

Report of the Faculty Council meeting

July 30, 2020

Update from Brent's meeting with the president and the provost:

current freshmen enrollment: 641; dorm residents are down by 200; current estimate of deficit is 12-24m; 20 staff members chose voluntary separation; 11 faculty members have chosen retirement.

Issues arisen from communication between faculty council and the senior leadership team:

1. Salary cut:

- SLT and their attorney believe they have the authority to cut faculty salary based on phrases such as "university-wide approach" and "avoiding financial exigency" in the FHB. Brent stresses that it makes no sense to avoid something that is not realistic. But SLT also believes that the definition of "exigency" has changed.
- In his email to the FC, Brent has suggested that, in order not to set precedence of the president cutting faculty salary at will, the faculty can write a proposal to cut our own salary, and vote on this proposal. But even this step would involve a FHB amendment. The president and provost have said that they would support this route, and that they will wait to hear from us before taking the next step.
- The proposal would include two major parts: 1) adding an amendment to the FHB which rejects the president's power to cut faculty salary short of financial exigency; 2) a tiered pay cut for faculty for 2020-2021 (0-10% is the current proposal of administration). Since these are two separate issues, there may be a difficulty in interpreting the "yes" or "no" vote. Some FC members suggested a dual proposal instead of a single one.
- Another concern is that faculty may vote "no" on the pay cut, and the SLT would choose to cut salary by force, which would set an even more damaging precedence. We may need to communicate the ramifications of a "no" vote to the faculty.
- Due to this dilemma, some raised the question of whether there is a way to have the pay cut initiative coming from the faculty without a vote.
- The FC executive committee will meet over this and call another FC meeting next Tuesday.

2. Health benefits:

- FC has turned down the proposal twice, and the provost has sent the third proposal with a small change ("several changes" is revised to "two changes").
- In its current form, the proposal is still not specific enough. Brent has sent Steve, as a model, an 2009 proposal of medical benefit change which lays out numbers clearly.
- Mark Waner pointed out that there is also a 2012 proposal with not only breakdown of numbers but also procedures to carry out the changes. He will forward this version to Brent to be sent to Steve.

- The health benefit change doesn't have the same time crunch, and doesn't require a summer vote anymore. Once passed, it would go into effect 1/1/2021.
 - The equity issue concerning people who joined JCU before and after 2013 has been explained to the president (those who joined before 2013 has less medical benefit coverage and take a slightly higher retirement contribution in exchange). The president said they would try to solve the problem but didn't say how.
 - Health benefit change is meant to be permanent.
3. Retirement benefits:
- Per faculty feedback, the proposal has been changed to a 1-year suspension. The SLT needs this to be decided before school starts. They believe that nothing in FHB prevents summer vote, and are hoping that faculty could vote on the proposal in mid-August to give HR enough time for making decisions about salaries.
 - FC members pointed out that staff members were informed of retirement benefit change in mid-July, two weeks before it was carried out. It is not clear why 4 weeks are not enough for decisions concerning the faculty.
4. Program closures:
- The SLT believes FHB authorizes them to close programs, remove untenured faculty and reassign tenured faculty.
 - FHB requires the SLT to make valid effort to reassign tenured faculty before involuntary separation.
5. Michael and Steve support the 13 items for shared governance, and has agreed to have 4 faculty members to look into the accounts.
They also welcome push from the faculty for better representation and stronger say in decision-making processes.