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AY 2003/2004 Dead last in Faculty Salaries: Faculty Speak!

Faculty Senate

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On Salaries: Faculty Speak

The following is a compilation of excerpts from some of the responses to my Jan. 23 memo, *USF: Dead last in Faculty Salaries!*

While clearly anecdotal, and with no statistical significance whatsoever, these responses do point to some of the frustration felt by faculty over the current situation. No names or departmental affiliations are used; only the writer's college is listed.

Impact of low salaries.

During my first three years in the Department, we lost tenure-earning faculty, some of whom said they were leaving due to the poor salaries. They actively job searched and moved to other states and countries within 1-2 years of being in our department. After moving they revealed their current salaries to me and in all cases almost doubled or more than doubled their salaries. The other reason they all cited is the 3-3 teaching load, which simply did not permit time for research and writing.

--- *College of Education*

I support your perspectives and efforts! If USF is to become a truly great university, it must have great faculty. To attract and maintain such, USF must compete with other universities for a talent pool which is often insufficient. Having been in administrative positions in the College of Medicine (COM) for 25 years, I know something of the problems. To compete with private practice incomes and with salaries at other medical schools, COM faculty must do more and more patient service. This has some positive aspects; however, it takes time and energy away from teaching and scholarly productivity. Increases in base salaries are needed. Should a Professor of Medicine (or a Professor of History or English, etc.,) be salaried lower than a football coach and at a level 50% or more below that of some USF administrators? I think not if we aim for the best contributions we can make to the individuals, institutions, and ideals we all serve.

--- *College of Medicine*

A few years ago, we lost an outstanding scholar/teacher ... due to CAS and Provost's Office slow movement and miscommunication with the faculty member regarding a counter-offer.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

I have lost a colleague this year – although he went to the private sector, rather than another university. My understanding was that salary was the main issue.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

A disturbing trend that must be faced by Departmental Chairs on average once every 2 years is the loss of faculty members to "better" institutions. This trend demoralizes the faculty and consumes precious University resources. Our record of hires (and the universities that hire them away) substantiates that our choice of candidates is excellent. Without exception, all those professors who leave still think highly of the Department. In other words, they are not leaving because of departmental problems. They leave for a variety of reasons, but one known factor is a lack of proper salary increases during the years after they are hired.

Conclusion: Salary compression causes many advanced Assistant Professors to search for other jobs, just before they earn tenure and promotion and assume positions of leadership in the Department and University. This trend represents a tremendous loss to both the Department and the University. Not only do we lose the considerable investment we have made in these young scholars at a time when they are poised to assume leadership roles, their departure also disrupts our undergraduate and graduate programs. Attempts to counter the effects of salary compression must be found to lessen the dissatisfaction of young faculty members who have

been at USF for about 4-5 years. As the below list shows, this problem has had a considerable impact upon our department.

1992: NH, hired away by Duke
Replacement: LE, hired away in 1996

1992: SL, hired away by UNC, Greensboro
Replacement: None.

1994: LP, hired away by UNC, Chapel Hill
Replacement: AF (hired away in 2000)

1996: LE, hired away by UCLA
Replacement: CG, (hired away in 2002)

2000: AF, hired away by Univ. of Pittsburgh
Replacement: JMG

2000: KF, hired away by Univ. of Minnesota
Replacement: PL

2002: CG, hired away by Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

The Department is the poster child for how terrible the impact of compression has been. Think of the lost potential when we nurture and mentor an Assistant Professor up to the promotion process and then they go somewhere else for \$10-15 K more.

--- College of Arts and Sciences

Impact of low salaries on morale and the everyday faculty experience

The impact is devastating and yet we have yet to talk about the problem in a forum other than college council. What concerns me is that I see faculty who are very good and even excellent job searching and then suddenly announcing departure. When I have asked whether they would be leaving if their salaries were competitive, most say "no," although those with a 3-3 load say "yes." This is the other albatross problem in the college.

--- College of Education

Having been a professor and an administrator at four different universities (including USF for the past 23 years), I think I have a rich understanding of what a university can be like and what we currently have at USF. Over the past 32 years, I also have been a licensed psychologist specializing in marriage and couples counseling. As a professor, I publish in the area of adult loving relationships and teach a graduate course in marriage and couples counseling. Fittingly, when I think of faculty morale I think of a professor's relationship with the university, which, interestingly, can be similar to that of a marital relationship. Over the past five years, I have watched younger, untenured faculty "do what they have to do to get tenure", middle-aged, tenured faculty "do what they have to do and make more money elsewhere", and senior, tenured faculty "do what they have to do until they retire".

Some people think the opposite of love is hate; that's not true. "If you hate me, you still care." The opposite of love is indifference. At the university over the past five years, I have watched many of my colleagues go from love to like, to frustration, to anger, to despair, and more recently to indifference.

