

BoR Speech
5th April 2022

Andrea Wheeler, Faculty Senate President, Iowa State University.

Good morning. My name is Andrea Wheeler, and I am the Faculty Senate President for Iowa State University.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the faculty. I have spoken to you a couple of times now. You listened to me when I told you how the faculty felt about masks and vaccines and about their lack of authority in their classrooms. I asked you to collaborate.

On this occasion, I ask you to look at me and listen to me again when I tell you why a reduction in salary competitiveness (the actuality of our condition **now**) will harm Iowa State University and the State of Iowa.

Why harm? What does it harm? Faculty have worked tirelessly for the past two years. The commitment made to our students during the pandemic has been astonishing. We have been adapting to new learning modalities, adopting new technologies, supporting students through illnesses and quarantine, and offering flexibility in our classrooms so students can achieve personal academic goals. We have made it through the worse. Faculty have upheld their professional standards and worked over and above expectations. They have demonstrated goodwill to the University and a wealth of care for their students. Faculty have accepted the pandemic condition, and despite personal obligations, family commitments, children at home, and elderly parents to shield and protect continued to uphold the importance of the educational achievement of students, resident students, and Iowan residents to ensure greater life opportunities education brings.

Faculty support the great State of Iowa: graduating students support its businesses and its start-ups, and they provide its young entrepreneurs and innovators. The overall economic situation is not bad in Iowa. So, when I tell you, we need to recognize what faculty do, what they do, how they contribute to the State: I mean recognize through proper reward and proper salary increases. I could give you numbers, others may, but the agreed observation, easy observation, is that salaries have decreased in real terms, and inflation is predicted to rise. Iowa State is losing both its competitiveness and the goodwill of its faculty.

Unless we can build, support, and reward, Iowa State will experience a slow bleed of the investment that it has made to the growth and development of its young faculty. And it will lose great faculty, those who have benefitted from investment: First-generation women advancing in their careers, working moms, underrepresented faculty, and those with leadership aspirations. Without a commitment to salary increases, Iowa State will lose this year, and each further year, those who have ensured the continued education of Iowan residents during this pandemic and helped maintain the National and International reputation of our residential campus institution.

Thinking about an example, then, thinking about how in real terms, this actuality, has impacted faculty this year, it is the position that I have found myself in; I have to give an example.

I am very grateful for my development at Iowa State University. For what Iowa State has given me. I have built my skills as an instructor, a researcher, and a leader. I have made friends, fostered mentors, and found supporters. Iowa State has invested in me. Iowa State has given me the experience I needed to grow and develop, personally and professionally. I have flourished. Iowa has invested. Iowa State University has given me good market value.

But like my colleagues, when I see my salary losing its power, I open to opportunities. And opportunity opened to me, it has offered more salary, academic promotion, and the challenge of leadership. These open doors, lead to the slow drain of investment if salaries do not increase. Our new strategic plan aspires to a flourishing body of faculty, staff, and students. But without proper salary increases in comparison with our peer institution, without proper plans, and agreed rewards, without increases, this plan will not succeed. The disengagement of faculty, the outward flow of excellence, this slow bleed will harm not only the well-being of Iowa State University - but the educational resources of the great State of Iowa.

These are the comments from the Faculty at Iowa State University.