**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**May 3, 2023**

**4-6 p.m.**

**Attending senators:** Taylor Acee, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, William Chittenden, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Dave Donnelly, Farzan Irani, Jennifer Jensen, William Kelemen, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Roque Mendez, Jo Beth Oestreich, Andrew Ojede, Adetty Pérez de Miles, Michael Supancic, Alex White

**Attending guests:** Eric Algoe, Andrea Aspbury, Mary Aycock, Gene Bourgeois, Matthew Brooks, Jenny Buschhorn, David Coleman, Lori Czop Assaf, Kelly Damphousse, Kristy Daniel, Shannon Duffy, Carla Ellard, Laura Ellis-Lai, Anita Ford, Lauren Goodley, Mohammed Iqbal Ahmed, Jesus Jimenez, Stephanie Larrison, David Nolan, Judy Oskam, Ruby Kishan, Deborah Pitts, Floyd Quinn, Aimee Roundtree, Arlene Salazar, Katie Salzmann, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne, Sheila Torres-Blank, Stephanie Towery, Bob Vasquez, Renee Wendel, Shelly Wernette, Kelly Woytek

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

**President’s Academic Advisory Group**

The first item on the PAAG agenda was to discuss the Senate Salary Study Subcommittee’s findings. For the past year, the subcommittee worked to analyze trends with faculty salaries and the cost of living in the San Marcos and Round Rock areas.

All salary data was acquired from Institutional Research based on all merit eligible faculty. Median salaries from 2012-2022 were plotted by rank, and salaries were adjusted for comparison purposes to nine-month FTE. Various faculty weren’t included for different reasons, such as associate deans, clinical faculty and practice faculty.

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 because 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.

President Damphousse said he tried to assume what was happening at this time, since he was not here. His hypothesis was enrollment stalled in 2016 or 2017 – and when that stopped, the merit raises stopped, as well.

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. The subcommittee report only uses data up to 2022, so it does not capture the latest round of inflation hikes.

Several 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 medians of data from CUPA, or the College and University Professional Association, increased significantly between 2017 and 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. Assistant professors are typically hired at CUPA median or close to it.

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 roughly 80% of the median salary. 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. 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. In San Marcos, the median home cost is currently $293,300 – and $440,600 in Round Rock. 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 (Wimberley, Kyle, Buda) are increasing at a similar rate. Average apartment rental costs in San Marcos have increased by 49-67% (for 1-3 bedrooms) over this period. Rental costs in Round Rock increased at an even higher rate. For example, two-bedroom apartments have increased by 70%.

Weekly wages in the region were analyzed in comparison to median salaries of faculty and staff. 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 professional services increased by 54% in Hays County between 2018 and 2023. State government wages have not increased at nearly the same rate. Faculty salaries are up only 5% in the past five 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. Twenty themes emerged from the data, including salary compression, cost of living and inequity/unfairness. Other major themes included food insecurity and thoughts of leaving Texas State. Three faculty members said they didn’t feel able to afford starting a family.

The president and provost both said they read the report. President Damphousse said he hoped he would read something different than what he had been feeling in the past nine months while talking with people. He said the statistics and charts were not surprising. Hearing the stories, however, was surprising and touching. Damphousse said this only inspires him more to think of what else the university can do to change this. He said the crux is costs are going up while salaries are stagnant – and he said this strengthens his resolve to keep compensation issues at the top of the university’s priority list. He’s asked Eric Algoe for an aggressive timeline regarding faculty and staff salaries. The president said he’s pleased to see assistant professor salaries have kept up with the market, which is typical around the country. Salary compression issues at other ranks are also typical around the country. Algoe said he is amazed by the thoroughness of the report. The university is interviewing compensation firms to help in this process and implement some solutions by September 1. He expects this to be a 4-6 year of sustained increases to get salaries where they need to be.

In terms of ways to solve these issues, Damphousse touted increases in online and international students. In particular, the university is years behind other schools in terms of international markets. The president also believes access to the proposed endowment from the state legislature will be a huge help for faculty and staff salaries.

A senator asked if the legislature understands the situation and data related to salaries. President Damphousse said it was the university’s number one legislative request. It was the first thing he said in his testimony to the legislature. The run to R1 has been mostly self-funded at this point.

