

**To: Marc Guidry
Chair, Faculty Senate**

**From: Randi Cox
Chair, Administration and Finance Committee**

Date: October 26, 2007

RE: Results of the Faculty Senate study on salaries and faculty recruitment and retention

For several years, SFA faculty salaries have hovered near the bottom ranks of Texas state universities, despite efforts to improve salary equity. While previous studies of the salary issue have focused on current faculty, the present study addresses the impact of salary on recruitment and retention of faculty.

The Administration and Finance Committee began by examining salaries of assistant professors, the entry-level position for permanent, tenure-track faculty. According to Coordinating Board figures, the average salary for assistant professors at SFA ranks next to last in the state; only the two campuses of Sul Ross State University pay assistant professors less. By contrast, Sam Houston State ranks 18th out of 35. It stands to reason that low pay for entry-level positions puts SFA at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining highly qualified faculty, especially when similar institutions in the area offer more competitive salaries.

This October the committee conducted a survey of department chairs to see if their experience bore out this assumption. The key findings of the committee are highlighted below, and the complete findings are attached as an appendix.

- Although there is variation by discipline, low salaries make it difficult for many departments to recruit highly qualified candidates, and as a result some departments have been forced to hire candidates without terminal degrees or who otherwise do not fully meet department preferences. Nearly two-thirds (62.5%) of chairs said that salaries create a “major problem” in recruiting faculty, and an equal number reported hiring faculty without terminal degrees.
- Low salaries and high workloads contribute to poor faculty retention rates. Eighty percent of chairs reported that faculty have resigned over the last three years to take higher paying jobs at other universities. One department has lost nine faculty over the last three years; another has lost more than ten.
- Departments which compete with the private sector have special difficulties in recruiting and retention of faculty. Six chairs reported losing faculty to private sector jobs, some of which can pay as much as \$30,000 more than SFA positions.
- Salary compression is a serious problem which demoralizes mid-career faculty and encourages them to seek jobs elsewhere.

RESPONSE RATE: Sixteen out of thirty chairs (53.3%) responded to the survey. (See Appendix 1.) The highest rates came from the Colleges of Science and Math (5 of 6), Liberal and Applied Arts (5 of 9) and

Fine Arts (2 of 3). Neither of the two chairs in the College of Forestry and Agriculture responded, although a faculty representative reported informally that salary is not problematic in that college. Both informal comments and comments made in the survey (“Nothing new that the administration has not been told about.”) suggest that chairs, like other faculty, have grown cynical about the probability of change. This frustration—and a sense that a Faculty Senate study will not have an impact on the BOR—likely accounts for the moderate response rate.

FREQUENCY OF SEARCHES: The survey asked about searches for permanent faculty over the last three years. None of the respondents reported searches for associate or full professors. Salary levels allow only for hires at the assistant professor rank, the lowest level of permanent faculty; departments *never* hire more experienced faculty members. Moreover, low rates of faculty retention result in frequent searches. Eight departments have conducted more than five searches for assistant professors over the last three years; five have conducted between three and five searches, while two have conducted one search. Comments on this topic included the following:

I hope the Senate will impress upon the Board how much searches cost. If salaries at the university were more competitive, fewer searches would be necessary. My department conducted three searches last year and is conducting three this year, due mainly to faculty members leaving the university for better-paying jobs elsewhere. (In fact, I don't remember one year out of the last seven when the department did not conduct a search.) Aside from the lack of stability that goes along with such constant hiring, it's also a very costly process, financially.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS: Departments post job announcements in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and other relevant print and online publications. Only one of the departments lists the salary in the initial job posting, and 71% of respondents stated that they did not list the salary out of fear of limiting the pool of applicants. The cost of searches also raised concerns, as some departments cannot afford to place advertisements in the *Chronicle* and others do not consider applicants from the east or west coasts due to travel costs for campus interviews.

IMPACT OF SALARY ON SEARCH POOLS: Chairs reported that low salaries make conducting searches difficult. As noted above, 62.5% stated that low salaries created a “major problem” in attracting qualified candidates, while 31% described salaries as “somewhat of a problem” in recruiting. Low salaries appear to limit the applicant pool for many departments; over two-thirds say that candidates have withdrawn their applications after being told the salary; a chair in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts reported that this had happened nine times over the last three years, and a chair in the College of Business reported that it had happened *more than ten times*. Comments on this topics include the following:

During our searches over the last two years...I personally contacted people graduating from my Alma Maters, and the Alma Maters of other faculty, to inform them of our openings and to extol the (non-salary) virtues of SFA and Nacogdoches. I spoke with seven people overall, each of whom preferred to remain on the market given our salary offer. Recently, at a conference, I met one of the graduates that I had contacted and discovered that he was teaching in an adjunct position that paid more than we are willing to offer as a salary. Needless to say, I couldn't interest him in reapplying. As a result, we are now recruiting for four positions with a very small pool of money available for searches. Again I am out beating the bushes.

IMPACT OF SALARY ON HIRING DECISIONS: As noted above, many departments have not always been able to hire their first choice candidates, and some departments have turned to faculty without terminal degrees. The questions on this topic are worth outlining in detail:

- Three-quarters of chairs report having been turned down at least once by their first choice candidate in the last three years. Three departments have had this happen more than five times.
- Eighty-one percent report that they are more likely to hire faculty without terminal degrees or who otherwise do not fully meet departmental preferences. (37.5% describe this as a major problem; 44% describe it as somewhat of a problem.) More than two-thirds of respondents had hired at least one faculty member without a terminal degree; six had hired three or more over the last three years.
- Sixty-nine percent report that low salaries have made it more difficult for them to develop a diverse faculty in terms of gender and ethnicity. (44% say it is a major problem; 25% say it is somewhat of a problem.)

Comments on this topic include the following:

We have been unable to recruit our first or second choices among the applicants.

We are currently conducting [several] searches, and I genuinely dread the question of salary being asked of me.

This is a major hindrance in our effort to hire quality faculty. Now that we are in the midst of mass retirements, it is a significant issue. We simply are not even close to being competitive.

In order to make our salaries competitive my department would need and across the board (all levels) pay raise of no less than \$6,000-\$8,000 just to get close. To really attract the better quality and keep the ones I have it would be closer to \$10,000.

I am told by the chairs of sister universities that most of them are offering around [xxx] or more for an assistant professor [in my field]. There is no way I can currently compete with that salary... The situation is bad and going to get worse as more of the faculty retire...If we are forced to hire whatever or whomever we can beg to come to work for the current peanuts we are offering, I really worry about the future quality of the program.

IMPACT OF SALARIES ON FACULTY RETENTION: As noted above, eighty percent of chairs reported that faculty have resigned over the last five years to take higher paying jobs at other universities. One department has lost nine faculty; another has lost more than ten. In addition, six departments saw faculty resign for higher paying jobs in the private sector. Many of those who left also cited teaching loads, indicating that they felt that they were paid too little for a heavier than average workload. Relevant comments included the following:

We have better faculty than we deserve for what we pay and how much we support them, but this will not last forever. New faculty have no attachment to SFA or Nacogdoches and will soon leave for greener pastures if they are not treated fairly.

We lost our best published faculty member--a full professor with years of service at SFA--mainly because of salary concerns. He was able to obtain an endowed chair at another university that raised his salary by a third over what he was getting at SFA. We have also lost several junior faculty for a variety of reasons, but low salaries is one of the precipitating causes of loss of faculty at all ranks within our department.

Individuals in the private sector make at least 20 to 30 thousand dollars more than faculty.

SALARY COMPRESSION: Eight chairs described salary compression as a major problem, while six chairs described it as somewhat of a problem. (Two chairs skipped this question.) All of the comments indicated that salary compression demoralizes senior faculty and tempts mid-career faculty to view their years at SFA as a stepping stone to a better position. Relevant comments include the following:

Salary compression is a problem in the department. I have full professors who make significantly less than beginning assistant professors. The full professors should be paid more for their knowledge of SFA and our student body. The new assistant professors still have a lot to learn but are being rewarded because of the shortage in our profession.

Salary compression is now a problem between [the professional and academic] faculty.

Salary compression in our department is a big problem. There is not much difference between the people we just hired and those that have been here 20 years.

My department hired two individuals who started teaching at SFA in the fall of 2005 and one who started in the fall of 2006. All three are making the same amount as three new people who started at the beginning of this year. That's somewhat demoralizing to the professors with seniority.

SFA gives a very small raise to faculty when the move from the assistant to the associate level in Liberal Arts--only \$2500.00. As a result, many of our recent junior faculty hires are making nearly as much as our associate professors who have worked at SFA for several years. This is embarrassing and demoralizing.

Salary compression is currently something of a problem but is developing into a significant problem, particularly as faculty develop sound teaching and research records. Several of the faculty who left over the last 5 years basically looked upon their tenure here as a resume building experience.

Appendix 1 – Results of Survey of Academic Department Chairs on Effects of Low Salaries on Faculty Recruitment and Retention

1. College in which you are a chair.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
College of Business		11.8%	2
College of Education		11.8%	2
College of Fine Arts		11.8%	2
College of Forestry and Agriculture		0.0%	0
College of Liberal and Applied Arts		35.3%	6
College of Sciences and Mathematics		29.4%	5
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

2. In the past three years how many searches has your department performed for Assistant Professors?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
1		12.5%	2
2		0.0%	0
3		12.5%	2
4		6.3%	1
5		12.5%	2
>5		56.3%	9

answered question	16
skipped question	1

3. In the past three years how many searches has your department performed for Associate Professors?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
0	100.0%	17
1	0.0%	0
2	0.0%	0
3	0.0%	0
4	0.0%	0
5	0.0%	0
>5	0.0%	0
answered question		17
skipped question		0

4. In the past three years how many searches has your department performed for Full Professors?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
0	100.0%	17
1	0.0%	0
2	0.0%	0
3	0.0%	0
4	0.0%	0
5	0.0%	0
>5	0.0%	0
answered question		17
skipped question		0

5. Where do you post your jobs outside of the University?		Response Count
		16
answered question		16
skipped question		1

6. Do you list the salary in your job postings?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		6.3%	1
No		93.8%	15
answered question			16
skipped question			1

7. If you do not list the salary in the job posting, is it because you are concerned that listing the salary will limit the pool of applicants?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Our department lists the salary		0.0%	0
Yes		73.3%	11
No		26.7%	4
answered question			15
skipped question			2

8. Have low salaries made it difficult for your department to attract highly qualified candidates?			
		Response Percent	Response Count

Yes—it is a major problem.		58.8%	10
Occasionally—it is somewhat of a problem.		35.3%	6
No—it is not a problem.		5.9%	1
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

9. Have low salaries made your department more likely to hire ABDs or candidates who are not as well-suited to the position as you would prefer?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes—it is a major problem.		35.3%	6
Occasionally—it is somewhat of a problem.		47.1%	8
No—it is not a problem.		17.7%	3
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

10. In searches in your department over the last three years how many ABD candidates have you hired?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
1		18.2%	2
2		27.3%	3
3		18.2%	2
4		18.2%	2
5		9.1%	1
6		0.0%	0
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		0.0%	0
10		9.1%	1

>10		0.0%	0
	answered question		11
	skipped question		6

11. Have low salaries made it more difficult for your department to hire a diverse faculty in terms of gender and ethnicity?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes—it is a major problem.		41.2%	7
Occasionally—it is somewhat of a problem.		29.4%	5
No—it is not a problem.		29.4%	5
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

12. In searches in your department over the past three years, how many times have applicants withdrawn their names from consideration citing salary concerns?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		35.3%	6
1		29.4%	5
2		0.0%	0
3		11.8%	2
4		0.0%	0
5		5.9%	1
6		5.9%	1
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		5.9%	1
10		0.0%	0

>10		5.9%	1
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

13. In searches in your department over the past three years, how many times has the first-choice candidate turned down a job offer citing salary concerns?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		23.5%	4
1		11.8%	2
2		35.3%	6
3		5.9%	1
4		5.9%	1
5		11.8%	2
6		0.0%	0
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		5.9%	1
10		0.0%	0
>10		0.0%	0
	answered question		17
	skipped question		0

14. Over the past five years how many faculty members have left your department and gone to another university citing salary concerns?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		18.8%	3
1		25.0%	4

2		12.5%	2
3		12.5%	2
4		12.5%	2
5		0.0%	0
6		0.0%	0
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		6.3%	1
10		0.0%	0
>10		12.5%	2
		answered question	16
		skipped question	1

15. Over the past five years how many faculty members have left your department and gone to work in the private sector citing salary concerns?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		56.3%	9
1		37.5%	6
2		0.0%	0
3		6.3%	1
4		0.0%	0
5		0.0%	0
6		0.0%	0
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		0.0%	0
10		0.0%	0

>10		0.0%	0
	answered question		16
	skipped question		1

16. Over the past five years how many faculty members have left your department citing teaching loads?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		31.3%	5
1		12.5%	2
2		12.5%	2
3		12.5%	2
4		12.5%	2
5		6.3%	1
6		0.0%	0
7		0.0%	0
8		0.0%	0
9		0.0%	0
10		0.0%	0
>10		12.5%	2
	answered question		16
	skipped question		1

17. To what extent is salary compression a problem in your department?			
		Response Percent	Response Count

A major problem		60.0%	9
Somewhat of a problem		40.0%	6
Not a problem at all		0.0%	0
	answered question		15
	skipped question		2

18. If you would like, please elaborate here on the impact of salaries on faculty recruitment and retention in your department. We would also be interested in comments made by departing faculty and candidates who withdrew or rejected offers.

		Response Count
		10
	answered question	10
	skipped question	7

19. Please comment on the issue of salary compression in your department.

		Response Count
		10
	answered question	10
	skipped question	7

20. Do you have any other recommendations or comments about salaries at SFASU that you would like to share with us? Again, all information will remain confidential. Thank you for your help.

		Response Count
		10
	answered question	10
	skipped question	7

Question 5

Modern Language Association Job Information List Chronicle of Higher Education

College Music Society and NASM schools

Geotimes AAPG Explorer

Chronicles of Higher Education, general science and area specific journals, listservs, and society web pages.

Chronicle of Higher Education, MLA JIL

on the website of the American Mathematical Society

We post on H-Net, and on-line site for the humanities and social sciences, and sometimes in more specialized publications (if we are able to meet the deadlines for those publications).

Chronicle of Higher Education

Professional Organizations and Conferences

The Chronicle (web only), The Observer, e-lists

discipline-specific job posting websites

higheredjobs.com acs.org

Chronicle of Higher Education Relevant listserves Professional personnel newsletters

Chronicle of Higher Education

Chronicle of Higher Education, NAKPEHE OPERA

Question 18

We lost our best published faculty member--a full professor with 12 years of service at SFA--mainly because of salary concerns. He was able to obtain an endowed chair at another university that raised his salary by a third over what he was getting at SFA. We have also lost several junior faculty for a variety of reasons, but low salaries is one of the precipitating causes of loss of faculty at all ranks within our department.

Before we bring a candidate to the campus, we discuss salary range. If the candidate does not agree with the salary range, we do not invite them for an interview. A bigger problem is that because the university does not help with the funding for faculty searches (i.e., they must be funded from department/school funds), there is a tendency for search committees to look less at candidates from the East and West Coasts because of the added costs of travel etc. I strongly feel that the university should provide funding for faculty/staff searches that will allow consideration of persons from all areas of the nation.

All of our faculty feel that salaries are too low and should be raised at least 20%.

Nothing new that the administration has not been told about. No more elaboration since it might identify my department.

Individuals in the private sector make at least 20 to 30 thousand dollars more than faculty. Recruiting at the higher ranks is extremely difficult. Salary compression is now a problem between MSN and PHD faculty.

This is a major hindrance in our effort to hire quality faculty. Now that we are in the midst of mass retirements, it is a significant issue. We simply are not even close to be competitive. What is important to realize is that we ARE competing with doctoral institutions. Applicants are applying to those institutions as well as others like ours, so we DO have to consider those in our salary comparisons.

They love our department and faculty, but cannot afford to come here/stay here for a salary/teaching load/summer support so much poorer than they can easily get elsewhere. We have better faculty than we deserve for what we pay and how much we support them, but this will not last forever. New faculty have no attachment to SFA or Nacogdoches and will soon leave for greener pastures if they are not treated fairly.

During our searches over the last two years we have been unable to recruit our first or second choices among the applicants. Those willing to come had poor teaching records, little to no research, and little to no scholarship potential. I personally contacted people graduating from my Alma Maters, and the Alma Maters of other faculty, to inform them of our openings and to extol the (non-salary) virtues of SFA and Nacogdoches. I spoke with seven people overall, each of whom preferred to remain on the market given our salary offer. Recently, at a conference, I met one of the graduates that I had contacted and discovered that he was teaching in an adjunct position that paid more than we are willing to offer as a salary. Needless to say, I couldn't interest him in reapplying. As a result, we are now recruiting for four positions with a very small pool of money available for searches. Again I am out beating the bushes.

I am told by the chairs of sister universities that most of them are offering around \$120,000 or more for an assistant professor of accounting. There is no way I can currently compete with that salary. In addition, I cannot give any summer support or promise summer teaching. The situation is bad and going to get worse as more of the accounting faculty retire and the shortage of accounting Ph.D.s continues. I hope the situation will be addressed while SFA is still one of the leading Accounting programs in the state. If we are forced to hire whatever or whomever we can beg to come to work for the current peanuts we are offering, I really worry about the future quality of the program.

Question 19

SFA gives a very small raise to faculty when the move from the assistant to the associate level in Liberal Arts-- only \$2500.00. As a result, many of our recent junior faculty hires are making nearly as much as our associate professors who have worked at SFA for several years. This is embarrassing and demoralizing.

