

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

March 3, 2011

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)
Brad Barry (BB)
Jen Ciaccio (JC)
Varlo Davenport (VD)
John Goldhardt (JG)
Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)

Dianne Hirning (DH)
Jack Lounsbury (JaL)
Jie Liu (JiL)
Ed Reber (ER)
Dennis Wignall (DW)

DW: PA is presently working on Constitutional language changes, so he'll find these documents (handed out by ER) very useful. My intent today is report to you on the Academic Council meeting on Tuesday. The Faculty Workload[*hereafter FW*] policy was under consideration for vote, but Donna was unavailable and asked for postponement, so we have a month to discuss it. I sent an e-mail that evening to the general faculty to open a discussion. A couple of comments from the faculty reiterated what I reported in Academic Council (which those faculty didn't know). Basically, the call is for the general faculty to engage in a "vigorous debate." My concern is that few people actually do with this kind of thing.

JC: They might not contribute, but everyone still listens.

DW: But unless they share their thoughts with the Senate leadership, we don't know, so you, as representatives, can get a better sense of what the faculty are perceiving.

DH: We have librarian meetings twice a month, where I bring this kind of stuff up, and we discuss things in there.

DW: The problem is that people say "us faculty never know what's going on." I tell them that the FSEC exists so that representatives tap into faculty—they're the liaisons, but the faculty lose track of that. They also wanted to know why they weren't appraised of this policy change, despite the fact that it's on the web site.

DH: And notice was given about it via e-mail. My understanding is that Donna changed it *after* she sent it out for review...?

DW: There's a new version as of last Monday. Ultimately, we'll have to have a vote on this or that language.

ER: BB did a great job outlining the policy to the English Department. for feedback.

DW: That's great...if I know what people are thinking, I can better represent them. In Academic Council, when this came up, I (paraphrasing) first thanked Pam Montrallos for getting us all as close to 90% equity as possible on a one-on-one basis—there's no policy that says she has to do that; she just does it and has had to defend doing so.

JC: Why don't we put it into policy?

DW: Well, that's the point—if it goes into the FW policy, then it's done.

ER: In some ways, unless there's a problem...Pam looks through the data and finds what's most favorable to us, so that flexibility is a boon to us.

JC: But what if she quits?

DW: Well, then we'd have to have a policy! We as an institution just need to tighten things up; we're not a family-run organization anymore. I went on to explain why "average" was an inappropriate way to approach this. Here's why: average = the statistical mean. If there's a standard bell curve, then the mean, median, and mode are all the same point. If someone is on the "high salary" side—to take an extreme example, a long-time, famous Harvard professor that makes \$350,000/yr. When we're hiring new assistant professors, they get \$35,000. The population on the "low side" is high, but the population is small on "high side"—that moves the mean toward the "low end." So if we base salaries on the average, it *lowers* salaries overall. What has been done is that equity is determined nationally by comparison of similar schools at the Division II level. That results in an average across schools, but because they're *similar* schools, we don't have a "high end" determined by places like Harvard, which is better. But in house—there's also an average determined by department salaries. They're not using a national rank comparison to create salaries in-house. I think the motivation behind this is "fairness," but they're using a poor method to get there. Essentially,

they have to maintain a *national average across* rank for *any* given department, and use that number. That creates equity, and if we're within 90% of that, then we're comparable.

DH: Which is what they're doing now, right?

DW: Yes, but they're trying to move it to "average."

JC: I thought the problem was that because most faculty here are at 90% equity...

DW: Martha shared some figures.

JC: She sent those out.

DW: Something like 66% are now at or above 90% equity.

JC: That means that if "average" is in there, there's no reason to bring those that are currently *not* at equity up to equity because we're already mostly there—there's no driving force to get those people to equity.

ER: And they'd still be bound to same number of overloads as others!

DW: So our mean is on positive side of equity. But right now, people of the same rank are paid differently across departments. So to get new people in higher-paid departments, we have to pay them more. That's not a unique problem to us, but if we compare between departments, it moves our mean around again. Plus, if we hire people at the low end, and people at the upper end retire, it creates an increasing inequality.

JC: But it doesn't matter if they're paid low or high—only if they're near equity.

