

Faculty Assembly

April 24, 2013

Library Conference Room

Ralph Olliges, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order. Since this was an unusual day of the week to meet, a head count was made to make sure we had a quorum. 68 were needed for a quorum and we had 70 faculty present.

Announcements

Ralph thanked everyone for attending on a special day and time. He also thanked SFB and the administration for working together to reach an agreement.

Jeffrey Carter

Jeffrey Carter took the floor on behalf of SFB. He stated that the blue sheet is the agreement between the SFB and administration and SFB moves to accept this agreement. He then went over the document as listed below.

Administration-Faculty Collaboration: It was asked that this be a part of the agreement. We are where we are financially because enrollment is not what was expected.

Direct Compensation: The 2013-14 budget has a pool that allows for a 1% merit raise for satisfactory performance. SFB is in agreement, in principle, with a formalized pay-for-performance system.

Merit Pay: Historically, we have had an across the board raise and a merit raise. The only change is that it would be merit based raise only. SFB supports a system that maintains purchasing power for faculty.

Other salary items and benefits: Administration is committed to review the range of compensation for faculty with administrative appointments, stipends, or releases during AY 2013-14. It was suggested that the words, "in collaboration with Faculty Senate" be added to this paragraph and Provost Schuster agreed to this change.

In 2011, SFB called for a retirement committee to be formed. Betsy Schmutz reported that there is a retirement plan committee that has been working with TIAA-CREF for the past 6 months and reviewing our portfolio. As recommendations are received, a group of faculty and staff will be called together to discuss the options before any formal changes are made.

Faculty lines: Administration is committed within context of the parameters that SFB has laid out.

Gender Equity: In AY 2013-14, administration commits to provide evidence to satisfy faculty that gender equity has been achieved.

Mercer adjustments: Administration acknowledges that Mercer adjustments have not yet been fully implemented. Based on pending enrollment review, it is hoped that mid-year adjustments can be made.

Adjunct faculty: A review of adjunct faculty status, salary and concerns has been conducted and a report is forthcoming to the Senate. No adjunct faculty salary adjustment pool is included in the

AY 2013-14 budget. An adjustment to individual adjunct salaries is a prerogative of department chairs and program directors.

Continuing agreements: The Faculty Senate requested that continuing agreements be added to the SFB agreement document.

Based on many conversations with the administration and the Faculty Senate, SFB is moving this document forward as it stands.

Dr. Julian Schuster, Provost and Senior Vice President

At this point in the assembly, the floor was opened to questions for Provost Schuster.

The statement was made that it is hoped that as the adjunct faculty compensation issue goes forward, we take a close look at what it means to award more money to one person and less money to another person. It puts a department chair in a precarious position and would not be a good situation for anyone.

The adjunct proposal has been tabled until there are resources to carry out the proposal.

It is known that many adjuncts are members of the Webster community and teach many courses. In the spirit of “sharing the pain” the administration plans to liberate some additional funds, presently in the budget, to provide stipends to those adjunct faculty validated by superb performance. The additional funds will not come out of the 1% allocated for the full-time faculty raise. If the Faculty Assembly is not in favor of this plan, the funds can be frozen.

Q: The question was then asked if this insinuates a new process for adjunct raises or does it maintain the same system we have always had in place?

A: This is not a new system and evaluations of adjunct faculty will have to be used to determine the essence of their raises as administration wishes to move to a merit based system for everyone, not just faculty.

Ralph Olliges stated that during AY 2011/2012, Mike Hulsizer, Art Silverblatt and David Hilditch came before the Faculty Senate with a draft document from the Adjunct Committee. The Senate reviewed the draft document and made suggested changes.

Provost Schuster stated that some department chairs are uncomfortable determining raises for faculty. Adjunct faculty have to be evaluated, just like full-time faculty, as they teach many courses for Webster. He stated that peer review evaluation should be the essence of their raises. If raises are independent of performance in the classroom, then we need to have another discussion about that as adjunct faculty teach 80 percent of the credit hours or more for the university.

Q: Is it a new system that replaces across the board raises for adjunct faculty?

A: SFB responded that it is their understanding that the administration is wishing to move to a merit based system for everyone. If that is the case, there will have to be some sort of evaluation system in place for adjunct faculty.

