

*JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE*  
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)  
Regular session – November 9, 2020 – 3:30 p.m. – via Zoom

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*Note: The remarks of the Senators and others are summarized and not verbatim. A recording of this meeting is available by appointment in the Faculty Senate office.*

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The Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor Amy Bradshaw, Chair.

**PRESENT:** Allen, Anderson, Benjamin, Bradshaw, Butler, Cline, Cryer, Cuccia, Dee, Edwards, Fithian, Fuenzalida, Hambright, Hoagland, Hougen, Hsieh, Jervis, Jiran, Kornelson, Lai, Lifset, Lyst, McCarthy, Miller, Moore-Russo, Mortimer, Muller, Natale, Olufowote, Parsons, Randall, Raymond, Remling, Riggs, Rubenstein, Schmeltzer, Schwartz, Shehata, Sikavitsas, Steele, Stetson, Stock, Teodoriu, Tepker, Wang, Weaver, Worley, Zhu

Provost’s Representative: Jill Irvine, Lori Snyder  
Staff Senate Representative: Crystal Ary  
ISA Representative(s): Christopher Cook  
SGA Representative(s):  
Guests: David Surratt, Tassie Hirschfeld

**ABSENT:** Bergey, Burns, Dunn, Nollert

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**APPROVAL OF JOURNAL**

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular session of October 12, 2020 was approved without revisions.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The remaining regular meetings of the Faculty Senate for 2020-21-20 will be held at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom on the following Mondays: December 14, January 25 (if needed), February 8, March 8, April 12, and May 10. Meetings of the Senate are regularly open to attendance by all members of the University Community and representatives of the press.

The College of International Studies is seeking short-term course proposals for the Fall 2021 and/or Spring 2022 academic terms at our Study Centers located in Arezzo, Italy and Puebla, Mexico. This is an opportunity for faculty to teach a short-term course in addition to participating in student life at the center and collaborating with the local community. The deadline to submit a proposal is December 7 and can be sent to Annaly Beck, Associate Director of Center Operations, at [annaly@ou.edu](mailto:annaly@ou.edu). Questions may be sent to Scott Fritzen, CIS Dean, at [sfritzen@ou.edu](mailto:sfritzen@ou.edu) or Annaly Beck at [annaly@ou.edu](mailto:annaly@ou.edu).

The Faculty Senate is sad to report the death of faculty member Thordur Runolfsson (Electrical & Computer Engineering) on June 17, 2020.

### ***SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Amy Bradshaw***

The Senate Chair's Report was distributed to all regular faculty members prior to this meeting along with the meeting agenda; it is attached. Prof. Bradshaw asked if there were questions or comments about any of the items in the report. There were none.

### **REMARKS BY DAVID SURRATT, VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF STUDENTS**

Prof. Bradshaw introduced the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students David Surratt. He has been in this role at OU for almost two years. They serve students on all the OU campuses. He and his staff see four pillars in their service towards students.



He has asked four members of his staff to serve as Advisory Committee Chairs:

- Sophia Morren, Director, McNair Scholars  
Educational Access and Scholarship
- Becky Barker, Director, Leadership & Volunteerism  
Leadership, Service, & Engagement
- Scott Miller, Director, University Counseling Services & Chair, Behavior Intervention Team  
Advocacy, Safety, and Risk Management
- Amy Davenport, Director, Fitness + Recreation  
Wellness and Personal Development

They are evaluating ways to support students under DACA. They are also looking at student death protocols and how they can support families as well as other students.

They have hired a new student conduct officer this year. They have also started an eSports program. They are working with the Provost's office to look at how to re-envision Camp Crimson and other student orientation opportunities. They received approval for an increase to the student activity fee, only the second increase in the last 30 years.

Right now, they are focusing on COVID-19 procedures and testing for the Spring semester. While student positivity rates have stayed constant, there has been a large increase in the surrounding community. In addition, there are flu shot clinics and you can have both the flu and COVID at the same time. They have also been working with faculty to support students throughout the election season.

