

To: Salisbury University Faculty Senators From: Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC)

Date: 3/25/2023

Re: Special Session Compensation

As part of the faculty senate motion approved on May 17, 2022, a model that described how faculty teaching summer/winter sessions would be compensated (referred to hereafter as special session compensation) was submitted for inclusion in the Salisbury University faculty handbook. As part of the motion, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) was given a charge to explore with the administration the current status of this policy and report any proposed updates to the Faculty Senate by the last meeting in March, 2023.

Background

The model for special session compensation included in the May 2022 motion was the model that had been included in the previous version of the faculty handbook (hereafter referred to as Model A). This model bases the compensation of faculty in special sessions on (1) the number of students, and (2) a percentage of the tuition money the students are paying to take the course. In discussions with Provost Karen Olmstead, the FWC learned that the University stopped using this model in 2015. According to Provost Olmstead, this decision was made by an administrator who has since left the school. This decision seems to have been driven by the concern that Model A paid instructors substantially more than if the same course was taught as an overload course during fall or spring semesters. A new model (hereafter referred to as Model B) was put in place where faculty were paid a set amount per student per credit hour. For example, for a four-credit class, faculty were paid \$557/student (approximately \$139/student/credit hour). For each student in the course, the faculty would receive an additional \$557 in compensation for the first 10 students. For every student after the first 10 students, the faculty would receive an additional \$116 for a four-credit course (\$29/student/credit hour). The FWC is unable to determine who came up with this model. Still, Model B has been used for special session compensation since 2015 with no modifications whatsoever (no change in compensation due to cost of living, merit, etc.). It is our understanding that Model B was not brought to the faculty senate for discussion at the time. In 2017, Provost Olmstead realized that Model B was being used, and that it did not match what was in the faculty handbook, and made the faculty senate aware of the issue. In the fall of 2019, the provost, associate provost, and members of the FWC held a meeting where options for special compensation were discussed. No progress was made on this issue from that time until Spring 2022, in a large part, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The FWC and Provost Olmstead started to exchange emails discussing this issue in the fall semester of 2022. Due to some other work assigned to the FWC, we asked to set up a meeting with Provost Olmstead during January 2023. At this time, we met and learned the history of Model B, as well as Provost's Olmstead's attempts to deal with this issue in the past. Provost

Olmstead spoke of her misgivings about Model A, as no other faculty compensation is based on the amount of tuition students pay to take that course. Provost Olmstead also mentioned that when Model A was initially put in the faculty handbook, all special session tuition was set aside in a special fund and may have been considered “extra” money for the University. Now, all tuition from special sessions goes directly into the university budget, and is not set apart from other institutional funds. The FWC asked the Provost to provide some data regarding these special sessions. In particular, we asked if data could be provided as to how much tuition was brought in during these special sessions, and how much of tuition went to pay faculty and how much went to the University. In addition, we asked the Provost to update Model B to include cost of living adjustments in order to more accurately compare it to Model A. We met again with the Provost in late February 2023, where she provided the information we requested (see Appendix of report), and we discussed the positive and negative aspects of both models.

In looking at the 10-year summary of how much total revenue is brought in to the university during winter/summer sessions and comparing it to how much faculty were paid by the University, it became clear that the University could fiscally sustain either model (see Appendix). Please note in this document that the recorded expenses are faculty compensation only, and does not include other expenses related to these courses such as overhead, IT expenses, housekeeping costs, etc.

When comparing Model A (using SU’s current undergraduate tuition cost) and Model B (with Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) since April 2019 included), the two models provide very similar compensation to faculty. Some differences include that Model B typically pays slightly higher for small class sizes (less than 25 students), while Model B also pays the same rate for faculty, no matter their rank. The compensation for each model based on the number of students can be found in the Appendix. Please note that (1) Model B is the model highlighted in yellow, and (2) both models are significantly higher than the compensation faculty would be paid for teaching the same course as an overload during the spring semester.

Recommendation

Although both models are both fiscally viable, and both currently would pay roughly the same amount, we recommend model B. We prefer this method because it does not directly link faculty compensation with tuition (which some of our committee members found unsettling), and it provides the same compensation for all faculty, no matter their rank. Still, we feel that if the faculty senate moves forward with model B, the COLAs given to faculty since 2019 must be added to what is currently being used. In addition, the model must be clearly described in the faculty handbook, including how faculty compensation for special sessions is tabulated, and language must be included stating that this model will continually be adjusted when COLAs are given to university faculty/staff.

