



OFFICE OF THE SENATE

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April 14, 2022

Chancellor Robert J. Jones
Office of the Chancellor
Fourth Floor, Swanlund Administration Building, MC-304
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Dear Chancellor Jones,

The Senate Committee on Faculty and Academic Staff Benefits (FB) held its monthly meeting on March 23. During this meeting, the Committee recognized the University's phenomenal response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the proactive steps it took during this challenging time to keep faculty and staff safe. As you know, throughout this period, faculty and staff have engaged in extraordinary amounts of work that have required extraordinary commitment and adaptability. They have done so with patience and understanding given the financial constraints posed to the University during this difficult period.

To this end, the Committee would like to highlight another key opportunity that FB believes deserves high prioritization as we move into the next period for this institution. In recent UIUC Senate meetings, faculty and staff constituents have expressed concerns related to the adequacy and competitiveness of salaries and recent salary increases and the degree to which there is fair and equitable compensation across various positions and rankings. The current cost of living is now close to 8%. Other expenses for faculty and staff (e.g., health insurance, parking, childcare) continue to increase annually, expenses that have not been offset with the on-going trend of a 2% salary increase. FB is concerned about the potential negative impacts this could be having on faculty morale and work commitment, as well as the longer-term risks this could pose to the University's ability to hire and retain qualified faculty and staff.

The good news is that we appear to be entering into a more favorable budgetary period, with an approved increase in tuition and fees, record enrollment numbers, and an increase in the state appropriation for the coming year. Given the new budgetary climate, this could be an ideal time to provide a meaningful salary raise to faculty and staff as a reward for their commitment during this difficult period and to boost faculty morale and commitment.

We believe that such action would better the UIUC campus environment, help provide a reward for the innovative service that faculty and staff have helped engender, and help us maintain or strengthen our competitive edge among other universities and peer institutions at a critical period in the evolution of higher education. Recent reports indicate that Purdue University has approved a \$500 appreciation award for full-time employees and a 4% salary merit pool, with an additional 1% salary pool to address specific workplace objectives. The University of Missouri System plans to commit \$500 million toward performance-based salary increases for faculty and staff members. Other institutions are considering similar salary and incentive programs. We would be interested in learning more about what you think

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the UIUC campus priorities should be when it comes to salary and benefits and what specific actions the Administration might take to support faculty and staff in this respect.

As part of its duties outlined in the *Senate Bylaws*, the FB Committee has begun a review and discussion of the current state of faculty and staff salaries and benefits on the UIUC campus. As a starting point, we will be requesting some information from the Office of the Provost: (1) to assess externally where the University of Illinois compares to its peer institutions in terms of salary and other forms of compensation and (2) to assess internally the degree of equity and fairness in compensation across various positions and rankings within the institution. We plan to work in collaboration with the Office of the Provost to conduct this formal review of faculty and staff benefits, which might also include an assessment of units' needs and priorities and what the specific issues are.

We wanted to make you aware of these activities. We welcome any suggestions you might have in terms of how we might proceed to address this crucially important issue.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF BENEFITS

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