November 25, 2014
Parsons Faculty Assembly—

Welcome by Craig Bernecker and Thomas Werner

Following email from faculty regarding the email from David Van Zandt regarding merit salary increases, the PFC reached out to Executive Dean Joel Towers who attended a PFC meeting the following morning and will be joining the PFA today to answer your questions.

Joel Towers:

1. Merit and Salary increases. - We need to be aware of how this language is used. All salary increases are to the base salary. These increases go on in perpetuity, as opposed to being one-year increases. They mark the 2nd year in a row that the university has given salary increases.

2. This is the second year the University has been able to allocate funds for salary increases. We have been able to do so as we have met our recruitment goals and revenue targets over the last year. Joel is optimistic that this will continue in coming years for both faculty and staff. It is important to note increases are contingent on the University meeting recruitment and retention goals as we are a tuition based institution.

3. Were are fiscal limitations on the pool funds we had to work with this year, these were noted in David Van Zandt’s recent email.

4. The 2.5% pool available for increases was the same limitation as the previous year. Distribution of the funds will occur across every staff and fulltime faculty member.

5. Over the last several years there has been a growing salary disparity within salary bands and across the institution. Giving a flat 2.5% raise to all faculty and staff will only exacerbate this problem.

6. When compared to new faculty, some existing faculty are compensated at a lower rate. Merit raises will allow some of this disparity to be addressed. 27% of the money available was given to faculty who were below the rate given to incoming faculty. In addition we have faculty who may not be eligible for a rank increase, and are not research centric. Merit raises will also allow these faculty to be more fairly compensated.

7. Faculty who received rank or tenure promotion this year, or who were hired after July 2014, were not included in the pool for raises this year. This totaled fifty staff and some faculty members.

8. The remaining funds were given in 4 categories, meeting expectations, exceed expectations, very good, excellent/exceptional. Merit raises were given in a progressive manner with a larger percent increase to the people at the lower end of the wage scale thus pushing the bottom of the salary band up. Given the funds available there is a small discrepancy between the raises given.
9. Having done that—Joel looked at every case as a percentage number over a period of time (2 years). Percent increase – 98% received increases. Some people were not performing at expectation there was a mandate to not reward those staff and faculty members.

10. All staff have been through regular review. All faculty have been through fairy regular review processes. School Deans have worked to understand where people fit.

11. PFC—We have a desire to participate in structuring any salary increase going forward. This may occur in any number of ways. For example:
   A. PFC/PFA – as mechanism for engagement and review of the process
   B. UFS- may work with the Provosts Office
   C. PFC – Representative at the Dean’s Council

   Joel is open to working in consultation with the faculty body— how this will occur is a further discussion

QUESTIONS: University has turned the corner—must make yearly revenue targets. We know whether we have reached these targets in October, which leaves little time before the end of the semester.

   We need to look at the salary freeze and cost of living-increases. Will there be a base line year over year increase?

   Joel: We have well exceeded national the cost of living for the last two years.

   WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE EVALUATION—Joel: The decision to go to literati has delayed the self-evaluation period. School Deans—categories—evaluation. Totally done based on performance. Joel was clear with the deans – you need to be looking broadly at a faculty member’s contribution. Research—value—meeting expectations exceeding this by?

   Engagement of a conversation.

12. When the word “merit” gets used it isn’t the same as corporate America works. Small incremental changes.

13. What is the matrix? Who do we know how to exceed expectations? Joel – the annual review process is intended to do that. We have become a culture of a great deal of review. Maybe we are doing that too much.

   Joel: All the increases are being reviewed. Each faculty member will then meet with their school dean. Every faculty member will receive a letter with their increase. To be followed up by a meeting with their dean.
14. The discussion with the deans after the amount has been sent?

Joel: This is not a negotiation. The dean will explain why the amount was given.

15. TRANSPARENCY OF EVALUATION—How much transparency is possible?

16. What if it was more money? Would we have a different conversation?

Joel: with more money you could keep up with annual increases on a regular basis as well as give merit raises. If you don’t deal with wage compression then we ignore the people who have the greatest disparity. You need to deal with wage compression.

17. Could we have given input before this decision was made? Not a negotiation, but input regarding the process. J- the faculty should be engaged moving forward.

Joel: We did not give a baseline salary increase across the faculty. If you do a fixed number as a percentage it is regressive. We need to be progressive.

18. Why do we have 4 levels for evaluation, not two or three?

Joel: we looked at models that had two and three distributions—we tried it lots of different ways. The differences between two and three levels were minimal. We are looking at very little money between each level and overall. We need to continue to be progressive in addressing salary needs.

