

Faculty Senate President's Report

September 18, 2024

The following report is a demonstrative summary of some of the activities undertaken by the Faculty Senate President as well as various members of the Executive Committee from August 21st, to the middle of September, 2024.

If there are questions on any point, please feel free to reach out any time. Thank you.

Introduction:

A lot has been happening since the previous Plenary meeting in August, and we are now well into the semester. Almost all of the Senate committees have met at this point, and have begun to engage in the work of each of their committees both through the Senate, but also with their University committees.

Key Initiatives/Accomplishments/Events:

1. Strategic Planning Faculty Priorities – The first meeting of the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee took place on August 21st (the same day as our previous Plenary). Since then, a working group has been formed to gather data on other SPs related to and in support of faculty at other universities, which has now begun the work of gathering exemplars for discussion by the wider group. We are also gathering insights about the best practices when it comes to the development of the wider set of priorities, and will present those to the committee as well at the coming meeting in October.
2. Salary increase/supplement – The BoT voted to approve a proposed budget that included a salary increase for all eligible full-time faculty (please see Note 1 for eligibility and additional details). The amount of the increase is 4% and will be included in regular salary payments beginning Dec. 1st, 2024. In addition to the salary increase, there is also a 4% salary supplement that will be paid to all eligible faculty and staff on Nov. 15th.

This increase was acknowledged in the BoT presentation that was made to the Trustees at the General Meeting that took place on September 13, 2024.

3. Inversion/Compression/Equity – Previously, we had noted that Dr. Kent had asked us to hold off on the modeling project that Dr. Pavelescu had offered to help determine the costs for some colleges/divisions for implementing the I/C/E changes that might be

needed until the updated budget had been passed. That has now occurred, and so the next step for our S&B committee will be to participate and advise in the process of modeling the scenarios that are currently part of the discussion for an upcoming policy.

4. AL SB 129 – Meetings have taken place around campus throughout the summer to help inform stakeholders of the impact of this new law. Plans related to compliance across locations/division such as the comprehensive USA website, courses, material activities, scholarships, etc. have been evaluated for compliance. The internal goal for completion of all changes and program compliance as a result of the law is September 16th, 2024 as the law officially takes effect October 1st, 2024.
5. In August, the Executive Committee brought forward the general concern about inconsistencies in Department Chair Professional Development/Training from one College/Division to another. This concern included a recommendation for a new PD program that would be developed ‘in-house’ that would effectively support the chairs in their roles, which in turn, would allow for the faculty who are in each department to benefit from a consistent application of Handbook and University policies. This was accepted, and the process has begun for developing curriculum topics. The ILC will be the main developer of the materials, but we have asked to have 3/4 faculty members as part of the development committee which has also been accepted.
6. On Sept. 14th, Dr. Webb presented some partial results from the R1 survey that the Evaluation committee conducted in March, 2024. These results will continue to be analyzed and a final report will be delivered to both the administration and the Senate in October.
7. The VP and I have been meeting with all of the Caucus Leaders from around campus. If they have not happened yet, they will very soon. These have been productive and have resulted in more information related to how information flows around each college/division, some of the key issues (or lack thereof) with different groups, and some upcoming events or occurrences that can impact the faculty at large. These meetings, either with CLs individually or if possible, with the full caucuses, will continue throughout Fall.

Faculty Concerns:

These items are often ongoing, and so if there are updates we will make them to the sections in the accomplishment section.

