

RESOLUTION ON JMU BUDGET PRIORITIES AND FACULTY SALARIES ~ Departments of Sociology/Anthropology, Political Science, Philosophy/Religion

Rationale:

- ❖ Issues surrounding faculty salaries on the JMU campus are currently very serious. They include widespread salary inversion, salary compression, and average salary levels that lag well behind those of our peer institutions.
 - These salary issues do not merely represent “personal troubles” for faculty, and faculty concern with these issues is not a simple matter of individual self-interest. *Rather, the extent of the issues very specifically impacts the central mission of this University.*
 - It sends the message that dedicating one’s career to JMU and its students is not valued.
 - It affects faculty recruitment and retention efforts.
 - It is the central issue of faculty morale.
 - It takes faculty time and attention away from the primary mission.
 - It sends mixed messages to students, faculty, and other constituencies regarding the core mission of this University.
 - The recent study of salary inversion, including the proposed strategy for addressing it is inadequate. It represents very little, very late, and does not indicate any serious change in the approach of the JMU administration.
- ❖ Furthermore, the cause of the salary issues cannot be an absolute lack of funding. It is quite clear that the University regularly finds funds for things that the Administration and Board truly want to accomplish.
- ❖ After years of flat salaries that, in effect, amount to pay cuts, the Faculty Senate recently urged President Rose to take a proactive step toward faculty raises as he prepared to step down.
- ❖ If the request is honored, this would be a welcome action. Yet raises alone will not address the comprehensive issues with faculty salaries. Furthermore, while increases in tuition and fees were requested in connection with raises, significant work can be done to improve the salary situation without necessitating any extra charges to students.
 - Of the overall monies paid by students to attend JMU only a portion is paid as “tuition” (i.e. “Tuition/E&G”), and *the tuition portion paid to attend JMU is among the lowest in the state system.*
 - However, nearly half of what an in-state student must pay to attend JMU is allocated to the Non-E&G Comprehensive Fee. *The fees paid by JMU students are among the highest in the state of Virginia.* When only about half of every student dollar goes to the educational side of the University it is no wonder that funds for faculty salaries *appear to be short.*
 - Furthermore, of those monies paid as Tuition/E&G only about 67% currently go toward instruction and academic support. *In effect, only about 37% of what in-state JMU students pay to attend the University is directly dedicated to Instruction and Academic Support.* (The equivalent figure is 55% for out of state students).
 - This issue is ongoing and systemic, and is directly related to the current salary situation. It is indicative of misplaced priorities if James Madison University intends to be a leading comprehensive University that fulfills its own core educational mission
- ❖ Thus, over the longer term, the primary issue at hand is one of the budget priorities of the JMU administration and Board. Significant and definite progress in addressing comprehensive salary issues can be gained simply by a reorientation of the priorities of this institution’s leadership.

Therefore, the Faculty Senate extends its message regarding salaries and urges that, as President Alger enters JMU, a top administrative priority becomes:

- ❖ The provision of a very specific plan to change the balance of monies paid by JMU students such that a much larger proportion of the actual cost of attending JMU is paid as Tuition and E&G funds. In effect, tuition can be raised, and if Non E&G Fees are dropped at the same rate, then charges to students are not increased.
 - At current rates, even a mere 10% drop in the comprehensive fee when added to tuition would provide over \$7 million in funds available for addressing concerns on the academic side of the University.
 - Furthermore, every effort must be made to increase the proportion of Tuition/E&G funds that is actually spent in Instruction & Academic Support
- ❖ The ultimate purpose of the plan will be to reorient the budget priorities of this University to bring it into line with its core academic mission.
- ❖ The proximate purpose over the shorter term will be to immediately and comprehensively make clear and measurable progress in addressing the widespread and serious issues of salary inversion, salary compression, and lagging overall salary levels relative to those in our peer institutions and other State of Virginia institutions.
- ❖ The long-term process should not involve discussion of faculty “raises.” Rather, this process must begin with widespread salary *adjustments* to resolve the long term, cumulative effects on salary structures that have been building over time.
 - The Faculty Senate notes that major salary *adjustments* are a routine practice at JMU. The problem is that they have been almost exclusively reserved for administration.
- ❖ Until such issues are resolved, a freeze should be placed on the dollar amount charged per student as the Non E&G Comprehensive Fee.
 - Various contingencies over the coming years may certainly make it necessary to increase charges to students. However, should any further increases in charges to students be made, those should be defined as Tuition and E&G monies, and entirely allocated to making continual progress on addressing these issues.
- ❖ In the midst of making very difficult decisions about these matters, the administration must make every effort to correct these issues without hurting JMU employees who are suffering from lagging and flat salaries.
 - In fact, with a primary emphasis on those employees whose work is clearly tied to the central academic mission of the University, *every effort should be made to correct all issues of inadequate compensation throughout the organization.*
- ❖ Once issues of compensation are adequately addressed, the administration and Board of JMU should commit to a firm target regarding the proportion of in-state student monies committed to the Non E&G Comprehensive Fee. The Faculty Senate recommends that the Fee proportion for in-state students does not exceed one-third of the monies paid by students to attend JMU.
 - A value of one-third is still very large, but reflects the fact that faculty do understand that these fees are important for many reasons.
 - At current costs to students, if our Non E&G portion was at one-third then both the fees and tuition paid by in-state JMU students would rank near the middle among state institutions. This seems more reasonable than the current situation of higher than average fees and lower than average tuition, and would free up significant funds for Instruction & Academic Support.