

Joel Burley, the Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC), reported to the Senate regarding the FWC response to Provost Dobkin's September 7, 2009 letter regarding the faculty salary policy. The FWC's formal response had been shared by the Senate chair with the faculty two days before this meeting. It is available on-line with other Senate documents.

## **Academic Senate meeting, October 1, 2009**

### **-- Report from Joel Burley, Chair, Faculty Welfare Committee --**

JOEL BURLEY: Hopefully you have all seen the copy of our official response. I am not going to review that in any detail. Instead, I want to touch upon a few points that I believe I mentioned a month ago, that is, "What happens next?" The first point that I outlined three weeks ago is that we need to inform the faculty and survey the faculty about their opinions and preferences on these issues. That process is underway. What is going to happen over the next month is Faculty Welfare is going to sit down and basically prepare our presentation and put together a survey that is going to go hand-in-hand with that, and then we will set up a schedule. Hopefully this will take place in November/December maybe into Jan Term, and the very first part of the spring semester. We will try to visit individually with academic departments, so we can have a detailed discussion and see what people think about these salary related issues. That is what is going to happen, specifically with respect to the first item.

The second item that I mentioned was the collection of the salary data. Beth has already started that, and we publicly want to thank her because that is a difficult and messy task, and her promptness in this regard is outstanding. We are working on that too. As noted previously, the first meeting we have on this is next Tuesday, so the numbers are already starting to come in.

Other comments or things I will briefly touch upon relating to our written response. One of our key concerns isn't so much differential salaries per se or policies per se, but when we deviate from the official policies that are in the Handbook; whether it is having Goal II on the books and pretending it's not there or wishing it were not there; or

having a salary scale but when it is really inconvenient in this case we ignore nor it or work out way around it. As we indicate in the memo, that opens up potentially big a messy cans of worms.

The second point is more historical: a question for the Senate. I would assume there was careful deliberation when the proposal came forward for SEBA to seek accreditation. That's one of the primary drivers of this situation. If you are going to have an accredited MBA program, then you have to hire people in graduate accounting or finance. That's not inexpensive. That's going to take some money. The question is were those things discussed at the time? Certainly they should have been in the original proposal in the Senate discussion, in the administrative deliberations when the Trustees talked about it, etc. I am speaking from a position of complete ignorance. I have no idea if that was there, or to what extent that was put into the plan. Of course, that is a little bit of a moot point now because we are moving forward and working towards full accreditation, but that is one thought that was percolating in my mind when we were working on this.

I would also like to publicly acknowledge the Faculty Welfare Committee members: Tomas, Colette, and Chris Jones for their hard work on this. As you might image, we went through a few drafts and had some discussions about what is appropriate, debates over word choices and all of that, and so I publicly thank them for their hard work.

TOM POUNDSTONE: There must be some questions for Joel.

BETH DOBKIN: This is not a question but a point of clarification. Joel, of course, doesn't have access to the data that I have access to, and one of the things that we found in doing this is that total compensation compared to base salary is a little misleading because total compensation includes a lot of things that don't fall under the category of what Faculty Welfare would want. Based on data I received recently, and the specific criteria you outline in the FWC response to the Senate, I believe that there are 9 full-time faculty out of 214 (4.2%) who are receiving some kind of supplement to their base pay that is not either "start-up" funding or associated with a specific, time-bound

task (such as course overload, program director, etc.). None of the 9 supplements are funded out of the faculty salary pool. Of those nine supplements, the range of percentage above base salary is from 7% to 37%, with the smallest of the nine being 7%, the highest being 37%, and the other seven being between those figures.

ED TYWONIAK: I would just like to commend Joel for the wonderful report – it was eye opening. It was more of an amplification and clarification of what you reported all along, but I want to thank you for the response.

STEVE CORTRIGHT: I am presuming Joel, that the survey which Faculty Welfare intends to do will go to total compensation, yearly salaries, since we are seeing a climate now in which movement on the benefits front, in essence, gives us salary reductions. Am I correct in that assumption?

JOEL BURLEY: It is neither correct nor incorrect. We're just getting started, so we haven't had any discussions about what might be included or what might be excluded. Obviously we want to keep things reasonably short and punchy, you know limited attention spans and all that, so that we can craft an effective message, but certainly that is a reasonable thing to include – absolutely.