Q: What is the rationale for removing across the board raises and going to a merit based system? When you move to a merit based system, bias can creep in with an eye toward gender and race. It is beneficial to have an across the board system.

A: Provost Schuster replied he is uncertain about biases existing. Any review of Webster colleagues is a peer review process and judgment is by your peers. An atmosphere has been created where people feel entitled to the courses they teach. Administration will not make any decision about a raise without a peer review. The reality is that some people are promoted and some are not. He also stated that we must have an open discussion about the peer review process to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It is up to the members of the Webster community to determine the criteria for the salary pool increases from one year to another. Pay per performance is a mandate from the Board of Trustees and it means we need to evaluate what we do and connect that with pay.

Provost Schuster stated that the administration commits itself to increasing and growing real purchasing power of its Webster community. We need to find a common ground at Webster in terms of salary and fringe benefits.

A faculty member asked for a friendly amendment of the SFB document to read across the board pay raises in place of merit pay. She stated that there is bias in our culture based on gender equity that has been witnessed for decades. There are inherent biases in society hidden by pay per performance.

Provost Schuster replied that in his opinion, across the board pay enforces biases. He also stated that if you have a person that performs their job well, they should be entitled to different remuneration than those that do not perform well.

Q: Would like clarification of the basis of defining merit as we are a broad based organization with many programs not accounting for discipline. Will faculty make that decision?

A: Yes. The peer review process should take into account artistic performance, accounting performance, etc.

S: The idea of merit pay has its merits as presented, but merit pay involves dividing the community. The Mercer adjustment created much division and insecurity among faculty. The principle of merit sounds good, but the practice is disturbing.

A: Let's open the books and see if this is true.

S: Faculty feel they are not worth anything if they are teaching art and someone else is teaching biology and the pay is not the same.

A: These problems were here before the Mercer study. Those differences should be mitigated among faculty. Nothing is more divisive if different efforts yield the same results. How do you measure performance? The same way we measure how faculty receive research grants, etc. Let's sit down and have a discussion about the criteria.

Q: An adjunct faculty member stated that she has never been evaluated by senior faculty and does not think that a system exists at Webster for measuring adjunct faculty performance. She is evaluated by her students and has seen the results of that evaluation. If department chairs are going to give merit based upon performance, how will that be accomplished fairly?

A: Provost Schuster replied that every evaluation is formative at the beginning. There are those faculty that were evaluated by their students and did not teach well and they are no longer

teaching for Webster. It is hoped that senior faculty are evaluating adjunct faculty and providing feedback to them. It is not policing them, but creating a community of sharing experiences and enabling the adjunct faculty to receive formative feedback about their performance.

S: We are jumping ahead in debating something that is not on the table. We agree to consider merit pay and make it a collaborative effort. All the issues raised are things that would have to be looked at.

A: The SFB wrote the agreement narrowly as the Board of Trustees has told us that they will only accept merit pay raises.

S: An adjunct faculty member stated that he worked for 35/40 years at a large organization and that the organization tried many across the board and merit pay systems. He stated that the merit system is always the best because the people in the organization then know who the performers are and who the slackers are. A well-defined, well-communicated merit based pay system allows something you can measure.

Q: How does the merit system work at the extended sites?

A: Evaluations are completed by the academic director at those sites.

Q: Looking forward to implementation of a merit based system, what recourse would a junior faculty member have if they felt passed over for a raise for whatever reason?

A: We need to sit down together and decide the criteria for this system. We will not create a system that is unjust and will cause more problems than solutions.

S: In having been asked about a vote on the SFB agreement, a faculty member stated that there is not a thing that has been said in this room that has not been said in different meetings. The Board of Trustees meeting is on Friday. The political reality is that the costs of not signing the SFB agreement are much bigger than signing the agreement. If we do not sign the agreement, in the eyes of the Board of Trustees, it will create a relationship filled with conflict that boils down to the Board thinking that faculty are just angry because we are not getting money when enrollment is not there to support a raise.

At this time, a paper vote was taken on whether or not to sign the SFB agreement. The outcome of that paper vote is as follows: 45 YES, 12 NO, 6 ABSTAIN. Several faculty had to leave and several faculty chose not to vote, hence the total number of votes does not add up to 70.

Ralph thanked everyone for their time.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.