Most of us know what a "functioning yet meaningless marriage" looks like. The two individuals go through the perfunctory and expected motions and act as if they are happy; they do what they have to do – they appear happy. Yet from an emotional/spiritual perspective, they really don't care – they're invested elsewhere. Importantly, they never talk about it. Thus, everyone goes through the motions, acts as if everything is honky dory, and only in small private conversations (with selected, trusted others, not each other) do they honestly talk about what's really going on. Over the past five years, I have seen more and more of my colleagues work from home, only come to the office when they have to, reluctantly serve on committees, and prefer not to get involved in administration. They unwaveringly are committed and invested in their students and their research and scholarship (funded or not).

From the state level on down, the system (and most parts of it) is being run by non-faculty decision-makers, faculty input is being ignored, and thus many faculty have given up – in spite of appearances.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

I find that the treatment of faculty is generally pretty abominable, and it shows up most clearly in the salary issue. Now, I have to say at the outset that I cannot and will not complain about my own salary, because by comparison with other full professors I earn a very respectable amount, well above the average. Of course, the primary reason for that is that I spent so many years in administration, but then that just goes to reinforce the notion that administrators are rewarded when faculty are not. This year, however, my salary increase came to about .999%, representing a fixed amount as set by the State, or so I am told. In truth, this will create no financial hardship for me this year, but I am frankly offended by what I cannot help but perceive as a lack of respect for the professoriate. That, along with a number of other things either done or not done by the administration, have naturally led many of us to want to do less in the way of service to the institution. Has anyone really wondered why faculty have to be begged to come to commencement, why older faculty generally (I think) avoid committee work, or why only 45 people might show up to an open forum with a provost candidate? None of these things will either help or hurt us with regard to financial rewards, and when you come to believe that "the institution," whoever that is, really has little understanding about what is important to the educational process, and when you perceive that the faculty at large are little respected by some of those in governance over them, it is all the more appealing to want to focus primarily on tending one's own garden (e.g., classroom teaching) than trying to make contributions in other arenas. Nothing wrong with trying to be the best teacher/scholar you can be, of course, but I think most of us would also like to think that we could be instrumental in shaping and directing the institution overall. The fact that I see less of that desire today than I have ever witnessed in my 30 years at USF tells me that there is a morale problem. So yes, the lack of respectability raises over a long period of time eventually has a devastating effect on morale, but so also does behavior at various levels of university governance when faculty may perceive it as evidence of responsible persons not "getting it."

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

While I can't complain about my salary in the sense that I am grateful to be making more than the average American and Floridian (I say this because this is how the average American/Floridian looks at the issue), I recognize that I am exploited by being under-paid relative to other people in my profession. Relative to the average person, I have put more time into my education, earning practically nothing while doing so, living in less than favorable conditions, sometimes living on macaroni and cheese to pay my bills and buy books. The time I spent earning my higher education (Two MAs, PhD) drives up the cost of my labor compared to the labor of the average person. In other words, compared to the average American who has 11.2 years of education, I have 25.

I didn't realize the full extent of the salary gulf between Florida Universities and elsewhere until a few weeks ago. A close friend and I were discussing future openings here at USF. He said he would love to move here, but would not be able to afford the salary decrease. I wondered how much of a salary decrease we were talking about. After all, we graduated in the same year from the State University of New York at Albany with Ph.D.s. My first job was at FSU in a doctoral granting program. He began at Northern Arizona in an MA program, and later took a job at Michigan State in a Ph.D. granting program. We both have the same administrative experience as Doctoral Program Directors. We have both edited journals. My publication record is much stronger ... I have graduated more Ph.D. students than he has. We have a similar number of MA graduates. We are both full professors. So I asked. I was shocked to find out that he made \$30,000 more than I do -- or 40% more than me. I looked up the cost of living difference between Tampa and East Lansing where he lives ... it costs 5.6% more to live in East Lansing than in Tampa, so that still leaves 35 percent of the difference in our salaries "unexplained" in the statistical sense. What explains the difference, apparently, is the value placed on the work of college professors as educators and researchers in Michigan and Florida.

I would like to take a sabbatical, my first ever, so that I can catch up on some of my research, and update my knowledge of new teaching technologies. I have not been able to financially afford a sabbatical during my previous 15 years of teaching in the State of Florida. Even at the salary I have now reached, half-pay for a year is a serious financial liability to incur to take advantage of one of the "perks" of college teaching. The real question is, "how can a sabbatical be a perk when few people can afford to take one?"

At this point, I am also thinking that I will need to look for a new job because of these salary issues. Why should I make 40 % less than my peers? I'd like to be able to afford to send my son to the University of his choice, so that he can be well educated. Looking at my finances, I realize that I need to increase my savings. A higher salary would help.

Finally, let me note that I am a second generation college professor. My life has revolved around living conditions for college professors. I've seen how they have changed -- the change is part of my personal biography, covering more than 40 years. I haven't calculated how my salary compares to what my father made at my age. But, here's what I know -- he was able to raise 4 kids in New York City AND send them all to college ON ONE SALARY. I doubt I could afford to do that on mine.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

Both my husband and I are assistant profs here at USF and to completely frank, our (lack of) salaries has been a very serious issue for us -- particularly now that we are starting a family. Our meager salaries have forced us to seriously consider our professional options. Also, as much as I love being a professor in my department, I do feel financially undervalued here at USF and this undoubtedly has an effect on my overall job performance.