The floor was opened to questions. Prof. Shehata asked what the obstacles are to ramping up testing for all students, not just those that live in the residence halls. VP Surratt said that compliance has been a challenge. If you require testing, then you must have a process in place to enforce that. We are also looking at less expensive testing options. If we only test and do not do other mitigation strategies, that can create a false sense of safety.

Prof. Muller has noticed that students have been struggling both academically and emotionally. He would like to know what resources he can direct students towards. VP Surratt said that the Counseling Center at Goddard is very helpful. He also encourages students to practice self-care. He also recommends that students stay engaged with other members of the OU community. First-year students living in the residence halls can also be directed to talk to their RA. VP Surratt said that many students have expressed appreciation to him for the support they have been receiving from faculty. A big part of conversations lately with students has been how to manage both anxiety and fatigue.

There were no further questions and Prof. Bradshaw thanked VP Surratt for speaking with the Senate.

***REMARKS BY JILL IRVINE, INTERIM SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST***

Prof. Bradshaw introduced Interim Provost Jill Irvine. She appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Senate and wanted to compliment the work Student Affairs has been doing and their partnership with the Provost's Office. Provost Irvine realizes that faculty have been putting in a lot of extra work this semester to respond to our current circumstance. The health and safety of our community (faculty, staff, students) is our top priority at OU.

She would like to bring up the impact of our current situation with COVID on faculty success. A few weeks ago, OU launched its strategic plan. It helps to give us a clear sense of where we are going as a community. A central part of the strategic plan has focused on expanding and enhancing research and

creative activity. They are also looking at ways to improve teaching and also the diversity efforts at OU. These goals are ambitious. To be successful, we must support faculty in navigating this terrain over the next months and years. A key one is faculty evaluation. Last spring, Provost Irvine was also to work on a plan to allow faculty to expand their probationary period by one year. This was an important first step, but is not enough in addressing how the pandemic has affected faculty work. She recognizes that faculty have invested a large amount of time in alternative teaching methods. The pandemic has also affected the ability of faculty to travel and engage in laboratory research. Faculty have also addressed issues in their personal lives related to the pandemic. She has been impressed by the resourcefulness that faculty have shown.

Provost Irvine announced that her office has been working on an NSF proposal for faculty evaluation especially in relation to marginalized faculty. At the same time, OU has been looking at revamping the faculty evaluation process across the campus. There is also a faculty task force looking at best practices in teaching evaluations. Provost Irvine has been working with the FSEC, deans, and chairs to get feedback on our faculty evaluation process. This year, we will not be using numerical evaluation of faculty. This will give faculty the chance to present a wider and more robust picture of what they are doing. We will be emphasizing the development of and feedback for mid-career faculty. Provost Irvine said that she will be sending information out this week to faculty on the new process.

Provost Irvine said that faculty hiring has been re-started and those searches are underway. This spring, there will be two parallel RFRA processes. One will be through the college and be similar to in the past. The new process will be run by the Provost's and VPRP's office for faculty to support OU's strategic plan objectives.

In terms of faculty retention, they are gathering more data and reviewing the data they have collected over the last 10 years. They are looking at both female faculty and faculty of color and both groups are leaving at a rate higher than would be expected.

Provost Irvine said that regular, transparent communication is an essential part of her job. The channels of communication need to be two-way. She noted that input from faculty played a role in shaping both our response to COVID and our revamping of the faculty evaluation process.

The floor was opened to questions. Prof. Miller asked if we are still on track to continue transferring graduate student fees over to tuition, so that our GTAs can anticipate seeing a little more relief. Provost Irvine said that we are still progressing with that. She noted that Graduate College Dean Randy Hewes has advocated speeding up this process.

Prof. Jervis asked if the faculty retention data will be available. Provost Irvine said that because of the numbers they are dealing with, they will have to de-identify the data to protect confidentiality, but they will make as much data available as possible.

