculty concerns outlined in the memo sent to me from Faculty Senate President Deneen Long-White. Over the course of the past few months, many of the answers to the concerns voiced in this report have been answered in other settings, so I will make reference when relevant to those presentations. Many were answered in the Special Faculty Meeting regarding the budget held on March 5<sup>th</sup>. In this memo, as I respond to the questions, I will make reference to certain parts of that presentation, which can be found [here](#). My excellent minutes that add context to the presentation slides, found [here](#).

*The President and Cabinet have full control of how this information is shared.* [Exhems w1.0/9Fa6902 ltytat\(ssa4\(roo5\(1-3\(u\)3-6hef\)io\)-7](#)

*Staff for Engagement, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications. It is not clear to Faculty why those new positions were necessary or what roles they fulfill on campus.*

In the Special Faculty Meeting, we addressed a similar question. Please see slides 49-52. In addition, VPAF Edenhart-Pepe sent the following message to Faculty Senate in response to a follow-up question that was asked during the Special Faculty Meeting, which asked the same question about the percent increases in positions. I include it here as the response to this question:

*Dear Faculty Senate,*

*We appreciate everyone engaging in this valuable week-long meeting and a kind follow-up*

Once these assumptions are corrected the analysis looks different. Each year we are required to report salaries to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). This data is audited for accuracy and reported on by the state. We just passed the audit with no findings thus we can be assured that this data is correct. Using this data, we can compare the average base salary of all exempt staff (including administration) to the average base salary of all faculty, C2/C1/adjuncts or overload pay (this accounts for the difference in the total faculty earnings that the FFOC is using for their average salary increase analysis). It is also important to note that exempt staff are typically 12-month employees, whereas most faculty are 10-month employees. Below is the salary comparison between 2016-2023, 2017-2023 and 2018-2023.

This data shows that the average exempt staff base salary (including administration) is lower than the average faculty base salary from 2016-2023. Although the percentage increase is slightly higher for exempt staff in the 2016 and 2017 data, the gap closes significantly in 2018.

Note: The appropriate audited data was used to answer these questions.

What is the explanation for the higher percentage increase in admin salaries vs faculty salaries? One explanation could be that it is the addition of admin PINs which would be a connection to the second question.

Looking at the COLA/merit information provided at the [budget presentation](#), you can see that increases were applied equally to all PIN faculty and PIN staff employed at the time of the increase.

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*Looking more closely, the salary data shared points to a particular individual. In several of the positions listed in the FFOC exempt data set, the individual has changed jobs/roles at the University and is now in a different job with a salary that is commensurate with the new position they are in. For example, Lynn Adkins was promoted from the head of Finance at the Foundation to the AVP of Finance for the University. Additionally, there are the several faculty-to-administrator changes, such as the director of the School of Nursing, and their salary changes are due to moving from a 10-month faculty position to a 12-month administrative position.*

*In other cases, the salary data shared points to a particular position, such as the President. Finally, some positions that were shared had been reclassified and/or received equity adjustments along with COLA, which skewed the data. For example, the Business Manager in Perdue and the Business Manager in Henson. As you can see, these are not equal comparisons that complicate the question being asked and therefore make it more challenging to accurately answer.*

*In conclusion, we have determined the following:*

- o Using the DLS data, when adjuncts, overload pay and contingent faculty are removed from the analysis, the average salary increase between FY18-FY23 for faculty is 25.66%.*
- o When we remove the individuals/positions who*

We addressed the

2019	129066 Academic Advising	788,514	757,512	77,135	73,168	243,721	243,813	1,109,370	1,074,493	96.9%
2020	129066 Academic Advising	830,382	837,352	55,230	58,649	248,589	214,747	1,134,201	1,110,748	97.9%
2021	129066 Academic Advising	860,137	854,476	41,392	32,919	251,996	248,291	1,153,525	1,135,687	98.5%
2022	129066 Academic Advising	962,533	981,222	26,264	8,984	250,296	195,116	1,239,093	1,185,322	95.7%
2023	129066 Academic Advising	1,022,849	928,605	-	-	262,452	258,586	1,285,301	1,187,191	92.4%
2019	144060 Center for Student Achievement	278,318	267,268	391,689	382,596					



*Faculty are concerned about the overreliance on third-party consultants: training consultants, brand consultants, consultants to investigate a marching band, consultants to investigate HR practices, etc. Undoubtedly consultants have value, but in some cases, it may be possible to draw on the expertise already on campus rather than paying for expensive consulting.*

I absolutely agree that we should not over rely on third-party consultants. That said, we have been told repeatedly that faculty feel overworked and are having difficulty balancing teaching with other service responsibilities. Therefore, while I agree that we should not over rely, sometimes we need to make a judgment call, balancing the need to move ahead with needed changes or initiatives with the time and energy that someone on campus with expertise might have to give.

For example, during my listening tour, issues related to HR and our hiring processes were referenced repeatedly, including issues surrounding outdated processes, confusing instructions, and multiple forms. In addition, Dr. Wormack stepped down in late spring and our new VPAF had not yet started (she did not join us until October 2023). After consulting with USM colleagues and other on-campus stakeholders about how best to improve the situation, it was my assessment that having a consultant do a detailed analysis resulting in a roadmap forward with improvements would enable our new VPAF to move quickly upon arrival allowing us to improve in the most expeditious and efficient way possible and for our campus to see the changes as quickly as possible.

It is worth noting that when we make decisions about hiring consultants, it is not in a vacuum. For example, this section singles out the consultants to investigate a marching band. We first spent time talking with stakeholders in academic affairs and athletics about what we would need to understand to relaunch a marching band. It was concluded that having an outside expert provide us with a roadmap and an evaluation of how prepared our campus would be for this initiative would be highly beneficial. In this case, the consultants were not expensive. The three experts who gave their time to us did so for only a few hundred dollars. We now have data and information that we did not have previously that will allow us to make decisions.

In sum, we agree that consultants should not be over-relied on, and that we have an incredible amount of talent and expertise in our faculty. As we move forward, and have more discussions about faculty workload and ways that we can work together on projects and initiatives that are important to SU, I hope to find new ways to best support our campus. For example, Provost Couch is considering the development of a Faculty Fellows leadership development program. The program would allow a few faculty each year to work on special campus leadership projects for which they have particular expertise. In exchange, the Fellows would participate in a year-long leadership training opportunity.

*Fac I o ld like o be er nder and he elf- aining b dge model ha he Cen er for International Education is now using. The new budget structure has changed the types of trips Faculty can make with students. It is also not clear who is involved in making these decisions about how global resources are used.*



After conversations with VPAF Edenhart-Pepe and Provost Couch, our understanding of this change is this:

When academic affairs was working through the budget challenges last year, then-Provost Olmstead made the decision to move to this self-sustaining model to allow for the budget that was originally allocated to study abroad to be distributed elsewhere in academic affai0 0 1 1rs.ETQq0.00000912

To the example presented about Library Faculty being asked to do additional work prior to Inauguration Week and hold a Publication Night for Faculty Research and projects with insufficient notice. When planning the inauguration, we wanted to find ways to highlight our



which impacts the school. I represent the university, and I believe I must do everything possible to protect SU, its reputation, and the reputations of all who work and learn here.

I try to be as transparent and approachable as possible. I also believe that maintaining a level of professionalism and polish is also important. @

For instance, my role involves representing the institution to various stakeholders, including donor(o).92011E0003>3