Salary compression in our department is a big problem. There is not much difference between the people we just hired and those that have been here 20 years.

My department hired two individuals who started teaching at SFA in the fall of 2005 and one who started in the fall of 2006. All three are making the same amount as three new people who started at the beginning of this year. That's somewhat demoralizing to the professors with seniority.

see above

Over the past 6 years, the faculty in my department have graciously consented to taking money off the top of the merit allocation to address salary compression. We still have some between the ranks, but no longer within the ranks.

It has directly led to one departure and others are actively seeking new positions elsewhere. The sad fact is that when the unfairly-treated faculty leave we will have to hire replacements that end up costing more than what they would have stayed for - SFA is ill-served by its refusal to address salary compression/inversion.

Salary compression is currently something of a problem but is developing into a significant problem, particularly as faculty develop sound teaching and research records. Several of the faculty who left over the last 5 years basically looked upon their tenure here as a resume building experience.

Salary compression is a problem in the accounting department. I have full professors who make significantly less than beginning assistant professors. The full professors should be paid more for their knowledge of SFA and our student body. The new assistant professors still have a lot to learn but are being rewarded because of the shortage in our profession.

This is an obvious issue, with little, if any, resolution in sight.

Question 20

If we don't raise salaries, we will continue to lose good faculty and pay the price through a loss of experience, a loss of institutional memory, a loss of networks that had been established between departmental colleagues, a loss of mentoring and bonds between faculty and students, a loss of prestige for SFA, and a further drain on department budgets to pay for new searches and new training for additional faculty.

SFA needs to raise salaries by a large amount to attract good faculty and stop the loss of our good young faculty.

In order to make our salaries competitive my department would need and across the board (all levels) pay raise of no less than \$6,000-\$8,000 just to get close. To really attract the better quality and keep the ones I have it would be closer to \$10,000.

Since the Board of Regents is obviously, and understandably, concerned about the finances of the university, I hope the Senate will impress upon the Board how much searches cost. If salaries at the university were more competitive, fewer searches would be necessary. My department conducted three searches last year and is conducting three this year, due mainly to faculty members leaving the university for better-paying jobs elsewhere. (In fact, I don't remember one year out of the last seven when the department did not conduct a search.) Aside from the lack of stability that goes along with such constant hiring, it's also a very costly process, financially.

Salaries are low, besides the support of the academic community. I think that having support from the Nacogdoches community i.e. business would be very helpful in presenting a case to the Board of Regents and

administration.

Yes, they are embarrassing! We are currently conducting 6 searches (more than half of my department!) and I genuinely dread the question of salary being asked of me. By the way... you need a "0" as an option in question #10.

As long as the faculty still meet all their classes, and we do not lose our accreditations, the administration/board will never see the urgency of faculty salary equity. We are whiny, over-paid, under-worked primadonnas in their eyes. Besides, the amount of money needed to bring all SFA faculty up to market averages is an overwhelming number - over \$5 million at least (this is a well-founded estimate based on good data). Salary equity for the staff is comparable, for a total of \$10 million. SFA will never come up with this much money for faculty and staff salary equity raises, which would have to be on top of the usual annual merit pools of 3%. And even if they did come up with the money, there are many faculty and administrators who would strongly object to using all that money just for salary equity, because there are some faculty and administrators on campus who are NOT behind the market, and hence would NOT get any of the salary equity funds. This is exactly what torpedoed the last salary equity attempt under Tito. In a true and fair salary equity adjustment, some faculty (who are way behind the market) would get huge raises, and others (who are at or above the market) would get nothing, other than their annual merit raise, assuming there was one. Lots of room for hurt feelings here. Those who are deemed to be at or above the market may not easily accept that assessment, and those who are behind the market may not agree with the size of the proposed adjustment they are given. For example, an associate professor in liberal arts who earns \$50,000 may be above the market in his/her field and thus ineligible for an salary equity adjustment, while an assistant professor in business who earns \$95,000 may be \$15,000 behind the market. Would SFA really give the first professor nothing, and the second one \$15,000? I think not. We would end up not bringing everyone up to market like they deserved, and many who did not deserve an equity raise would get one anyway.

I am not sanguine about any really effective action on the salary front. The Board seems to have adopted a "trickle down" approach, "lets build a resort, attract students, and eventually faculty salaries may go up." The reality is that despite the actions taken to bring faculty salaries into line with comparable instituion, we are in fact stil falling behind.

Raise salaries and adjust for salary compression. Best of luck on accomplishing this.