Prof. Teodoriu said that it seems there is a lot of efforts to evaluate faculty. But how about evaluations of other OU personnel. Will OU implement a general evaluation policy? Provost Irvine said that President Harroz would like a more robust administrative evaluation process and that is underway. She added that administrators are developing their key performance indicators (KPIs). Provost Irvine invited Associate Provost Lori Snyder to speak to this. Associate Provost Snyder said that marginalization is more of an issue if you are comparing faculty members to each other and not looking at them as individuals.

Prof. Bradshaw asked if the new process will be more time-consuming for both chairs and committee A members. Because of COVID, there will be additional efforts required, but most units feel that the effort will be similar, but will yield greater outcomes.

Prof. Cline said that the guidelines for faculty evaluations for 2020 are fairly detailed and asks how much additional detail should be in the guidelines composed by committees A for their departments.

Prof. Miller asked whether the P/NP vs. letter grade option for this term been settled? Provost Irvine said that she met with the SGA. She also consulted with the FSEC and Student Affairs. She doesn't anticipate introducing a P/NP option. There are three reasons. The first was about student academic performance. They pulled the mid-term grades and we do not see a reduction in grades so far. She believes that the flexibility in the system and from faculty have been a factor in this. The second reason is that it is not the norm or common practice for our peers to move to a P/NP system this semester. The concern is that if there are 2-3 semesters with students receiving P/NP grades, that could very negatively impact them in applying for future opportunities. The third issue was that with 2-3 semesters of P/NP grades would make it difficult to evaluate student progress within a major. They are providing students with additional tutoring opportunities and the decision to withdraw from courses this semester will not count against the overall limit of five.

Prof. Randall asked whether the non-numerical faculty evaluation system is a one-time event or a longer-term change. Provost Irvine said they will have a conversation about that after they see how it works this year. Prof. Shehata asked, that as COVID cases spike across the country and in OK and Norman, and with flu season upon us, and with ICU beds full or near full in a number of hospitals, and likely even higher cases in the coming weeks and months, is the University contemplating moving to completely online teaching next semester? They are continuing to look at the situation and will address changes as they occur. They will also be watching for any changes to the federal guidelines as we have a new administration coming in. Prof. Shehata expressed concern about large groups of students he has seen congregating around campus socially and the potential for those to become super-spreader events. Provost Irvine said that Student Affairs has taken a positive view of trying to encourage good behavior and that other campuses that have cracked down on students have not had any better response.

There were no further questions and Prof. Bradshaw thanked Provost Irvine for speaking with the Senate.

***CHANGES TO BYLAWS RELATED TO COMPENSATION COMMITTEE NAME AND FACULTY SENATE OFFICERS ELECTION TIMELINE***

Prof. Bradshaw said there are two changes to the bylaws up for a vote at today's meeting. They were both discussed at the October 12, 2020 meeting. They are to add the word benefits to the FCC committee name. The other is to alter the FS office election timeline.

(d) Committee on Faculty Compensation.

*Charge:* This Committee is responsible to the Faculty Senate for reviewing and recommending policy on questions related to the economic welfare of the faculty, including fringe benefits.

In carrying out this responsibility, the Committee shall:

- (1) Monitor, each year, the entire process by which salary increases are requested and

#### A. OFFICERS:

1. The officers of the Senate shall consist of a Chair, a Chair-Elect, and a Secretary.

Consider  
changing  
to April

2. The Chair-Elect and the Secretary shall be elected by ballot at a meeting of the Senate in **May**. The ballot shall seek to have at least two candidates for each office. Candidates must have previously served as members of the Executive Committee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. In the event of a tie between two candidates, candidates may offer brief remarks in support of their election, and/or may withdraw from the election. Subsequent rounds of voting will be conducted until one candidate achieves a simple majority. If three or more candidates stand for election and no candidate achieves a simple majority, the top two candidates will enter into a runoff election. If there is a tie among run-off candidates, all candidates may offer brief remarks and/or withdraw. Subsequent rounds of voting will be conducted until one candidate of the run-off candidates achieves a simple majority.

If either office is vacated, a replacement shall be elected at the next meeting of the Senate.

3. The Chair-Elect will succeed to the office of Chair whenever it is vacated or when his or her own successor is elected. Normally, the Chair's tenure of office will be from May to the following May.

Consider changing to April 1

4. For officers elected between **May 1** and January 31, the term of office will be until the following May. For officers elected between February 1 and **April 30**, the term of office will be until the second May following.

Consider changing to March 31

5. Both the Secretary and Chair-Elect shall be *ex officio* members of the Senate unless they are also serving as an elected senator.

Prof. Tepker made a motion to call the questions on changing the name of the committee to the Faculty Senate Committee on Compensation and Benefits and Prof. Natale seconded.

Prof. Miller made a motion to call the question on suggested changes to the election of officers. Prof. Natale seconded it. Both motions were approved by the Senate and the Bylaws will be changed.

#### ***ELECTION, COUNCILS/COMMITTEES/BOARDS***

Prof. Bradshaw presented the list of mid-year replacements to fill vacancies on both University councils, committees, and board as well as Faculty Senate committees. She opened the floor to discussion. There was none.

The Faculty Senate approved the nominations from the Senate Committee on Committees to fill vacancies on university and campus councils, committees, and boards (attached).

**FACULTY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE (FCBC) PROPOSALS**

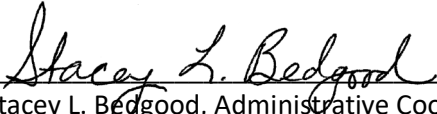
Prof. Bradshaw said that there have been three proposals (attached) made by the Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee (FCBC) for discussion and approval by the Senate, and that these proposals would be discussed prior to a formal vote at the December meeting. Prof. Bradshaw gave the floor to Prof. Natale who is both a senator and Chair of the FCBC. He reviewed each of the three proposals and Prof. Tassie Hirschfeld (a member of the FCBC) provided additional information about the “Additional Protections for Faculty from COVID-19 Related Health Costs and Disability” proposal. Prof. Natale recommended that those with questions over the next month contact him directly.

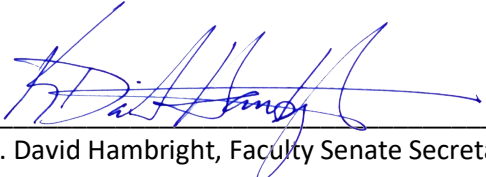
**NEW BUSINESS**

Prof. Bradshaw said she would entertain any new business. There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, December 14, 2020, via Zoom.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacey L. Bedgood, Administrative Coordinator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
K. David Hambright, Faculty Senate Secretary



## **Faculty Senate Chair's Report**

Amy C. Bradshaw

October 10 – November 9, 2020

Following the October FS meeting, during which students presented and discussed a proposal for P/NP grading in Fall 2020, Vice Provost Mark Morvant sent me the Spring 2020 P/NP data, which was forwarded to senators by Stacey Bedgood on October 14. FSEC continued exploration and discussion of possibilities and concerns related to the P/NP issue during the time between the October and November senate meetings.

On **October 14**, the FSEC met with a Candidate for Dean of Libraries.

On **October 15**, I met with Keri Kornelson and Dave Hambright for our **weekly FS Officers meeting**.

In **October 20**, I forwarded names of nominees to serve on **Campus Crisis Response Team (CCRT)**.

On **October 21**, I attended the **Staff Senate meeting**.

On **October 22**, I met with Keri Kornelson and Dave Hambright for our **weekly FS Officers meeting**. Administrative Coordinator Stacey Bedgood also joined the meeting. Among other topics, we continued ongoing conversations about making Faculty Senate actions and information easier to access. In the recently added "**Latest News**" space on the main FS website, we added a new "**View Previous News**" link to a new page that will include all actions of the current Faculty Senate term since the September FS meeting, including Chair's Reports, Informal Meeting Notes, and any formal statements or actions.