STEVE CORTRIGHT: Well, then consider that advice from an old hand.

ROY WENSLEY: Steve took one of my points, but my other point was, in terms of thinking about compensation, is about differential workload. I don't know if that happens, but it seems that it is just as important as compensation, so it seems that should also be included. There are a lot of issues, and it seems they are not just tied directly to salary of an individual. There are other doors that things can go through.

JOEL BURLEY: It absolutely does. Especially for those of us in the School of Science, we often debate the amount of credit we receive for teaching labs.

ROY WENSLEY: There are other deals much less below board than that. Someone being given 4 courses instead of 6. I don't know if that happens, but it seems like it should be part of the total package of set compensation.

JOEL BURLEY: I agree. But of course the tricky part will be crafting a good yet reasonably concise policy. Most of the focus has been on comparison schools. What are our peer institutions? What is a fair workload? How do we compare one school versus another school? We will certainly be looking at that.

STEVE CORTRIGHT: This is a query and an offer. If, at some point, Faculty Welfare decides that its present membership is not sufficient to make, in a timely fashion, the large number of visitations that you are contemplating, there are Faculty Handbook remedies for that, temporary appointments to the committee and so on.

JOEL BURLEY: We have already internally discussed all the people who we would love to share our workload with.

STEVE CORTRIGHT: I suspected that might be the case.

TOM POUNDSTONE: Is this option of identifying those we would like to share our workload with open to all of us? That would be tremendous! (Laughter)

JOEL BURLEY: So we can deputize people on the street. (Laughter)

TOM POUNDSTONE: I have a different question, and I am not certain if I should address it to Joel or Steve. Both of you in your history on the Faculty Welfare Committee would know this. At times, I hear deep suspicion of those who try to shift from talking about base salary to talking about total compensation. At other times I hear people say we need to make this shift. Would you weigh the pros and cons of each option for us?

JOEL BURLEY: There have been ideas thrown out, for example, that maybe our compensation is generous relative to our salaries per se, things like that. And I know that Jim Sauerberg, for example, has looked into this – and as far as Jim has been able to ascertain, they track pretty consistently with one another. So we are not benefits rich and salary poor or vice versa, based on the information that has been available. And, of course, at some point you are always comparing apples and oranges because every institution is different. I think that is the short way to answer your question. Obviously if you want to look at the whole package, you have to include not just the salary but also the benefits.

TOM POUNDSTONE: Are we aware of any differential benefit packages?

BETH DOBKIN: That's illegal.

TOM POUNDSTONE: OK, so we are not aware of that? (Laughter)

STEVE CORTRIGHT: I think the last time Faculty Welfare did a comprehensive look at where St. Mary's sat with respect to WCC plus Manhattan schools, total compensation and also \_\_\_\_\_, would have been four years ago. At that time Joel's information \_\_\_\_\_ transparent where we sit with respect to compensation salary \_\_\_\_\_. That is information four years old.

PHIL PERRY: Just one caution, Joel. Whatever information you are able to find on salaries from individual faculty members should be held in the strict confidence so they cannot be identified with an individual or a small group of individuals.

JOEL BURLEY: I completely concur. Beth and I, and more broadly Beth and Faculty Welfare, we have had many discussions on that very important topic. We view our charge in that regard similar to the confidentiality associated with Rank and Tenure or the Grievance Committee. We absolutely want to see the numbers, but at a certain

level we simply don't care who is attached to the numbers, if that makes sense. We totally agree.

PHIL PERRY: Even identifying a large differential in salaries with a small number of assistant professors can be very dangerous.

BETH DOBKIN: This is why I stopped, that figure of nine, it goes way back and I am not associating it with rank, I am not associating it with program. Because it is so small, that is the risk we run, so that's as far as I want to go.

ED TYWONIAK: I think that is fairly well articulated here when you say you want access to raw compensation data and it is contextualized in that framework of keeping this totally closed.

JOEL BURLEY: It was a deliberate decision not to go beyond just what the numbers said.

BETH DOBKIN: At the same time the issue about being able to sustain our faculty excellence without raising the issue of differential pay is one that I think even though the number is small, and this is not a trend, it is not a whole scale violation of policy. It is still an issue we have to address, and that is why I think we need to reconvene the Faculty Salary Policy Task Force.

TOM POUNDSTONE: Thank you, Joel.