

Faculty Petition on Salaries

Walt Hunter, Assistant Professor of World Literature; Matt Hooley Assistant Professor of English; David Coombs, Assistant Professor, Literature and History of Technology; Angela Naimou, Associate Professor of English

The recent COACHE survey inarguably demonstrated that the faculty here at Clemson University are deeply demoralized, and the single highest-ranked source of discontent is the University's practices and policies of faculty compensation. Clemson has been undergoing a moment of unparalleled growth, during which the athletic teams have new state-of-the-art facilities, and key administrators and football coaches recently received significant pay raises of between seven and twenty-five percent. The university has undertaken major fundraising efforts (bringing in \$109 million last year, according to the Anderson-Independent) on the strength of faculty excellence. But the faculty itself has been largely excluded from the benefits of the university's current expansion and prosperity. Cost-of-living adjustments are rare, and meager, and the process by which merit in research and teaching translate into salary increases is disorganized, inconsistent, and opaque. Many extraordinary researchers and teachers go on year after year with no change in base salary to reflect their work. We believe that the issue needs to be addressed promptly, and by more than a token gesture.

What follows are 3 theses detailing the problems with the university administration's current approach to faculty compensation.

- 1) Faculty compensation increases should be distributed to address the deplorably low pay of lecturers, especially in CAAH, and the inequities in special faculty compensation between Clemson's colleges.
- 2) Salary increases should be clearly and consistently tied to merit, and cost of living increases should be awarded regularly. Most R1 universities of the type Clemson hopes to emulate distribute cost-of-living raises based on a consistent salary scale in addition to merit-based raises awarded by department chairs. Neither system exists at Clemson. Instead, university departments have spent the last two years creating specialized rubrics that would theoretically determine merit-based pay increases, but these rubrics have been so far used only for faculty evaluation without any connection to pay increases. The university currently adheres to a retention-based model of awarding raises with which there are two significant problems: a) faculty are rewarded for their efforts to leave the university, rather than improve it; and b) the inherently ad hoc nature of a retention-based approach leads to waste and wildly inconsistent salaries, increasing salary compression. It also leads to the appearance, if not the fact, of raises being distributed through shady backroom deals. We note here that in the event that the university begins distributing merit-raises under the newly approved specialized rubrics, such raises must be given regularly to meaningfully address these inconsistencies and inequalities.
- 3) Merit-based compensation should be distributed in a way that addresses salary compression and better gender equity. The current haphazard system of compensation has led to a situation in which faculty salaries are lopsided in ways that systematically disadvantage Clemson's women faculty. We have been told informally by the Provost that clear cases of gender discrimination are exceedingly low at Clemson: we look forward to seeing the results of the analysis of salary equity commissioned by Clemson

from a private law firm. As yet those results and supporting data have not been released. In the experience of many colleagues is that gender bias affects salary at the Associate rank, even when it does not meet the threshold of gender discrimination as defined in the private study. Other universities have devised formulae by which merit-based raises can simultaneously be awarded to reduce compression. Clemson should adopt such a system.

We hope the administration will recognize the legitimacy of our concerns. Only by acting urgently to address them will Clemson make progress towards achieving its full potential as a university and a community.