

## Summary Update Number 4, August 18

Lionel M. Raff  
Regents Professor  
Chair of the General Faculty

During the previous six weeks, numerous events have occurred that bode well for the future of Oklahoma State University and shared governance between Regents, Administration, and Faculty. The purpose of this Summary Update is to keep all Faculty informed of the initiatives in progress. To be certain, each of the initiatives may unravel and fail. A lot of work, trust, and compromise are going to be required.

The Administration, with the approval of the OSU Regents, have implemented the first year of a four-year plan to replace the 100 faculty lost to the budget cuts of the past two years. The approximate annual cost of replacing these 100 positions is about \$10 million. This year, 26 of these positions will be filled. The Provost, Dr. Marlene Strathe, has consulted with all the Deans and many Unit Administrators in reaching her decision as to the placement of these positions so that the University and the students receive the most benefit possible. Although no one will agree with every decision, I hope the Faculty will support this effort.

On Friday, July 30, I addressed the Regents on a related matter, retention of quality faculty at OSU. My analogy to the Regents was that of a leaking dam. The water level behind the dam represents the number of faculty at OSU. This level is currently very low, in part because of the attrition produced by the budget cuts. The Administration's program to replace the 100 positions is, in effect, pouring water into the reservoir behind the dam. However, the dam contains a large hole through which our best faculty are escaping. My department alone lost four outstanding faculty members in the last six months. If we are going to fulfill the President's Strategic Plan and attain greatness, we must plug that hole.

To plug the hole, we must repair the OSU retirement program and we must raise OSU faculty salaries to the average of the Big 12. The first of these initiatives is well advanced thanks to the actions of the

President in providing for grandfathering into the pre-1993 TIAA-CREF program and in providing what is now an 11.5% retirement package. The passage of HB 2226, which is the result of a superb effort by Regents, Administration, Staff, and Faculty, is a major step in this direction. However, the salary initiative must still be addressed.

The program the Faculty Council is urging the Regents to adopt is similar to the Administration's four-year plan for filling the 100 vacant faculty positions. The annual cost of raising OSU faculty salaries to the Big 12 average is about \$10 million, according to rough figures provided by Mr. Joe Weaver. This is about the same as that for filling the 100 positions. If we can do one, we can do the other. Moreover, we must do the other or the first will fail. Why pour water behind a dam that has a huge hole in it?

The good news is that the response of the Regents and of the Administration has been excellent. At the ceremonial signing of HB 2226 at the State Capitol on August 4th, two Regents assured me that they were going to give this idea serious consideration. Specifically, they invited me to be present at the September meeting of the Regents and suggested that I would be pleased with what I hear on this issue. On the return trip from the Capitol, President Schmidly discussed possible revenue streams that might be directed toward achieving salary parity in the Big 12. On Friday, August 6, Mr. Weaver informed me that his office has been directed to study plans whereby such parity might be achieved. I have asked the Faculty Council's Budget Committee to specifically consider this issue. The officers of the Council have also requested that this initiative be made part of the Strategic Plan for OSU.

My remarks to the Regents also addressed a second issue, priorities for construction from the proceeds of the \$500 million bond issue should it pass. We informed the Regents and the Administration that our two top priorities are the multi-disciplinary science building and the renovation of South Murray Hall to provide first-class facilities for the humanities and the social sciences. I have recently asked the Facilities, Safety and Security Committee of the Faculty Council to consider this issue. Informal feedback from the President suggests that he sees no reason we cannot

execute these two projects provided the bond issue passes. To pass the bond issue, we are going to need faculty participation at the Capitol to educate our new senators and representatives. There will be about 60 of these new legislators due to term limits. I hope each of you will volunteer to help with this project when the Faculty Council makes the request this coming academic year.

Finally, we have been working to develop procedures wherein the expenditures of OSU Foundation accounts are subject to scrutiny by OSU Faculty. The OSU Foundation is not subject to open records laws since it is not a public institution. I have had discussions with the past, interim, and new Director of the Foundation about this point. On Friday, August 6, I received a phone call from Mr. Kirk Jewell, Director. He informed me that he is working with Vice-President Bosserman to develop a procedure wherein appropriate oversight of expenditures will become standard practice. On Monday, August 16, I spoke with Dr. Bosserman about this issue. He provided complete records of all IT expenditures on Foundation accounts. He also indicated that similar documentation would be provided to the Council should the need arise. I consider this to be a superb response to our concerns.

The academic year begins next week. The Faculty Council will begin its work almost immediately. With the support of the General Faculty, the Council can become a force in achieving shared governance. Without it, it will be business as usual at Oklahoma State University. I prefer the former. Contact your councilors, the Committee Chairs (see the Faculty Council webpage), or me with your concerns and suggestions. We will address them.

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