DW: If you just take their pay—say, mass media—and compare it across the county, right now the policy is that they're close to that. We have two definitions floating around here: *national* equity and *interdepartmental* equity.

JC: I think right now they're hiring people near equity.

DW: Yes, because they're not going to attract people if they don't. Here's another observation: if you're within 90% equity, then by definition you're paid below average! I don't know that we can change that in this economy; I'm just trying to explain why "average" can't be part of the policy.

JG: In this economy, they can offer lower salaries because more people are looking for jobs.

JC: The workload thing kicks in as long as >50% are above equity. Basically, what the workload committee says, with "average" in, is: as long as >50% faculty are at or above 90% equity, then *everyone* has to be at the same overload position.

ER: Yes, this all relates to when the workload policy kicks in. Administration *wants* it to kick in; then they can leave some people at high salaries and some people at low salaries and still apply the policy. Then some people are bound by the policy even if they're in the low pay bracket.

DW: Overload comes from the administration perspective from a different model: they have an accreditation agency looking at how much overload our faculty are asked to do. Above a certain line, the agency won't accredit a school because they perceive faculty as being overworked, making pedagogy suffer. That's where Donna's coming from—I don't see it as a money thing. In the past, there's been a verbal statement that says "If you're a new hire, you're below average salary and below equity. We'll try to get you there sooner or later, but in meantime, we'll give you overload opportunities to get your pay up."

JC: And if this policy kicks in, then that faculty member couldn't do that.

ER: Overload doesn't figure into pay, though.

DW: We have three pay scales here: F-T contracts, for which salary decisions are based on equity; P-T (adjunct) contracts, for which there is a set scale and no benefits. For overload, F-T people are paid at a set scale, and I consider that a professional slap in the face. Not to demean adjuncts, who are eminently qualified people, but the pay to teach overload *and* Summer should be a percentage of the F-T contract. Overload is beyond contract; so is Summer. We have a right to say "I'm not going to teach those." Take this back to your departments: you need to determine course caps in your individual departments. Donna doesn't want to create a prescriptive list that applies across campus. Departments need to take a stand on this—that is what pressures administration to hire more faculty or find more adjuncts.

ER: Has it been put into policy that the workload committee determines class sizes?

DW: No, it's by department—a committee can't know what is optimum for each department.

ER: The difficulty with that is that I can't imagine that administration will simply say "OK" to everything.

DW: Let's say they don't: if they want to push, we have USHE and the Board of Regents to turn to. Administration knows this, so they'll try to mediate a solution.

ER: I'm just thinking that when there was a faculty workload committee, the joint force of their saying what the appropriate caps were gave it more force when going to administration.

DW: FSEC and the faculty in general will have to monitor small departments carefully for that. So anyway, it all gets very convoluted. Don Hinton chaired the Academic Council meeting; he charged everyone with reading this policy and getting back to Academic Council, and I requested that people talk to me and I'll bring their information to the Council. I suggested that if we *have* to have a statistic in there, they should use the median rather than the mean—the median divides scores into equal parts, and that won't change.

JC: But that still won't mandate that they have to get the people on the low side up to equity as long as half of the faculty are already there! We now have 66% of our people at or above equity; therefore, the people *not* there will *still* not be drawn to equity. As long as the average (or median) faculty salaries are above 50%, then *everyone* can only teach five overload hours. I was under the impression that doing it on an individual basis was what was driving administration to keep everyone at equity.

DH: I'm still stuck on whole equity thing—if this goes through, do I just never have a hope of reaching equity?

JC: There's no mandate for them to do that; it's just up to the administration's goodwill. It doesn't matter what the statistic is.

DH: Martha said she avoided using the median because it was worse than the mean.

JC: But outliers would all be on the low side. Let's say we have 1+1+1+1+1+1+1+10 = 17; the median = 1, but the mean = 2.125.

JiL: It depends on which side (low or high) is heavier.

DH: So if they hire more below-equity people, it drags the median lower.

JG: Which is what will happen.

JC: It's not the actual money amount; it's the percent of equity you're at, so actual dollar amounts don't matter.

DW: But it has to—that's what it translates into.

JC: But even if you hire a chemistry professor at 60K and an English professor at 40K, they're all still within equity, even if their salaries are unequal.

DW: I'm trying to visualize this. Let's say a Business F-T professor is paid 100 and a Communication professor is paid 75K, and equity comes from national comparison.

