**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

JCK 880 and Zoom Meeting, 4:00-6:00 pm

**Attending Senators:** Taylor Acee, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Farzan Irani, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Roque Mendez, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Alex White

**Guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Jesse Backstrom, Andrew Behnke, Jason Coates, Autumn Guel, Twyla Hough, MiHyun Kim, Suzanna Okere, Aimee Roundtree, Brendan Scott, Karen Sigler, Lois Stickley, Rose Trevino, Shelly Wernette, Jess Youngs

The meeting started at 4:00 pm

**Invitation to Run to R1 event (Jess Youngs, Rose Trevino, Aimee Roundtree)**

All faculty and staff are invited to attend the Run to R1 Town Hall on May 1 from 3-5 pm in Evans Liberal Arts Building.  President Damphousse and VP for Research Dr. Mandayam will discuss the next steps for R1 status.  Following the event, refreshments will be served on the Quad and a 1K walk/run will be held to symbolize the steps needed to achieve this goal.

A senator asked what would be available at Round Rock.  The committee hasn’t discussed this yet.  There is not currently a run/walk scheduled in Round Rock, but it may be possible to organize this.  The presentation is expected to be streamed for those unable to attend in person.

**Summary of the Salary Study Report (Senators Bender, Davenport, Dedek, Irani, Mendez, Ojede, Supancic, White)**

The senate formed a Salary Study Subcommittee to analyze how faculty salaries have changed over time.  Specifically, the subcommittee was interested in trends in faculty and administrator salaries (compared to CUPA medians) relative to the rising cost of living in the San Marcos and Round Rock areas.

The subcommittee presented a summary to senate to seek suggestions as the draft enters final editing in preparation for presentation at the final senate President’s Academic Advisory Group (PAAG) meeting with the president.

All salary data was acquired from Institutional Research based on all merit eligible faculty.  Median salaries over the last 10 years were plotted by rank.  Salaries have increased over time, but the slope of the salary increase is markedly lower beginning in 2016.  The lecturer/senior lecturer salaries also began to converge at this time, indicating that senior lecturers were not gaining as fast as lecturers.  This is likely due to the fact that lecturers tend to be newer hires, hired at a higher rate than more senior faculty.  A similar trend is found when comparing the long-term salaries of associate and full professors compared to assistant professors.

When salaries are adjusted for inflation (in 2012 dollars), salaries increased until 2016, and salaries have dipped dramatically over the past two years.  Salaries are not keeping up with inflation.

A number of figures were generated depicting the median salaries by rank and year as a function of department and college.  This helps with the identification of groups of faculty that are underpaid.  The percentage of faculty that are paid below 90% of the CUPA median increased significantly in between 2017-2018.  Lecturers are the most impacted group (nearly 50% of whom are paid less than 90% of CUPA), followed by full professors, and associate professors.

Administrative salaries were difficult to compare because they could only be compared to doctoral institution salaries.  Given this limitation, the subcommittee compared all salaries against this non-peer group.  When this was done, faculty salaries were 80-86% of the median salary.  In general, the comparative salaries were (from lowest to highest): Full Professor < Lecturer < Associate Professor < Assistant Professor.  Administrators at the Vice President level and above are at 91% of the median salary and the president’s salary is at 104%.

The cost of living and median home prices were compared among the 154 institutions in our CUPA peer group.  The average cost of living for CUPA peers is 100.5 (100 represents the national average) and the median cost of living is 93.9.  In San Marcos, the cost of living is 101.1 and in Round Rock it is 116.5.  Therefore, the cost of living is 7% higher than the median in San Marcos and 16% higher in Round Rock.  The cost of homes in the area is similarly higher than the median.  The average cost of homes in the locations of our CUPA peers is $231,800, while in San Marcos the median home cost is currently $293,300 and in Round Rock it is $440,600.  In general, San Marcos has a higher cost of living compared to our CUPA comparative group, and the cost of living in Round Rock is far higher.

The housing trends in the area mirror national trends, but at an accelerated rate. Home prices in San Marcos increased by 104% between 2019 to 2022, and they increased by 78% in Round Rock.  Nearby cities (Kyle, Buda) are increasing at a similar rate.  Average rental costs in San Marcos have increased by 48-67% (for 1-3 bedrooms) over this period.  This increase is attributed to growth in the area that is not matched by supply.  Rental costs in Round Rock increased at an even higher rate.  For example, two bedroom apartments have increased by 70% to an average monthly cost of $1793.

Weekly wages in the region were analyzed in comparison to median salaries of faculty and staff.  The university has not kept up with area wages, which is in part responsible for the outflux of staff over the past couple of years.  The average weekly wages for all industries in nearby counties peaked in the third quarter of 2022 at levels twice as high (or more) compared to the median salaries of Texas State employees.  Wages in business and professional services increased by 88% in Hays county between 2018 and 2023, and by 33.7% in Travis County over the same period.  State Government wages have not increased at nearly the same rate.  Salaries in this sector have been nearly flat over the past 5 years.

Alongside the analysis of quantitative data, qualitative responses were gathered from faculty via survey.  The survey netted 145 responses.  The number of responses were roughly equal between tenured and non-tenure line faculty.  20 themes emerged from the data.  The top themes were: salary compression, cost of living, and inequity/unfairness.  Other major themes included: class sizes, lack of career paths, CUPA concerns, food insecurities, and leaving Texas State.

Comments revealed the personal impacts of salary compression and financial stress.  Faculty expressed their frustration that raises of senior faculty have not kept up with the salaries of new hires (which tend to be tied to inflation).  Salaries have not been enough to sustain a moderate quality of life in the region.  Sustained merit raises are needed to reflect changes in economy. Faculty feel devalued and exploited based on inequity in pay for different roles.  Overloads are sometimes offered to boost pay, but this is simply more work for potentially equivalent pay.

Senators agreed that the report should be shared with all faculty when presenting it at PAAG.  Senators also suggested that future senates may be able to follow up on this report with updated data.  One of the authors noted that this report utilizes the expertise of the coauthors.  Future reports may look different due to differing skillsets.

A senator raised the question about whether the report should be released before or after the presentation to the President.  Several suggested that it be sent to all faculty at the same time that it is sent to the administration.  One reason for this is that the report may help fuel the argument that Texas State needs more resources.  The senate agreed that the report should come from the faculty senate (not the subcommittee) through a web link, an email, and a link on our bulletin.  This will likely be sent on the Friday prior to the PAAG meeting.

The motion passed by vote: The report will be sent by the faculty senate by email to all faculty and PAAG from senate on Friday, April 28.  It will also be advertised in the May bulletin.

The meeting ended at 5:53 pm

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin