

## **Faculty Senate Meeting with the President**

April 1, 2024

via TEAMS

### **Members Present:**

Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Teddy Burch, Steve Canfield, Scott Christen, Melissa Comer, Kris Craven, Mark Creter, April Crockett, Andrew Donadio, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steve Frye, Syed Hasan, Samantha Hutson, Krystal Kennedy, Christy Killman, Matthew Langford, Richard Le Borne, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Jeannette Luna, Jennifer Mabry, Twanelle Majors, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Holly Mills, Wendy Mullen, Michael Natrass, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Hyewon Park, Christopher Reames, Steven Seiler, Lee Ann Shipley, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Amber Spears, Leslie Suters, Kyle Turner, Hannah Upole, Lenly Weathers, Brenda Wilson, Kimberly Winkle

### **Members Absent:**

Megan Atkinson, Yun Ding, Dennis Fennewald, Mustafa Rajabali

### **Guests Present:**

Kevin Vedder, Lee Wray

Senate President Allen called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

### **Remarks by President Oldham**

The President acknowledged that with one month to go until graduation, everyone is in “crunch time” and he appreciates all you do. He said the university is close to finalizing the first round of market-based adjustments achieved by setting targets and prioritizing support and professional staff. He feels good about our position in the process, and this first round will affect about 75% of employees. The first-round completion will see all faculty within greater than 92% of respective median categories except Interdisciplinary Studies. This round will get support staff 9% closer to the median. Minimum salaries will be set to no less than \$30,000 annually. The changes will be seen in April pay, and there will be notices sent in the coming weeks regarding pay and classification changes. Round 2 of compensation adjustments will take place in the summer.

VP Kevin Vedder joined President Oldham to field questions regarding Mercer and the compensation adjustments in this meeting.

### **Discussion Highlights**

The concern of many senators is that there is transparency in mapping existing jobs to the new architecture, that the architecture is visible, and that there is a way to raise questions/concerns/grievances if the new structure does not seem correct or a good fit for the job. VP Vedder stated that though there is not necessarily a final written report from the study, there is an ongoing architectural framework with benchmarks that are subject to updates as needed. That said, the architecture is not complete and official until July 1, and they are tweaking, updating, and adjusting it as needed as they apply changes in round one. He further stated that

anyone concerned about the place where an employee lands in the new architecture should address it and considerations will be looked into to determine if a change must be made. President Oldham reminded everyone that sometimes issues arise from overqualification. Overqualification for a position does not mean there will be an automatic reclassification if the position itself is what is needed at its current classification. The goal is to assign/map everyone first and then deal with any challenges or issues (if any).

Some senators inquired about the uniqueness of our new architecture. Both administrators noted that though there may be commonalities in the structure, there will be unique portions to our institution. Other LGIs may or may not have a similar structure, but it is not a standardized structure, per se.

When asked directly if there would be any reductions in force or reduced salaries, the President responded, “No.”

Regarding round two in the adjustments, the President stated data are still being gathered. The Budget Advisory Committee and Cabinet will help advise on the matter. The idea is to prioritize additional work on moving up support staff and bringing Interdisciplinary Studies up more than it was in round one. Initially, thoughts are to save out 1% of the 3% salary pool in the summer to address adjustments, and the Board has already agreed that no less than 1% could be set aside. Merit would likely be applied first, and then adjustments would be applied from the 1% afterward. Round three would then seek to assess current standings and prioritize additional changes. Rounds one and two are quickly achievable, but round 3 (and any subsequent rounds) will take more time and likely more money due to fluctuating job markets.

Regarding inversions, it was stated that some may self-correct after rounds one and two, but that issues beyond those rounds can be addressed. It is possible that not all inversions could be corrected.

Rounds one and two will not affect faculty seeking promotions as there will be no rank disassociations.

### **Other Topics**

- A senator was unsure if divisive concepts legislation would affect applications for Native American scholarships. President Oldham will follow up with Counsel Perdue to be sure, but believes this is not a race category and therefore may not be subject to those rules.
- A senator wondered if the issues with the FAFSA were affecting freshman enrollment. President Oldham noted that all notifications are delayed due to the issues, but that SOAR registration is ahead of the same date last year, with over 1,000 registrants so far. So far, the university is on pace, but nothing will be taken for granted.
- Senate President Allen noted that representatives from capital planning will join us in our next Faculty Senate Business Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

**Approved:** 04/15/2024