TO: Thomas Boyd, Interim Provost

FROM: Faculty Senate

DATE: December 19, 2016

SUBJECT: Faculty Salary Concerns

Data from the recent faculty climate survey suggest a rather low level of faculty satisfaction with salary. For example, ~15% of the faculty is somewhat or very satisfied with salary raises; ~11% is somewhat or very satisfied with cost of living adjustments; ~32% is somewhat or very satisfied with current salary; ~23% of the faculty somewhat or strongly agree that their salaries are comparable with those of peers at other institutions. In contrast, ~78% are somewhat or very satisfied with benefits.

Approximately 41% of the faculty indicated it is somewhat or very likely to leave or try to leave in the next three years. Approximately 64% of the faculty indicates that to some or great extent, it has considered leaving to increase salary. This points to a potential faculty retention problem at Mines.

As representatives of the faculty, Senate has compiled the following list of questions and comments to help us understand the process better.

1. To avoid conflicts of interest (or their appearance), can salary monies tied to promotion and tenure advances be separated from salary monies used to support the overall raise pool?
2. How do salary and start-up for new faculty hires impact the raise pool? Is money ever taken from the raise pool to augment the offer to new faculty?
3. Salary compression occurs when an organization has small differences in pay regardless of experience, skills, level, or seniority of its employees. A sensitive issue arises at Mines when new faculty are hired with starting salaries higher than those of existing faculty at the same rank with established teaching and research portfolios. Similarly, dissatisfaction arises when high performing faculty receive similar salary raises to low performing faculty. Mines should consider equity increases for existing faculty to prevent them from feeling undervalued and to mitigate internal departmental tensions.
    a. Do DHs, DDs, and Deans consider salary compression issues? If so, how?
    b. Do DHs, DDs, and Deans consider external salary data for existing faculty? If so, how?
    c. Could Mines new-hire budgets contain monies to provide equity increases to existing faculty?
4. How does the Mines administration determine salary increases considering cost-of-living data and merit based on teaching, research, and/or service?
5. The following items are not always clearly communicated to faculty:
    a. How and when is the annual faculty raise pool determined? How is this dependent on tuition increases?
    b. As new items are added to the operating budget, how do these expenditures impact faculty salaries?
    c. How much influence do Academic Affairs, the Board of Trustees, and the State of Colorado have on faculty salaries?
6. How are salary inequities across disciplines addressed at Mines? Large salary inequities may not promote a healthy, long-term, motivating work environment for faculty in lower compensated fields.
7. How are non-tenure-track faculty salaries balanced with respect to tenure-line faculty salaries? Newly hired Teaching Faculty, for example, with similar rank qualifications as newly hired tenure-track Assistant Professors typically earn lower starting salaries and find themselves on more gradual salary trajectories over time.
8. Does the Administration have a consistent, transparent strategy to retain star faculty?
9. The academic year begins in late August, but the first paycheck is received at the end of September. Can this undesirable practice be handled better?

Senate respectfully requests a written response to these questions by February 1, 2017 so we may share these responses with our faculty colleagues.