On **October 23**, I provided feedback to Interim Provost Jill Irvine regarding **Faculty Annual Evaluations for 2020**, expressing FSEC's strong unanimous preference for narrative only evaluation. I also provided feedback related to ongoing discussion and consideration of the cap on Renewable Term faculty, and possible paths to promotion.

On **October 26** I learned that the **Graduate Student Senate had passed the P/NP bill** with a minor amendment, and that it was expected to go back to Undergraduate Congress on October 28, after which it would be sent to the SGA president for approval or veto. However, the Undergraduate Congress was not able to meet as expected because, following the ice storm beginning on October 26, the OU Norman campus was closed for October 27-28. Although campus and classes reopened on Thursday, October 29, many Norman residents were still without electricity and Internet service more than a week later. Therefore, our initial thought that we might seek senators' preferences between meetings after the SGA processes were complete was not feasible. I later learned that on November 5, P/NP formally passed by congress and senate. Both during the October 12 FS meeting and during the subsequent FSEC



conversation and considerations, including formal and informal feedback from senators and other faculty members, FSEC sensed a clear desire among faculty to support students to be successful. Although some of the strongest objections to P/NP in Fall 2020 were allayed by the students proposing that only C and higher count for a pass, there remained substantial concern among many of faculty we consulted that adopting a P/NP in Fall 202 would cause problems in the future in terms of the overall number of P/NP courses allowed, and related to future scholarship and graduate school applications. Overall, we did not sense either strong or uniform enough support for an outright endorsement of the students' proposal, nor strong or uniform enough objection for a formal statement against the proposal.

**On October 29, I received a survey link related to the Faculty Advisory Committee of the State Regents for Higher Education** and forwarded it to the Norman Campus regular faculty via the facsen@ou.edu account.

**On October 30, I met with Interim Provost Jill Irvine**, during which we discussed Faculty Annual Evaluations, and considerations related to the students proposal for P/NP grading in Fall 2020. We also discussed the need to support students who are most at risk of academic harm by the pandemic, regardless of what is decided regarding P/NP for Fall 2020. I asked how the university can support our most vulnerable students via policy and practice, and we discussed some examples of such supports. She indicated she would continue to explore these ideas with others throughout the campus. (Our meeting was cut short by another electricity outage.)

**On November 2, FSEC met for our monthly meeting.** We discussed P/NP grading concerns and considerations and were later joined by VP and Dean of Students David Surrat, and Interim Provost Jill Irvine. The same day, I forwarded to the Committee on Committees nominations to fill vacancies on FS committees (due to sabbaticals, retirements, etc.)

**On November 4, I attended the monthly Deans Council meeting.** Later that day, **FSEC met with Pres Harroz.** During the meeting, we discussed changes related to budget, finances, and accounting, recruitment of marginalized and faculty of color, partner accommodations and opportunity hires, the role of OU Tribal Liaison, and other topics. Following meeting, FSEC continued our discussion of retired faculty benefits concerns.

**Proposed Changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws  
November 9, 2020**

Change to Faculty Compensation Committee name:

<p>Page 9 of Charter &amp; Bylaws (charbylw.pdf)</p>	<p>Consider inserting the words " and Benefits"</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>(d) <u>Committee on Faculty Compensation.</u></p>		
<p><i>Charge:</i> This Committee is responsible to the Faculty Senate for reviewing and recommending policy on questions related to the economic welfare of the faculty, including fringe benefits.</p>		
<p>In carrying out this responsibility, the Committee shall:</p>		
<p>(1) Monitor, each year, the entire process by which salary increases are requested and</p>		

Change to Faculty Senate Officers election timeline:

