

To: Faculty Senate
From: Budget and Economic Status Committee
Date: April 4, 2017
Re: 2016-2017 Committee Report

Committee Members: Chair Gavin Townsend, Raga Ahmed, Leonora Brown, Charlene Schmidt, James Arnett, Boris Belinsky, Nicholas Boer, Michael Bonnal, William Crowe, Tim Gaudin, Diane Halstead, Liu Xuhua, Brian Rogers. Ex officio: Vice-Chancellors Jerald Ainsworth and Richard Brown

The committee met four times (dates: 9/7, 11/2, 1/25 and 3/29) during the 2016-2017 academic year and met with representatives from the administration including Dr. Richard Brown and Dr. Jerald Ainsworth and Assistant Vice-Chancellor of Finance, Tyler Forrest.

The main committee discussions focused on:

1. the relationship between slight enrollment increases, better student retention rates, severe tuition caps, and modest faculty compensation;
2. the need to address salary compression and not just cost-of-living and merit/equity adjustments;
3. the overall solidity of the university's financial footing;
4. the faculty computer refresh program;
5. expenditures to refurbish Lupton Library and Holt Hall;
6. concerns that administration compensation is out-pacing faculty compensation;
7. effort to make the SimCenter self-sustaining;
8. the difficulties of interpreting the university's posted budget figures;
9. stalled efforts by the UT system to institute a workshop program for department head development;
10. the worth of getting UT system approval for differential lab fees;
11. the crucial need to secure more staff, especially security personnel;
12. concerns about outsourcing custodial, maintenance, and landscaping personnel;
13. the need to get updated comparative faculty compensation data from Sibson Consulting

The main recommendations of the committee include:

- To encourage the University Administration to continue to pursue its goal of having all faculty member salaries at 95% of the median average for rank as outlined in the Sibson report.
- To encourage the University administration to not narrow its focus to awarding increases based solely on merit, but to also keep the ongoing issue of salary compression for senior faculty as part of the equation.

Complete minutes of the four meetings, including the plan to address faculty salary compression, have been posted to the Committee's website on Blackboard

Respectfully Submitted,
Gavin Townsend, Chair of the Budget and Economic Status Committee