

Invited Comments – FY2020 Salary Policy

Peter Martin, Iowa State Faculty Senate President

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President Richards, Members of the Board of Regents. Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of the faculty at Iowa State University concerning the FY2020 Salary Policy. I could easily spend my time today sharing with you statistics that indicate faculty salaries at Iowa State University are the second from the bottom among its peers. I could easily spend my time today highlighting that a peer comparison shows Iowa State professors trailing the top university salary by more than \$40,000. I could also point out that the one percent salary increase last year, the zero percent salary non-increase two years ago, and low pay raises the past half dozen years are having a toll on faculty morale. I could easily use my short time to talk about the money.

However, it is not *just* about the money. I want to remind you that our faculty are hard-working members of the academic community who go home after a long day at the university to start working again in the evening and on weekends, preparing their classes, correcting papers, catching up on research. Our faculty members care about their students, and they are likely to drop everything when a student stops by their office to talk about a problem or question. It is not *just* about the money, it is about recognizing our dedicated, ambitious faculty whom we can count on every day.

We are not superhuman. We do our work like most other Americans, and we appreciate when we are recognized for what we do. Low or no salary increases give us the message that we are not appreciated, we are not the priority at the university nor with you, the Board of Regents. As a consequence, some excellent faculty members are leaving the university. As you know, we have had high numbers of faculty members resign at Iowa State for the last two years. In last year's report, we read that 44 percent of the faculty members who left Iowa State said their new position would pay "much higher." When you are at the bottom of the pay scale among your peers, you can also not attract the best, new faculty members to join us. And this hurts our students because we are compromising the student experience.

Here is the primary question I want to ask you, our legislators, and all parents who send their students to Iowa State University. Looking into the future, do you want our young adults in Iowa to be taught by the best professors we can hire and keep at Iowa State, or are you satisfied with a future faculty that may well be below average? Do you want our future students to be engaged with the most creative, nationally recognized faculty or are you satisfied when the pool of applicants is reduced to those rejected by other universities? For our young adults, the years at Iowa State University are the most formative years, they are years that will determine their future. The future as an employer or employee, the future as a father, mother or single parent, the future of a well-rounded, well-educated citizen. It is about the student experience.

Let me share a brief experience from my own work. I teach a large class of undergraduate students on the topic of aging. I challenge my students to find current publications in our field. It is rewarding for me (and I hope for them), when some of these students come to me and proudly announce, “Dr. Martin, I found an article published by Peter Martin. Is that really you?”

We care about our students, and our students deserve the best. Our students at Iowa State express that they are paying a large amount for a good education and that they expect high quality professors. Professors who are actually producing new knowledge in the field. And to provide the best, we need to support our faculty with salaries that tell them, we appreciate your work, we recognize that you are a leader in the field. We want to keep you here at Iowa State, and we want you to attract others who strive for the best to come to Iowa State.

Keeping the best at Iowa State also means that we need to do everything we can to keep a diverse group of faculty. We must strive for equitable salaries across all group designations at the University: gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age. The last salary report just released by the AAUP indicated that women associate professors at Iowa State University earn only 88.8 percent when compared to men. That is \$11, 189 less for women every year. Our women faculty are often not as recognized and valued for their contributions, our faculty of ethnically underrepresented groups continue to voice concerns, and older, productive faculty members are often pushed to the sidelines. At

Iowa State, we strive for a university that is fair and equitable to all faculty who contribute so much to our mission. One important way to signify this is through equitable salaries.

Members of the Board, it is not *just* about the money. It's about how we value the hard working faculty who do their very best to give students what they deserve: a great educational experience of a life time. To do so, we must retain and attract top-notch faculty. For those reasons, we believe that faculty salaries are our top priority. Catching up with our peers, every professor would need a salary adjustment of \$13,300 – and this would make us only average among our peer group. I hope you know that we strive to be an above average university. At Iowa State, we very much appreciate your support, but I urge you to continue your efforts to do everything you can do, to support our faculty with salaries that allow them to feel they are not the bottom of the barrel. The work of our faculty matters. It matters for the student experience. It impacts a faculty member's sense of loyalty, engagement, and drive towards excellence. I want our faculty to see that we are moving up within our peer group, because we believe that we, at Iowa State University, are among the best in our fields and can remain so in the future. Thank you.