

Faculty Senate Update

April 2022

Greetings! MSU,

As we near the end of the semester, we continue to engage in the good and necessary work of academic governance. We want to thank President Stanley for the Academic Governance Reception held at the Cowles House on March 22nd to acknowledge that work.

Compensation and Benefits Update

Today, President Stanley announced the administration's plan to restore 12 of the 18 months of retirement match reductions experienced by faculty and academic staff during the pandemic. These retirement reductions were accompanied by 10 months of pay cuts and two annual cycles without merit raises. Taken together, these cuts were the most extreme austerity measures imposed on faculty among the Big Ten Universities. We welcome and commend this retroactive rightsizing of the retirement cuts by the MSU Board of Trustees and the executive leadership team.

This successful result comes after months of engaged academic governance work by the Faculty Senate, the University Committee on Faculty Affairs, and those faculty and allies who signed the petition to "Restore the Cuts." Our efforts included distributing petitions; receiving endorsements from the Faculty Senate, Academic Congress, and the University Committee on Faculty Affairs; collecting, collating, and analyzing difficult-to-obtain salary data; and developing raise models and financial simulators to demonstrate our understanding of the cost of restitution and offer ideas that might be acceptable to the faculty. The cuts represented a shared sacrifice, but today's announcement is a shared success. I am particularly grateful for the contributions of Vice Chairperson Stephanie Anthony; At-Large Members d'Ann de Simone, Megan Donahue, and Andrea Kepsel; University Committee on Academic Governance Chairperson Jack Lipton; Faculty Senator Anna Pegler-Gordon; Dr. Scott Imberman, who graciously helped us understand the economic dimensions of the situation; UCFA Chairperson Mick Fulton; and UCFA Budget Subcommittee Chairperson Matthew Comstock.

To remain a nationally competitive institution of higher learning, MSU must address its longstanding, institutional compensation challenges. To that end, the Faculty Senate recently endorsed [UCFA's annual faculty raise recommendation](#), which calls for a 10% increase in the total raise pool for 2022–2023, including 2% for the Excellence and Equity pool (formerly the "market pool") and 8% for the merit-based pool. While some may balk at a request for a 10% raise, the well-reasoned request is consistent with requests during similar periods of high inflation in the past.

The University's new strategic plan heralds a new path forward, including an entire section on valuing employees: [MSU's biggest investment — and most important asset — is the exceptionally talented faculty and staff at the core of the Spartan community](#). A plan is good, but without action it has no value. We pay for what we value, and a budget is a moral document. Let our actions show that we value our people above all. We look forward to continuing to partner with the administration, ensuring that MSU's intellectual infrastructure remains a high priority not only in strategic plans, but in practice.

Caregiving

Caregiving continues to be a priority issue. On March 15, the Faculty Senate discussed the challenges of caregiving and brainstormed possible solutions to faculty concerns. Senator Juliet Guzzetta and Vice Chairperson Stephanie Anthony developed the Qualtrics survey you should have received from your respective colleges' senators requesting your input about caregiving needs. The information from this survey will be used by the Caregiving Task Force to make recommendations to the President. The task force is co-chaired by Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs Suzanne Lang (langsu@msu.edu) and Director of Employee Relations Richard Fanning (rickfanning@hr.msu.edu). Your input is greatly appreciated to ensure a robust and sustainable solutions for the caregiving concerns of MSU's employees.

Closing Thoughts

While another academic year has come and gone, the work of academic governance never stops. Voting-eligible faculty and academic staff should keep an eye out for an email from acadgov@msu.edu in the next two weeks with instructions on voting for At-Large Members of the Steering Committee.

Finally, I have been honored to serve as the Faculty Senate Chairperson this year, and I hope that Spartans felt like academic governance was working for them. Let this summer be enjoyable and restful for all of us; after all, there is good and important work to be done when we return.

In the meantime, please email acadgov@msu.edu if you have any academic governance-related questions.

All the best,

Karen

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