<p>Page 5 of Charter &amp; Bylaws (charbylw.pdf)</p>	<p>BY-LAWS OF THE FACULTY SENATE, Norman Campus</p>
<p><b>A. OFFICERS:</b></p>	
<p>1. The officers of the Senate shall consist of a Chair, a Chair-Elect, and a Secretary.</p>	
<p>Consider changing to April</p>	<p>2. The Chair-Elect and the Secretary shall be elected by ballot at a meeting of the Senate in <b>May</b>. The ballot shall seek to have at least two candidates for each office. Candidates must have previously served as members of the Executive Committee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. In the event of a tie between two candidates, candidates may offer brief remarks in support of their election, and/or may withdraw from the election. Subsequent rounds of voting will be conducted until one candidate achieves a simple majority. If three or more candidates stand for election and no candidate achieves a simple majority, the top two candidates will enter into a runoff election. If there is a tie among run-off candidates, all candidates may offer brief remarks and/or withdraw. Subsequent rounds of voting will be conducted until one candidate of the run-off candidates achieves a simple majority.</p>
<p>If either office is vacated, a replacement shall be elected at the next meeting of the Senate.</p>	
<p>3. The Chair-Elect will succeed to the office of Chair whenever it is vacated or when his or her own successor is elected. Normally, the Chair's tenure of office will be from May to the following May.</p>	
<p>4. For officers elected between <b>May 1</b> and January 31, the term of office will be until the following May. For officers elected between February 1 and <b>April 30</b>, the term of office will be until the second May following.</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Consider changing to April 1</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Consider changing to March 31</i></p>	
<p>5. Both the Secretary and Chair-Elect shall be <i>ex officio</i> members of the Senate unless they are also serving as an elected senator.</p>	

FACULTY SENATE NOMINATIONS FOR VACANCIES ON  
UNIVERSITY COUNCILS, COMMITTEES, AND BOARDS  
NOVEMBER 2020

Faculty Appeals Board:

complete 2020-21 term of Rich Cifelli: Doyle Yoon (Journalism)

complete 2020-21 term of Dan Swan: Zhibo Yang (Chemistry & Biochemistry)

University Libraries Committee:

complete 2020-23 term from Architecture of Stefanie Pilat: Mia Kile (Interior Design)

Student Conduct Hearing Panel:

complete 2020-21 term of Ihhan Demiralp: Megan Shaner (Law)

# COVID-19 Disrupted Sabbaticals

**Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committee  
Passed FSCB by a vote of 3 yea, 2 nay on September 8, 2020**

## **Summary**

The OU Faculty handbook states: “Sabbatical leaves of absence are among the most important means by which an institution's academic program is strengthened, a faculty member's teaching effectiveness enhanced, and scholarly usefulness enlarged. The major purpose is to provide an opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and training.”

Faculty on sabbatical that extended through spring of 2020 experienced several unique disruptions that could not have been foreseen when they completed their application. These disruptions involved data collection with community research partners such as schools; differential accessibility to state and federal funding agencies experiencing mandatory shutdowns; access to research laboratory facilities and supports; and unexpected increases in caretaking (child, partner, elder). As a result, faculty on a sabbatical that extended through Spring 2020 have been unable to realize the benefits of uninterrupted time and focus on furthering their scholarship.

## **Issue: Timeline for Sabbatical Eligibility**

The current policy indicates that after six years of service that eligible faculty may apply for sabbatical leave.

## **Proposal: Amended time for Sabbatical Eligibility**

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University allows for waivers from the current policy for those who were on a yearlong 2019-2020 or spring 2020 sabbatical during the 2019-2020 academic year. Waivers could include:

- Being eligible for submitting a sabbatical application after three years.
- Course and service releases over a period of time that is negotiated between the faculty and their unit Chair or Committee A rather than a dedicated sabbatical period.

# Faculty Remuneration Policy

Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committees  
Passed FSCBC by a vote of 5 yea and 0 nay on September 8, 2020

## Summary

Currently, OU Norman campus faculty may earn up to 25% of their full-time base pay. OUHSC and OU Law does not have the same restrictions as the same professional privilege is not allowed for the academic professionals on the Norman campus. While the policy's intention appears to encourage the faculty member to focus on their primary job, this one-size fits all policy, unnecessarily prohibits productive faculty from additional compensation beyond the 25% threshold for either teaching, research or consulting.