A senator asked if peer institutions are reliant on enrollment increases for raises. UTSA and UNT, for instance, have seen big increases in enrollment, but the president doesn’t know if enrollment is the sole driver for all 154 peer institutions. Other state legislatures have set aside money for higher education. The president said raises are tied to revenue, and there are three sources of revenue – state allocations, private giving and tuition. Even if enrollment had gone up recently, the university is spending more in scholarships to bring students to Texas State – so revenue has gone down.

A senator asked about student retention efforts. The president said getting the biggest freshmen class is great – unless you don’t retain them. There was record retention (80.2%) from fall 2021 to fall 2022 and near record retention (92%) from fall 2022 to spring 2023. He reminded senators that head count isn’t the metric to watch – it’s student credit hours. The university is up 11% in SCH. Algoe added that the university’s $50 million investment in scholarships likely played a big role in these retention numbers.

A senator said he appreciates that the president read the report and was there to discuss it with the Senate. He hopes the president doesn’t lose sight of the immediate need contained in the 145 qualitative responses in the report.

The second PAAG agenda item is the Tenure and Promotion Report. There were two applicants for clinical associate professor, and one was approved. The one who was declined was at the president and provost level. There were 27 applicants for promotion to professor, and 23 were approved. There were 27 applicants for tenure, and 26 were approved. At both levels, all declined applicants didn’t reach the president and provost level. There was one applicant with research faculty, which was approved. Four applicants for promotion to associate professor of practice were also approved.

A senator asked what would cause the president and provost to deny a candidate at their level. The provost said, in this case, the dean didn’t support the promotion – so they supported the dean.

On a final note, the provost said it’s been 20 years since there was a movement away from automatic performance-based raises to merit only. He believes this is something the Senate should discuss. He believes merit only won’t be able to address as extensively the number of salary issues at the university. A senator asked for a clarification between performance and merit. In the past, performance raises meant everyone who was eligible received a raise. Merit means there is discretion at the local level.

**Recognition of Departing Senators**

The Senate recognized outgoing senators Acee, Martin, Mendez and Ojede for their service and dedication.

**Seating of 65th Faculty Senate**

Incoming senators Chittenden, Donnelly, Kelemen and Oestreich were seated as part of the 65th Senate.

**Officer Elections**

Three senators submitted statements of purpose to serve in the three officer positions. A motion to hold a vote of acclamation was introduced. A senator voiced opposition to Senator Oestreich being elected as secretary since the duty is difficult for an incoming senator. Another senator said there is nothing in the standing rules that precludes a first-time senator from being an officer. The outgoing secretary went over the time commitments and challenges of the role. Senator Oestreich said she is willing to wait a year before serving as secretary, but no one else volunteered. A senator raised a suggestion from a colleague to post the meeting recordings instead of taking detailed minutes. A senator said the detailed minutes are helpful for archive searches. A senator asked if previous secretaries used transcription or closed captioning software, but the transcriptions are not particularly accurate. The motion to hold a vote of acclamation was approved. The vote of acclamation was then approved.

Officers for the 65th Senate are:

Lynn Ledbetter – chair

Rachel Davenport – vice-chair

Jo Beth Oestreich – secretary

**Concerns About University Archives**

A senator raised a concern from a colleague about the university archivist. The faculty member said he called the archivist for help with a project, but she said she was only able to assist until May 1. At that date, she said she will assume duty as cleanup of the Government Documents section of Alkek Library. She will be relocated from the University Archives and indicated she had been told that requests for archival assistance would be temporarily or perhaps permanently suspended when she assumes her new role. The senator said the archivist is an important position for faculty and students, especially in the run to R1.

A senator said she has received information that University Archives is not going away. A senator asked who the archivist reports to. That position reports to the university librarian, Kelly Visnak. A senator suggested Visnak should be invited to Senate to discuss this situation. A senator said the Senate should first ask for clarification before inviting Visnak to join a meeting. Senator Ledbetter said she would contact Visnak for clarification. Stephanie Towery, the copyright librarian, said all archives requests currently come to her, but University Archives is not going away. She did not want to speak on behalf of Visnak, but she said this is just part of reorganization.

**Other Business**

Three policies need Senate review. Senator Bender will review AA/PPS 04.01.25. Senator Jensen will review UPPS 04.04.51. Senator Perez de Miles will review AA/PPS 04.01.21.

Minutes from the April 26 meeting were approved.

The Senate will meet two times over the summer: June 21 and July 19. Each meeting will be from 3-5 p.m.

**Executive Session**

The Senate then went into Executive Session to discuss the Part-Time Teaching Award.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.