---*College of Arts and Sciences*

Thank you and the senate for addressing the Faculty salary issue as number one priority and I am really surprised why it took so long to realize this and why as faculty we never question our worth and why we do not steadfastly pressure the administrators to act on it.

On the average most of us are getting paid far less than what we are worth but hard numbers given here can ruin one's peaceful weekend. So most of us ignore it to keep our sanity and so we can do the best job that is possible. If the argument that president's salary has to be competitive is valid and the board of trustees vote to raise the salary, what about us whose collective work is what makes this president and the University look good.

In the desire to be the top research university, focus is on research funding and recruiting and retaining strong faculty. Most will agree to that. But, high salaries and start-up packages are being negotiated by so called "star" faculty which is leading to severe salary compression. Full professors with more than 15 or 20 years experience and who are very productive earn the same or less than many assistant professors who are currently recruited in certain key areas.

--- *College of Engineering*

I voiced my displeasure with faculty raises or lack thereof at least once a year to our Dean and Provost. This seems like an appropriate juncture to do so as a faculty member. Charitable giving may be reduced considerably as a function of the minuscule raises provided to faculty this year (following many, many years of substandard raises) coupled with the substantial increases in costs of health insurance. My usual annoyance is aggravated by the alacrity with which the Governor and Legislature found and allocated 396 million dollars for the Scripps Institute, including monies to pay what will no doubt be handsome salaries for its employees. This when Florida State Government's budget is supposedly in such dire straits. Hopefully, the apparent small windfall to be enjoyed by USF from lottery funds can be directed in whole or part to render this year's increases a bit more palatable for faculty and staff.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

One of the main reasons that I was happy to take a Visiting Professorship [this year] was my salary in general and the so-called Faculty Excellence Awards from the President's office in particular. Meanwhile my sixth and last book published by Oxford University Press is in a second

printing and a second edition is already in the works. No rewards, no salary increase, just a request to teach more classes and more students. Have always wondered why USF has been basically incapable of recognizing distinguished work by many of their faculty when the greater world outside can.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

Keep up the good fight. We are pathetically underpaid. My colleague at the University of Chicago is shocked by our salaries. Compression is such a huge issue also. [A recently hired colleague] makes more than \$16,000 dollars more than I do. I am now bringing in my fourth large NSF grant, and I have received no acknowledgement must less a dime for my efforts along the way ... My colleague at the University of Chicago just got a salary raise to \$175,000 for 12 months and considers it really under what she should be making. I am furious to put it mildly.

--- *College of Education*

Other Issues:

One of the issues that needs to be considered in raising faculty salaries is that many faculty have to earn all or most of their salary through outside revenue. As a consequence, salaries are driven by our ability to bring in grants or (in the case of clinical services) third party revenue to cover not only our clinical or grant time but our teaching time. The consequence is that we are asked to financially ensure that higher salaries can be accommodated in a structure, which often does not support the educational effort expended. Even if the University determines the need to increase faculty salaries, the faculty themselves will be pressed to earn more revenue to make up for it. As many of us are already working at maximum capacity, I am unsure how we will be able to do this. I realize our responsibility to write grants, do research, educate (and serve patients or clients in the case of clinical programs); however, many of us are in the position of surviving (barely) as it is just doing the clinical and education piece. I say this from the perspective of a clinical faculty member. In essence, we need more legislative and private support of the underpinnings of our educational system.

---*College of Medicine*

If there are going to be faculty salary increases, please ask the administration to come up with a quantitative formula that is based on assigned duties and annual evaluation, salary compression, inversion, rank, etc.

I hope that large salary increase pool is distributed over several years, as opposed to a single year because many people get left out of the process when such opportunities arise only for a year.

Also, let's see who is consistently doing well, not who has done well just recently. Otherwise, it all becomes a timing factor/luck.

Who is doing well? Well, let's have a diverse definition of that. Funded scholarship is not the only gauge of success.

--- *College of Engineering*

Despite increases over the past few years, my salary is still compressed. Thus, I am less likely to apply for grants and more likely to do my research through consulting due to my still below appropriate salary. For grants, I must use my compressed salary as the basis for summer and other salary from grants. To the contrary, in the consulting situation, I just set my price, and can use figure closer to what I am really worth. Further, even when I do go for the grants, on the full overhead NSF grants I have had for the last 10 years, using my compressed salary only results in the university losing money on the overhead portion of the grant. We'd all win if I were paid a less compressed salary.

--- *College of Arts and Sciences*

Do you realize that we are in a university in which there are slightly over a thousand people on Administrative and Professional lines and about sixteen hundred full time faculty?

-- *College of Arts and Sciences*