



Response letter to President Crow Regarding Future Faculty Compensation Academic Year 2018-2019

Dear President Crow,

On behalf of the faculty members and academic professionals represented by the University Senate, we would like to thank you for your May 9, 2018 response to the Senate regarding faculty compensation at ASU. We also appreciate you reaffirming your commitment to ensuring competitive salaries for all our faculty members when compared to our ABOR peer institutions. In closing your May 9th letter, you indicated we can advance from our current position. This letter comes to you in the spirit of continued advancement of salaries of all faculty from full professors to instructors so that we are not only able to embrace and increase our national academic reputation but also promote our compensation levels as a source of pride and acknowledgement for the hard work and innovation this faculty has embraced and continues to execute. We envision that this letter will help further discussions between ASU's faculty and administration on the question of salary compensation at all faculty levels and result in the development of a strategic plan that will address faculty concerns and strengthen the educational community of ASU.

Our faculty is committed to supporting the ASU mission and vision and maintaining our stature as the most innovative institution that is world-class across many fields and disciplines. Faculty innovation has enabled the University to achieve its successes despite decreased resources. We are committed to the University charter and the ambitious goals set by our University as well as those of the Arizona Board of Regents. We endeavor to partner with the leadership of the University to achieve these goals so that the University prospers and maintains its global impact. In addition to research, faculty and academic professionals work diligently to offer quality instruction, and to mentor students and assume responsibility for their overall well-being, which is instrumental to strong student retention at ASU.

Seeing that our faculty members compete with other institutions based on our academic and educational achievements, we believe that a most meaningful comparison for faculty salaries is among peer institutions with similar academic rankings. Salary comparisons among PAC-12 universities, which are grouped because of an athletic affiliation, are not the best representation of the overall market for which our units compete for students, faculty members, awards, grants and other types of recognition. While we did review the data you provided, it remains frustrating that assistant and associate professor salaries are in the bottom half of our peers even when adjusted for regional price parity. Equally challenging to the faculty is a review of the ABOR's 2018 annual personnel report which states, *"All three universities' average faculty salaries rank at or near the bottom of their peers. For ASU, 11 of the 15 peer universities pay higher average salaries... When total compensation is calculated,*

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Arizona university faculty still rank at the bottom percentile compared to peer institutions". The same report shows that the percentage increase in faculty salary required for ASU to reach median salary of peers was at 6.7% for FY 2017. You mentioned we are not far off the mark, but these gaps are significant to our faculty members and we believe that based on our collective performance we should strive immediately to propel our salaries to a stronger position.

Although we welcome and appreciate your commitment to increase assistant professor salaries to raise our position among our peer institutions, we feel strongly that we should ensure the same, if not more, for our associate and full professors in order to recognize their value and contributions. Tenured faculty (associate and full professors) are the leading scholars and main contributors to our research, education and service at ASU and they are the engine for driving up ASU's academic ranking. While the average salary of an ASU full professor is in a higher position than the other tenured ranks, salary compression is a pronounced issue at ASU, throughout all faculty ranks. Salary increase for tenured/tenure-track faculty at ASU averages 2.18%¹ per year in the past 10 years which only incrementally beats the rate of inflation.² We are also concerned about the salaries for non-tenure-track faculty, who bear the largest share of the university's instructional obligations and enable the university to attract the student body that it does and fulfill its educational mission, yet many of whom are underpaid.

Addressing the salary lag at any faculty rank only by increasing starting salaries and through high paying targeted hires, will further exacerbate the problem and damage the morale of both tenured and non-tenured faculty members. It is of the opinion of the Senate that to both attract and retain the quality faculty members needed to execute our mission, it is imperative that we have a strategic plan that, on average, compensates all faculty members (tenured, NTE & APs) at the top half of our ABOR peer institutions. In the absence of this plan we have the very real potential to attract outstanding assistant professors, train and nurture them to become successful, only to risk losing them later to schools with more competitive compensations at the associate or full professor rank. Losing faculty members at the associate or full professor level can be much more damaging for the university both financially and academically. To replace them, ASU not only has to offer significantly higher compensation to recruit associate or full professors from other universities (which invariably perpetuates the problem of salary compression and salary inversion), but also has to endure the disruptions to our teaching and research programs, graduate and undergraduate advising, not to mention loss in external funding, university reputation and faculty morale. As such, we request that the university strives to pair strong student retention rate with strong faculty retention rate, which is more sustainable in the long run.

¹ Based on data that President Crow sent with the 2-21-2018 response letter.

² According to ABOR 2018 Annual Personnel Report, inflation has averaged 2% in the past few years and is expected to rise to 2.5% by the end of 2018.

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In our original letter to you the Senate expressed concern over how merit pay adjustments were distributed. The University Senate Personnel Committee conducted an informal poll with the Senators last year regarding the merit pay process and found that most Senators did not feel sufficiently informed of the process involved in merit pay and how it was distributed among units and their faculty. Therefore, we particularly encourage improved transparency and faculty involvement in the development of policies and procedures related to the distribution of faculty salary performance funds. This is outlined in ACD 511 - 01. We believe this step will not only result in a better strategic plan, but also energize the faculty, provide the opportunity to better close the salary compression gaps and enhance our already strong faculty/administrative relationships. We hope that your new strategic salary plan actively addresses this concern over the lack of merit pay transparency.

At the same time that we request you address the general faculty pay discrepancies at ASU, we request a gender pay salary study completed to determine the latest status of how gender effects pay at ASU. While our sister institution is now facing a class-action law suit against it for potentially gender discriminatory pay structures, ASU does not want to find itself facing similar litigation and the national disapprobation that comes with it. ³ And given national trends, we call for the inclusion of race and ethnicity in the gender study.

Finally, faculty members and academic professionals believe in the ambitious goal of ASU charter to help our students, communities, state and the world. As we receive exciting news each year that ASU has set new records on our research and educational rankings as well as the increasing number of students we teach, we ask that you accept our goal that ASU tenured faculty salaries are also moved up in their own rankings amongst our ABOR approved peer institutions and that all other instructor and academic professional ranks follow in suitable accord. We ask that your administration engage our faculty on the immediate development of a firm strategic plan, with a specific timetable that outlines the steps required to propel us to this position in the very near future.

Respectfully submitted,
University Academic Council
University Senate Executive Committee
University Senate Personnel Committee
ASU Faculty Senate

³ The last analysis that was done on pay averages for men and women at ASU, women's faculty pay lagged behind in all categories. See <https://data.chronicle.com/104151/Arizona-State-University/faculty-salaries/>.

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