19. There is a lot of information in that: two different processes. In the end, it’s a small amount. Large institutional concerns that we should think about as a group. How do we see expectations? What does it mean to “Exceeding Expectations?” We are all working hard. (Do we have to grow wings?)

Joel: Putting the money issue aside—The annual review process is intending to do this, to evaluate faculty on an ongoing basis.

For this process we cast a broader net. Worked with School Deans and looked back at all of the reviews. We’ve become a culture of a great deal of review.

Faculty will have individual meetings with their respective School Deans, after the raises and promotions have been given. We will write each faculty member to inform them of their raise.

20. Have the amount of the raises been decided already?
Joel: Yes. There have been meetings with the School Deans and the raises have been decided. We have worked to be progressive and fair.

21. Is there a fixed percentage for raises this year?

Joel: There is no fixed number this year. We needed to be progressive.

22. Comment: Two weeks ago no one knew anything and now it’s fully in place and sitting at HR.

23. This comes amid a large conversation over performance based salary at universities across the country. This is more about score cards—accounting for performance—a wedge of a larger structure of tying performance to salary. Is this the beginning of a structure of tying salary to performance? This is a change in culture for the school. Is this a baby step towards some bigger steps? Are we moving toward this, or are we staying at baseline increases?

Joel: We need to watch our falling down that slope. The Dean’s came together in a way that is fair. I chose the 2 year perspective as I felt this gave a better overview. We are pretty strongly egalitarian. We have to be on guard and articulate how our principles of shared community allow us to advance in the best way as a university. What are our principles of shared community?

There is an arms race going on between universities in a highly competitive market. We are out there trying to let people know what we do in a very capitalist sense as we attract students.

We need to separate this from how we manage our faculty. This is a business. We are in an industry that uses money to keep tuition up—discount rates of 50% and above. I am very sympathetic to this. How do we advance as a group collectively? We need to realize the world we live in as a university, and how we live and compete here in New York. We are finding a middle ground in this. This is somewhat egalitarian but this is somewhere in between.

24. Faculty moral is a concern. Merit raises may be divisive and though the increase is higher than the national rate of inflation it does not address the rate of inflation in New York. Some faculty members are concerned about survival.

Joel: Either way these things have a way of being divisive. We’re trying to do what we can with the resources we have. The only place we have to increase
revenue is an increase in tuition as our goal is to keep the University about the size that it is.

The university – gives a little over $90M tuition funds in scholarships to students—This is the discount rate. This is a Robin Hood model. Parsons has a 26%-28% discount rate that is based on other liberal arts colleges.

Joel: We have to be really careful about slipping down that slope. Joel was pleased with the Deans being in support of the community as a whole. Joel is trying to look at this as a two-year perspective. Awarding any kind of performance-based reward is potentially divisive. We have to be on guard with this. What are our principles of shared community? There is an arms race—competitive market—promotion of what we do—in a capitalistic sense. Industry that uses money to keep tuition up—discount rates of 50% and above. Joel is very sympathetic to this. How do we advance as a group collectively? This is somewhat egalitarian but this is somewhere in between.

25. Comment: Faculty have voiced concern regarding their ability to expect a 2.5% baseline increase that may or may not cover the cost of living in NY. We cannot ignore the fact that this tension exists.

Dean Powers was thanked for his time and candid responses.

UFS REPORT- Sven
1. Senate occupied most of its last meeting with the raise issue. It was very helpful to hear from Joel. The senate has a different role. Broad institutional issues and specific divisions--Lang has been very outspoken about this process. Lang feels the university has not been forthright.
2. It is important that response to Joel’s report that it is passed on at Parsons.
3. The administration, Tim Marshall and David Van Zandt were aware that they sent out a poor email about this. Better communication. Their take on it was in line with Joel’s take. The primary issue: the very small amount of money and that everyone would get a raise.
4. Free Press story came out that noted DVZ’s conversation with Divisional Deans to gain their input on the implementation process.
5. This is an opportunity for University faculty to stake their presence in the debate and the ongoing approach.
6. Better explanation of the process would have been helpful.
7. SUPERVISOR term used in DVZ’s email—most faculty responded to that with surprise.
8. What was not said in the email was that virtually everyone will be getting a raise.
9. The Senate is gathering information about this decision making process. This has yet to be seen. Collecting information—congealing it.
10. Senate Co-chairs met with David and Tim. There is a reticence on the part of faculty and administration to acknowledge how truly challenging our
financial situation is. The reality of the institution—against the cut-throat competition. Many institutions will not survive the next decade.