JC: Let's say another Communication professor is paid 40K—they're 35K away from equity, and that's the number that's important because that's what administration is tying workload to. We're arguing against whether the *average* faculty has to be at or above 90% equity vs. whether *each person* has to be at or above 90% equity. If *each person* has to be at or above equity, then the workload policy applies to *each person*. If equity for a Business professor is 110K, a new hire is on the positive side of the bell curve. If equity for a Communication person is 100K, and they hire someone at 75K, that person is on low side. If a third person in Communication gets 90K, they're on positive side—just using these three people, the 75K guy *cannot* get workload overages because the *average* salary is above equity.

DW: That's why we don't want "average" in this.

DH: I still don't see how the mean and median make a difference...

JiL: The median is if there's 150 universities, ordered from low to high, and cut right in middle. But the mean has to add the highest and lowest salaries, and those numbers affect what comes out.

DW: Let's say everyone on campus made 100K per year. What we really have is a range of scores, but the *amounts* of the scores don't affect the median.

JC: But we don't want *any* statistic in there.

PA: Why are we putting so much energy into this? If we don't want to teach overload, we don't have to.

JH & DW: Because if the requisite number of people are at or above 90% of equity, then those people that are at the low end of the pay scale that want to earn more money to compensate for their lower pay, they would be limited to just five overload hours, even if they wanted to do more.

DW: JC, could you type up something stating your perspective on this that I can pass along to Martha and others? JH can then include it in the minutes [*next page*].

“When average faculty base salaries remain within 10% of equity benchmarks, faculty members’ overload shall be limited to one course with a maximum of 5 credits per year. Exceptions are subject to the approval of the Vice President Academic Services.”

There are several ways to interpret the phrase “when average faculty base salaries remain within 10% of equity benchmarks.” To clarify, I will use hypothetical data. In the first example, I have purposely skewed the data so that just over half of the salaries are within 10% of equity benchmarks.

Example 1:

Sample DSC Faculty Salaries	Sample National Equity Level for Similar Faculty	% Equity
44000	50000	88
55000	52000	106
90000	100000	90
62000	65000	95
48000	55000	87
60000	68000	88
62000	68000	91
72000	74000	97
68000	70000	88

The following are possible ways to interpret the term “average” in the above policy statement.

1. More than half of the faculty salaries (55.6%) are within 10% of equity benchmarks.
2. Faculty salaries on average are within 10% of equity benchmarks – the mean % equity is 92.7% (median = 90% equity)
3. The mean faculty salary (\$61,667) is within 10% of mean equity benchmark (\$66,889) – it’s at 92%. The median faculty salary (\$62,000) is within 10% of median equity benchmark (\$68,000) – it’s at 91%.

I think we might need clarification as to which of these interpretations is the intended one and whether it makes a difference. The only way to interpret it that fairly represents having more than half of the salaries at or above 90% equity is interpretation 1. Otherwise a few people way above equity could skew it as shown below in example two, where all faculty are below the equity benchmarks except for one who is above.

Example 2:

Sample DSC Faculty Salaries	Sample National Equity Level for Similar Faculty	% Equity
24000	50000	48
95000	52000	182
89000	100000	89
58000	65000	89
48000	55000	87
60000	68000	88
52000	68000	76
62000	74000	83
62000	70000	88

1. Less than half of the faculty salaries (11.1%) are within 10% of equity benchmarks.
2. Faculty salaries on average are within 10% of equity benchmarks – the mean % Equity is 92.6% (median = 90% equity)
3. The mean faculty salary (\$61,111) is within 10% of mean equity benchmark (\$66,889) – it’s at 92.6%. The median faculty salary (\$60,000) is within 10% of median equity benchmark (\$68,000) – it’s at 91%.

If they must put a word in, median is most likely the way to go. However, even if median is used, 49.9% of faculty could be getting a salary of less than 10% of equity benchmarks, yet the 5 credit overload limit would still kick in. In other words, the limit would be in place almost regardless of equity. And it was my understanding that it was the overload policy that was the incentive for the administration to keep everyone at equity (i.e., if the administration wanted to limit a faculty member’s overload, then they would have to keep that member’s salary within 90% of equity). Am I wrong about this argument?