

Summary Update Number 11, February 15, 2005

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The purpose of this and previous Summary Updates is to keep all Faculty informed of recent events that have occurred and of initiatives currently in progress. All Summary Updates may be found on the webpage for the Faculty Council.

Announcement:

The OSU Board of Regents approved our recommended changes to Appendices A and B (University Charter and Bylaws of the Faculty Council) at their January 28th meeting. We are, therefore, now operating under these revised policies.

Recommendations and Resolutions Passed by Faculty Council

At the February 8 meeting, the Faculty Council approved two recommendations to President Schmidly.

Recommendation on "Competitive Graduate Student Stipend and Tuition Package"

The following recommendation passed unanimously:

The Faculty Council Recommends to President Schmidly that: The graduate student stipend and tuition package be increased to make it more competitive.

Resolution: Whereas the University has committed itself to the program to Restore, Reward, and Grow the Faculty, and Whereas the graduate student stipend and tuition package at Oklahoma State University is not competitive with that available from other comprehensive research universities, the Faculty supports University efforts to make the graduate student stipend and tuition package competitive with those of other universities.

The rationales given in support of the recommendation are (1) OSU Faculty made graduate student stipends and tuition a high priority when surveyed this year and last, (2) graduate students are an essential component of the research and teaching effort at OSU, and (3) recruitment and retention of faculty is closely linked to the University's ability to attract good graduate students.

Dr. Gordon Emslie, Dean of the Graduate College and Associate Vice-President for Research, spoke briefly in favor of the recommendation and provided some information related to his initiative to fulfill the above recommendation. Dr. Emslie seeks to raise the monthly

stipend of all graduate students on RA or TA appointments to the average of our peer institutions and to waive in-state tuition for these graduate students. Approximately \$900,000 has been requested for the first year of this effort to come during the next fiscal year. The plan calls for RA tuition to be paid from the supporting grants. Such line items, which are permitted by many granting agencies, are not included in the amount on which IDC must be paid.

Consideration of Proposed Promotion and Tenure Document Revision

As most of you are aware, the Faculty Committee of the Faculty Council is currently reviewing the suggested revisions to Appendix D, which is the policy statement dealing with promotion, tenure, reappointment. It also defines the type of appointments offered by the University. The Faculty Committee is meeting every two weeks to complete their recommendations. At the time of the last Faculty Council meeting, approximately half of the work was complete. Since additional changes with respect to the policies governing appointment, reappointment, rewards, and responsibilities of regents professors are currently under consideration, there will likely be additional work for the Faculty Committee.

To give the Faculty Committee adequate time to complete their review in a careful fashion, the following resolution was passed by the Council:

The Faculty Council Recommends to President Schmidly that: Faculty review of the proposed Promotion and Tenure document (Appendix D) be held in abeyance and the document not be submitted to the Regents until faculty have had a reasonable time to review a complete draft.

I believe this recommendation will be accepted by the Administration. Consequently, we can be assured that a careful and complete review will be forthcoming from the Faculty Committee. We may be able to bring the issue before the Council in March, but it may extend to April.

Nominations for Vice-Chair and Secretary of the General Faculty for 2005-2006

Following the procedures contained in the Charter and Bylaws, the Faculty Council nominated two candidates for Vice-Chair and two for Secretary of the General Faculty for the coming year. The candidates are

Vice-Chair:

Dr. Linda Austin, English

Dr. Bob Miller, Regents Professor and Head, Microbiology

Secretary:

Dr. Birne Binegar, Associate Professor, Mathematics

Dr. Reynaldo Martinez, Associate Professor, STCL

Additional candidates for these positions may be nominated by securing 15 names of faculty eligible to vote (this is reduced from 50 due to the approval of the revisions to Appendices A and B by the Regents at their January 28 meeting). You will be receiving material related to this via campus mail in the near future. Once the nomination period closes, statements from the candidates will be distributed to all faculty after which the election will be held using a mail-in ballot.

Pending Actions

The Administration has accepted our recommendation passed at the November 9 meeting of the Council to reconstitute the Student Technology Fee Committee (STFC). Vice-President Bosserman outlined the structure and procedures to be followed by this committee. The STFC will operate with dual chairpersons, one from the SGA and the other from the Faculty. The Committee will report directly to Dr. Bosserman. Like the original committee, the STFC will comprise 20 members, 10 students, 7 faculty, and 3 representatives of the Administration. There will be no IT member on the Committee. At the time of the meeting, formal approval from the SGA had not been obtained. Consequently, the document has not yet been formally accepted.

Committee Updates:

Retirement and Fringe Benefits Committee

Dr. Terry Lehenbauer, Chair, reported that the request to the IRS to approve provisions of House Bill 2226 that permit OSU employees to opt out of OTRS under various options has gone forward after some delay produced by legal counsel for OTRS. It may be a year before IRS approval is obtained.

Most of the approvals required for implementation of increased access to vested TIAA-CREF funds by OSU employees who qualify for retirement but choose to continue working are complete. The new rules allow for loans, hardship withdrawals of funds, periodic withdrawals of TIAA-CREF funds in amount not to exceed 5% of the fund balance per year, and annuitization of the funds prior to actual retirement. At present, Human Resources is seeking beta test cases for the new policies. If you are contemplating taking advantage of these new regulations, please contact Assistant Vice-President Anne Matoy. It will probably expedite your request and be very helpful to the University and other OSU employees.

The survey of Big XII health insurance benefits, premiums, and costs recommended by the Faculty Council is partially complete. Human Resources hopes to have this survey completed in the near future.

Research Committee

Dr. Alexander Rouch, Chair, reported that the Committee will be monitoring the implementation of the compromise agreement reached with the Library Administration in January. Under this agreement, hard copies of peer-reviewed journals that are available electronically will be moved to the Annex. Hard copies of peer-reviewed journals that are not available electronically will be returned to the main library. The execution of this agreement will require on the order of 100,000 volumes be moved. Therefore, completion of the work will probably extend into the summer. The Library Administration is doing this department by department beginning with the Department of Mathematics. Library Administrators will be requesting from each department a listing of journals currently stored at the Annex that the department wishes to have returned to the main library. Therefore, each department should be prepared to respond to the Library when asked.

Announcement:

The Student Affairs and Policies Committee will be scheduling a series of meetings in the near future at which the proposal that Rank-in-Class evaluations be included in the grading system and be made available to the students upon their request will be discussed. I will transmit a notice of these meetings times, which will be varied so as to give each faculty member maximum opportunity to attend at least one session.

To date, the Committee has received numerous suggestions for improvement. One of these is automatic Rank-in-Class grading by the computer to reduce faculty work. Several options are being considered: (1) a single button to instruct the computer to execute Rank-in-Class evaluation using the instructor's grades only, (2) options to enter the point totals and have the computer do full rank ordering or rank ordering subject to resolution limits entered by the professor.