The idea that as faculty we are treading water, that we are left out of the conversation of not only decision making, but ideation of how we are all going to survive. We don’t talk openly enough about this.

11. There is too often a divide between faculty concerns and university needs.

12. Question: I heard 2 key things. 1 I do not know what my colleagues know at large. One thing we all feel is that we do not have enough money. First – Salary bands we do not know what those are. 2 – we do not know if we can expect year over year raises.

Sven: This happens every year. Every year people fall below the lower end of the band.

13. Question: it seems that this will happen across the bands. If the amount of money between all four categories is so small, then why add to the division between us by creating these bands and categories. To put this way of addressing merit with a small percentage of change why create the issue? We all work hard, how can we even speak to the idea of meeting or exceeding expectations. Is our heavy workload the new normal? How can we give feedback? What feedback can we give as a group?

Sven: This is where the PFA and PFC need to work. To respond as a meaningful body. We hear regularly from a handful of faculty at Lang who say they are speaking for everyone.

14. Question: Since the subject of transparency comes up regularly, when is the university going to publish salary bands.

15. Question: Is parity being considered across parsons or across the university? Parsons is not at parity with the university.

Sven: Parity is considered between national averages, NS and other universities, and within the NS

16. Negotiation -We are making huge steps as a faculty.

17. Bring your communications to the PFA/PFC and the UFS—speak with your representatives at all levels—it is easy to dismiss the information if we don’t do this together.

18. The USF will hold a special meeting on December 2ND to discuss this issue.
PFC – We will continue to engage in this and other issues during and after the break. Please let us know your thoughts and comments.

PRESENTATION BY THE SCHOOL ASSOCIATE DEANS

Associate Deans
Lorraine Karafel ADHT
Yvonne Watson Fashion
Matthew Robb Design Strategies
Robert Kirkbride Constructed Environments
Lucille Tenazas- AMT

Associates Deans Committee works to bridge local RSCP task groups and the University Research Council. They are looking specifically at faculty mentoring and their role in the same.

Associates Deans may direct faculty in their own schools to meet with other faculty for mentoring and let people know what the mentoring opportunities are.

Associates Deans will also participate in the review of fund usage assessment. RSCP Faculty Funds and Proposals. Best Practices of decision-making processes within each school.

There are different RSCP settings in each of our schools.

--

Lucille—
School Leadership Committee Meeting
Pascal and Anne—Curriculum
Faculty Dev. Curriculum and AMT in general

University Lounge—
Design Manager for AMT—brand—Marketing/Communications at TNS.

AMT HAS NINE PROGRAMS
6 ugrad and 3 mfa
MPS-programming/data viz

52 FT faculty-Meeting with colleagues—pragmatics
Who you are as a practitioner—influences who you are as an educator.

Yvonne- 22 FT faculty
Roles are nuanced differently across the different school
RSCP – Committee-chaired by Hazel Clark –related research across the division.
Fashion as a field of research. Timo Rissanen—research practices—theory and applied. Shelley Fox-Fashion as research—type of research has continued to develop. Peer Review event.
Overarching role-involved with the review process with School Dean. RSCP-Timo and Greg-researchers to present their research in a small community of practice.

What are the ways to continue research practice? Deepen that research practice? BFA evolution-MPS-

Matthew Robb- 28 FT - faculty
Design Strategies—
Expertise—embodied in the FT faculty—serial entrepreneurs and fine arts as well as traditional academic.

Matthew background in philosophy—

Lorraine Karafel—
Same roles
ADHT SLC – 16 FT - faculty
Curricular affairs—
Do not deal with FT faculty affairs. No Ugrad degrees. Deal with ADHT—staffing pt faculty members-ADHT—CUE school-based coordinator.

EX OFFICIO- RSCP of ADHT

Robert Kirkbride – 35 FT - faculty
Scholar practitioner- Many faculty continue to run their own offices and firms

Michael Kahlil endowment—students across Parsons apply for this.

AMT – all curricular matters.
These pages are useful to faculty.

PRESENTATION BY GAY FLORIO ON CONCUR
CONCUR—air/rail travel program
The University is reviewing agencies and needs people to join the committee—we will be going out for new bid.

Policy paper in March under the accounting website.
No more per diems-
No more cash advances-
Tax exempt form- is under “My Employee Form”
You have 30 days to submit all expenses.
University Credit cards have made a big difference in the way we manage funds.
As of January 30th there will be a new view for Concur