We would like to strongly recommend that faculty members who taught during the Winter 2023 semester be given backpay to account for the discrepancy with the current Model B (without COLA) and whatever model the faculty senate chooses, as this matter was initially

brought up prior to that contract period, but scheduling conflicts pushed the discussion into the new year. We discussed this matter with the provost, and she mentioned that this definitely is a possibility.

In addition, we would like to voice our strong displeasure with the administration who made the unilateral decision to change the model of special session compensation without discussions with the faculty senate at the time. This type of behavior is egregious, and if the people who made this decision were still at SU, we would recommend that the faculty senate publicly censure those individuals. This is a great example of how administration overreach can hurt the concept and process of shared governance. We would also like to voice our belief that even when the administration's action was discovered and brought to the faculty senate's attention in 2017, special compensation should have gone back to Model A (and not stayed with Model B) until the faculty senate had decided on this issue.

It is very clear that when the administration put Model B into place in 2015, there was no discussion about this with faculty. We are very concerned that administrators outside of the Provost's office were able to unilaterally make the decision regarding faculty compensation, going against the policy in the faculty handbook. We are unsure of what faculty can do about this, but it would be nice to know if there is a policy within the University to keep this from happening in the future.

Closing Thoughts

As stated earlier, both models currently pay faculty very similar amounts. However, this would not have been the case if we went back to 2021. We have had a string of COLAs in the last two years, which has brought Model B compensation up to be competitive with Model A. We are aware that Model A compensation will go up more often, as tuition increases happen more often than COLAs. We do not have enough data to project which model will give greater compensation for faculty in the future. We suggest that the faculty senate compare the two models every five years to get a better feel for how the two models may differ over time.

Lastly, it is purported that one of the reasons that Model B was put in place was the discrepancy between Model A and overload pay. During our meetings with the Provost, we suggested that a solution to this discrepancy would be to increase overload pay. The Provost asked if the FWC could take a look at overload pay in the near future.

Faculty Welfare Committee

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Appendix

10 Year Summary of Special Session Tuition/Faculty Compensation

Fiscal Year	Total revenue	Recorded expenses*	Net recorded revenue
2013	\$ 3,976,804	\$ 2,009,015	\$ 1,967,789
2014	4,091,390	1,672,610	2,418,780
2015	3,549,381	1,559,689	1,989,692
2016	4,432,717	1,978,695	2,454,022
2017	4,876,277	1,503,819	3,372,458
2018	4,494,018	1,457,573	3,036,445
2019	4,235,512	1,288,288	2,947,224
2020	5,083,740	1,338,055	3,745,685
2021	4,885,551	1,477,401	3,408,150
2022	5,008,933	1,437,699	3,571,234
Total	\$ 44,634,323	\$ 15,722,844	\$ 28,911,479

* Facilities, utility and administrative related overhead, as well as IT equipment and software related expenses required to deliver Winter or Summer sessions are not included in this analysis

Comparison of Model B, Overload, and Model A

4-credit ug course	Enrollment					
	8	10	15	25	30	35
Based on formula/table in current special session contract	\$ 4,454	\$ 5,568	\$ 6,148	\$ 7,308	\$ 7,888	\$ 8,468
Based on formula/table in current special session contract escalated for COLAs since April 2019	\$ 5,164	\$ 6,455	\$ 7,127	\$ 8,472	\$ 9,145	\$ 9,817
If taught as overload during the spring semester						
Assistant Prof. rate	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,392
Associate Prof. rate	\$ 4,572	\$ 4,572	\$ 4,572	\$ 4,572	\$ 4,572	\$ 4,572
Professor rate	\$ 4,720	\$ 4,720	\$ 4,720	\$ 4,720	\$ 4,720	\$ 4,720
If taught based on description in Faculty Handbook (current resident tuition per credit hour = \$309)						
60% of resident tuition for fewer than 10 students	\$ 5,933					
Base* plus 12.5% of resident tuition if 10 or more students						
Assistant Professor	\$ 5,937	\$ 6,710	\$ 8,255	\$ 9,027	\$ 9,800	
Associate Professor	\$ 6,117	\$ 6,890	\$ 8,435	\$ 9,207	\$ 9,980	
Professor	\$ 6,265	\$ 7,038	\$ 8,583	\$ 9,355	\$ 10,128	

*Base = overload/adjunct rate

Model B is highlighted in yellow (with COLAs since April 2019) while Model A is the bottom table.