

Faculty Welfare Committee Report, 2023 - 2024

As part of our duties as members of the faculty welfare committee, we submit this report to the Salisbury University Faculty Senate. This is a summary of the issues and items we were assigned to look at, as well as issues we chose to look at during the past academic year.

Fall 2023

To start the semester, our committee was given two charges by the faculty senate where we were asked to work on them during the Fall 2023 semester.

- In September of 2022, the Faculty Senate charged the FWC with reviewing the “Faculty Workload and Responsibilities” section of the Faculty Handbook and to bring proposed revisions to the Faculty Senate no later than the final meeting in Fall 2023. The depth of the revision was left to the Faculty Welfare Committee’s judgment, but may include a full rewrite of the section. It was recommended that at least one member of the Provost’s office be included in an advisory capacity in the committee’s work on this charge.
- In March of 2023, the Faculty Senate charged the FWC with looking to align overload pay with winter/summer compensation pay, as well as evaluate chair compensation, program director compensation, and graduate student assistantships (in consultation with representation of the graduate council). We were to submit a report no later than the final Faculty Senate Meeting in March of 2024.

During the summer of 2023, we received multiple grievance reports from faculty members that our committee was asked to address. Although we met often during the semester, these grievances took all of the time of the Faculty Welfare Committee, and did not have time to deal with either Faculty Senate Charge. We asked for an extension of the due date for the September 2022 charge until March of 2024.

Spring 2024

- With regard to the September 2022 charge, we reached out to the Provost’s office and worked with Jessica Clark. After reviewing the charge, and upon learning that another faculty senate committee had also been asked later to review some of the same section of the handbook, we reached out for further clarification from the faculty senate. We were told by faculty senate officers that they would like to see the other committee’s report before they gave us clarification on our charge. To date, the other committee has not filed a report and so we have asked for our extension to be pushed until October of 2024. We were granted this extension.

- With regard to the May 2023 charge, we reached out to former Provost Olmstead, former Associate Provost Wilkens, and current Assistant Provost Clark for information. Associate Provost Wilkens and Provost Olmstead had completed a study regarding chair compensation in 2019, and had brought forth four proposed modifications for chair compensation. We found that two of the four modifications had already been implemented by the University, and we suggested that the last two be implemented in short order. These two modifications are as follows: (1) stipulating that during a chair's 3-year term, the chair compensation could increase if the number of student credit hours and full-time equivalent faculty supervised increases, but a stipulation should be made that the chair compensation should not decrease during the 3-year term. (2) Currently, after a 3-year term, 30% of the chair's stipend is returned to their base salary, and after a 6-year term, another 40% of the chair's stipend is returned to their base salary, thus rewarding faculty for being chair long after they have left the position. However, when these percentages are returned to the base, the overall compensation doesn't change. For example, if a chair's stipend was \$10,000-during their first three years, this will be paid contractually. If a chair completes three years as chair and signs up for another 3-year term, \$3,000 will be put in their base salary, while the other \$7,000 will be the contractual payment. If a chair completes six years and returns for another 3-year term, \$7,000 will be put in their base salary, while the other \$3,000 will be a contractual payment. Associate Provost Wilkens and Provost Olmstead suggested that this policy should be changed so that the return to base policy does not decrease the amount of the contractual amount received for being chair.

We also made the following recommendations regarding chair compensation; (3) that the base values for chair compensation should increase when COLA and Merit raises are given; (4) that a methodology of calculating a chair's teaching download be created for Salisbury University. Currently, there seems to be no set method to make this calculation; (5) that the Faculty Senate work with the Provost's office to create a way to recognize chair service toward promotion to full professor. It is a general feeling that if you are made chair while an associate professor, it will be very difficult to become a full professor during your term as chair due to the amount of time that is taken away from professional development.

With regard to overload pay, we recommended that overload pay (as well as adjunct pay) be brought up to match what faculty are paid during summer/winter semesters. Although we tried to get numbers from the administration to calculate how much this recommendation would cost, we were told that the administration would not be able to get us numbers by the end of the semester, so we had to make our recommendation without any concrete data. Although this will cost the University, we feel that this is an equity issue that must be addressed.

With the formation of the new Graduate School, we recommend that a comprehensive review be done by the Graduate School to determine the compensation and duties of

graduate assistants. Once this data is collected, we recommend that a discussion be had on how to make assistantships equitable.

With regard to program director compensation, we recommend that the Provost's office and the Human Resource office complete a comprehensive study to determine the duties, the teaching download, and the monetary stipend given to all program directors. After this study is completed, we recommend that a consistent policy on how to calculate the stipends for the program directors be developed and implemented. For program directors who are overseeing an entire department (similar to an academic chair), a policy should be considered where part of the director's stipend is returned to their base salary.

Although our committee was unable to bring to completion the charges given to us by the Faculty Senate, we can with certainty declare that we put in a lot of time trying to complete the tasks assigned to us. We appreciate the Faculty Senate and all that they do for the faculty.

Matthew Bailey
Chair, Faculty Welfare Committee