## Issues: Inequity and inflexibility in additional compensation policy

Currently, 5.7.2 of the OU faculty handbook reads: After prior written arrangement, faculty members may engage in professional activities for extra remuneration (from within the University or from outside sources or in any combination of the two) to a maximum of 25% of their professional effort.

## Proposal

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University amend the policy to the following:

- After prior written arrangement, faculty members may engage in professional activities for extra remuneration (from within the University or from outside sources or in any combination of the two) beyond the 25% given they are **meeting expectations** for their academic units annual performance review.

# **Additional Protections for Faculty from COVID-19 Related Health Costs and Disability**

**Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committee  
Passed FSCB by a vote of 4 yea, 1 nay on September 8, 2020**

## **Summary**

A number of recent publications have shown that patients who contract COVID-19 may suffer prolonged illness lasting several months, even if they were previously healthy and had no pre-existing conditions prior to infection (see sources below). Doctors are also realizing that some patients go on to develop kidney damage, neurological problems, cognitive decline, permanent lung scarring and/or other complications that require extensive rehabilitation. The newness of the disease means that these different clinical profiles are still not well understood.

## **Issue: Faculty and Staff Risks**

These uncertainties mean that OU faculty and staff who return to in person teaching or other campus job duties in the fall will be at risk for an infection that could require extensive hospitalization and prolonged rehabilitation services. Some employees could end up permanently disabled. While faculty with pre-existing conditions have been given the opportunity to petition for adjusted job duties in the fall, there is no guarantee that young, healthy faculty will be spared these long-term complications if they contract the virus.

OU is among one of a slight majority of schools that self-insures employee healthcare. This model of providing health insurance is generally advantageous for cost control but remains untested as a model to address a 21<sup>st</sup> century pandemic that will make the already unpredictable costs of healthcare difficult to project.

## **Proposal: Additional Protections: Funds for Out of Pocket Health Costs**

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University create a special fund for faculty and staff who may need assistance with out of pocket health costs (including co-pays and deductibles) in the 2020-2021 academic year due to COVID-19 infection. While several federal policy initiatives (such as the CARES Act) have sought to limit out of pocket costs for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, this benefit is likely to expire before the beginning of the fall semester.

## **Additional Protections: Enhanced Coverage for Short- and Long-Term Disability**

In addition to catastrophic out of pocket costs, COVID-19 infection may result in long term disability. The current disability insurance offered by OU includes short term disability (60% of salary, with coverage up to 26 weeks), and long-term disability (3 plans with variable coverage, up to 2/3 of salary, uncertain duration). The Faculty Senate is also requesting that the University either negotiate with an insurance provider to offer additional disability insurance with an open enrollment period or set aside additional funds that could be used to bolster the payout of existing short- and long-term disability policies.

## **Stop-Loss Coverage Review:**

Self-insured plans usually feature stop-gap coverage for employees whose costs exceed \$50,000-\$100,000. Faculty side is requesting that University review projections for current COVID-19 projected health care costs and consider those against the current stop-loss coverage provisions. Faculty should not face financial ruin to comply with the universities reopening plans.

## **Improving Faculty Confidence in Re-Opening**

The Faculty Senate appreciates that the University has already invested significant resources in redesigning classroom spaces to encourage social distancing in ways that will protect faculty. We are confident

that appropriate precautions will reduce the risk of outbreaks in the campus community. But at the same time, we encourage the university to demonstrate additional support for faculty by pledging to fund these initiatives. Faculty who return to in person teaching should not have to face devastating out of pocket medical costs or lasting disability for complying with the University's re-opening plans.

## SOURCES

1. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-12/covid-19-s-health-effects-can-last-long-after-virus-is-gone>
2. <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/8/21251899/coronavirus-long-term-effects-symptoms>
3. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-symptoms-long-haulers/>
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/06/covid-19-coronavirus-longterm-symptoms-months/612679/>
5. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-kidney-damage-caused-by-covid19>
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