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1-4-2007

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Recommended Citation

Maurer, Trent, "Plans to Make Faculty Salaries Competitive at the Doctoral-Research University Level" (2007). *Faculty Senate Index*. 6.

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Plans to Make Faculty Salaries Competitive at the Doctoral/Research University Level

Submitted by: Trent Maurer

1/4/2007

Question:

The 2005-2006 AAUP Faculty Salary Survey reported average salaries for faculty at Georgia Southern University for the ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor to be \$75,500, \$59,100, and \$52,000, respectively. As a Category IIA Masters/Comprehensive University, these averages placed us in between the 50th-60th percentiles, 40th-50th percentiles, and 50th-60th percentiles, respectively, compared to faculty salaries at all other American Masters/Comprehensive Universities. Although not ideal, these salaries were at least competitive with other institutions in our Category. However, in spring 2006, The Carnegie Association reclassified Georgia Southern University from a Masters/Comprehensive University to a Doctoral/Research University (Category I Doctoral University). This placed Georgia Southern University in a new category for future salary comparisons. In Category I, the salary averages reported above fall below the 10th percentile for the Professor and Associate Professor ranks, and just barely above the 10th percentile for Assistant Professors. In the new Category, these salaries are nowhere near competitive and are, in fact, an embarrassment to the university and its faculty. What specific plans do Georgia Southern University and the University System of Georgia have to address this issue and quickly make current and future faculty salaries competitive with the average for our new classification? What is the specific timetable for these plans? What are the specific strategies to address faculty morale, faculty retention, and faculty recruitment until such time as salaries are brought in line with the Category I averages?

Rationale:

Faculty salaries, morale, retention, and recruitment are issues that concern all faculty at the university and in which all faculty have a vested interest. Without substantial effort to significantly raise faculty salaries in the next few years, the university could face extraordinary difficulty in maintaining morale and in recruiting and retaining faculty.

SEC Response:

The following response comes from Dr. Bleicken. It really all boils down to a question of whether the BOR gives us \$\$\$. --pbh

Plans to Make Faculty Salaries Competitive at the Doctoral/Research University Level
Although the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recognized Georgia Southern University as a doctoral/research university, the University System of Georgia continues to classify the institution as a regional, comprehensive. Because funding for our institution flows through our University System, it is essential to demonstrate to that entity that the funding level for Georgia Southern University should be increased. This process has already begun, and significant information was shared with the staff at the University System during the most recent budget hearing that occurred in November, 2006. Georgia Southern will learn at the conclusion of the 2007 state legislative session the funding that will be allocated to the institution. If the 2007-08 (FY 08) budget for Georgia Southern University is enhanced, when compared to the FY 07 budget, it is unlikely that the funding will be consistent with that of universities in the doctoral/research category that have been classified beyond the comprehensive level for a significant number of years. In essence, Georgia Southern University is in the early developmental stage as a doctoral/research university. Our institution is currently growing the number of doctoral programs, but the number of doctoral students and graduates remains relatively small when compared to many institutions in the same classification. In addition, the level of extramural funding (grants and contracts) achieved by Georgia Southern University remains relatively low. As graduate programs develop in size, the tuition dollars that accrue to the university will help to enhance the funding base that can be used for faculty positions and salaries. In addition, the growth of external funding will also enhance the sources from which faculty compensation, graduate assistants, and equipment can be funded.

Senate Response:

One from Trent Maurer asked about making faculty salaries more competitive at the doctoral/research university level. Humphrey explained that, while Carnegie may say that GSU is a doctoral/research university, the Board of Regents still says that GSU is a regional comprehensive university. It is the BOR that allocates money. GSU administrators “are working very diligently on trying to convince the Board of Regents that we do desire and need and deserve more money, but we’ll have to wait for the end of the legislative session [for] that.” She reported that the faculty salary survey is still in progress; Dr. Bleicken anticipated a report in a couple of weeks.