1. Of primary concern to faculty has been the discussion on R1. A goal date of 2028 has been established for the university to meet the general metrics that are part of this status (<https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/carnegie-classification/carnegie-2025-basic-classifications-faqs/>). This process will entail increasing our overall PhD student production to 70 PhDs per year (we are currently ~52/year) and maintaining our R&D spend at more than \$50M/year. In order to determine who meets this threshold, they will use the higher of either a three-year rolling average or the most recent year data. At our current rate of growth, we will 'naturally' achieve both of these metrics by 2028. Clearly, the conversation must and will continue about teaching loads both for research active and teaching faculty, compensation, research assistant classification and salaries, as just some examples.
2. Of concern to faculty has been that there have been key academic searches that occur during the months not covered by a typical faculty nine-month contract. We have asked the administration to consider this in scheduling interviews for these key positions, as well as if they do progress to interviews during that non-contract time that they at minimum record presentations and offer zoom as an option to the interviewing group. They agreed and this went forward in that way this summer, allowing some of our traveling faculty to participate in a productive way.
3. A new item which is being developed is that of the role of adjuncts as colleagues. Currently there are no representative bodies for these colleagues, and while many have been involved with the university for a reasonable length of time, they are not actively or financially acknowledged in many ways. We currently do not represent adjuncts through our Bylaws, which means this discussion is also out of the purview of the Senate (by tradition), but this has been brought to our attention, so I'll add it here for the moment for committee discussion.
4. We have noted the extreme length of time it takes to volley handbook or other policy changes between the Senate and CAD. There was a document that was formulated in 2019 to mitigate and advise on that process, but that document does not include any proscribed timing that could be used as policy. A hindrance to adding timing to this policy is that the Senate currently does not meet as a Plenary group for two months in the Summer months of June and July. A discussion will be put forward to consider the requirement that all Senators will be required to make themselves available for two Zoom Plenary meetings in the months of June/July. We will also need to consider how to codify the process for electronic voting during those months as well.

Administrative Updates:

1. The search committee for the VPRED has reconvened and will be conducting zoom interviews in the coming week. On campus visits will hopefully take place in mid/late October.
2. Current FTFT enrollment is 1916 students. Overall, we are up around 3.7% to date. I've asked Mathew Cox to come and update the Senate at our plenary.

Faculty Achievements: We want to start building up a repository of key accomplishments for our colleagues around campus, mainly focused on teaching excellence, innovative research or other essential academic pursuits. As several examples:

1. Dr. Joseph Hair, at the MCOB and director of the PhD programs there, will achieve 500,000 citations in Google Scholar sometime in October. He is currently at 486,987 and has calculated the rate of citation (his area of work is multivariate analysis so...) as early October. But to be safe. Let's say October.
2. We need more faculty achievements.

Future Actions:

1. On August 21st, the first meeting of the Institutional Planning Committee will take place at 8:30am. This committee is charged with evaluating the current university strategic priorities, for potential updates, additions and changes as well as devising a process for changing them to meet the changing needs of all university stakeholders. I have met with Angela Coleman, who is aware of the Senate's clear desire for faculty to feature more prominently in the strategic priorities going forward, and offered that we will be the 'test case' for how to manage the process. Hopefully that will cut a substantial amount of time off the change/update process and get faculty needs met more specifically as there will be clear priorities to build metrics upon.
2. Townhalls related to the Brand Refresh – will cover research, new designs, how we will tell our story.

Friday at 10am, Sept. 20th

Wed. Sept 28th, at 3:30 both at Marx Library.

Note 1: Eligibility and additional details

Regular faculty, and regular and temporary staff and administrators in the University General Division are eligible for the four percent salary increase effective Dec. 1, 2024.

The salary increase excludes temporary faculty, postdoctoral fellows, interns, instructor interns, language tutors, medical and nurse practitioner residents, student assistants, graduate assistants, non-reappointed faculty or other categories where an increase is determined by contract.

Regular faculty, staff and administrators in the University General Division, employed on or before May 31, 2024, and who remain employed as of Nov. 15, 2024, are eligible for the one-time salary supplement. Eligible employees will receive a salary supplement equal to four percent of their annual salary, prorated based on FTE.

The supplement does not apply to temporary employees, residents, postdoctoral fellows, graduate assistants, interns, student assistants, USA Health employees or other categories where an increase is determined by contract.

The supplement is subject to mandatory federal and state taxes, FICA, retirement contributions and court ordered payments.