

SENATE UNIVERSITY BUDGET COMMITTEE 2018/19

ANNUAL REPORT

At its first meeting in August 2018, the SUBC identified three priority areas for the upcoming academic year: (1) the Athletics Department budget; (2) pay equity; and (3) possible budget impacts of Governor Malloy and President Herbst stepping down from their respective leaderships roles. Background on each issue, as well as actions taken by the SUBC throughout the academic year, is set out below.

1. Athletics Department Budget: Members of the SUBC continued to express concern about the funding gap between the expenses incurred and revenue generated by the Athletics Department. The SUBC has remained in close communication with David Benedict, the Director of Athletics, to obtain a better understanding of the level and trajectory of the shortfall in the operating budget. One particular area of focus is the ongoing dispute with former men's basketball coach, Kevin Ollie, over whether or not he is entitled to the \$10 million that remained of his contract when the university fired him. As of the date of writing this report, the issue remains unresolved.

In the meantime, the SUBC is continuing to monitor issues that may affect the funding gap including declining revenues from ticket sales, especially football, given the team's performance last season. An additional item of interest that the SUBC would like to carry over into the next academic year is how the recent American Athletics Conference media deal may affect the Athletics Department budget, and by extension, the university budget.

2. Pay Equity: Pay gaps based on gender and/or underrepresented minority groups have been of interest to many in the university community for at least the past decade. For example, in 2010/2011, faculty involved in several NSF ADVANCE proposals to promote Women in the STEM fields along with WIMSE, a grassroots community of women in the STEM fields at UConn, identified pay equity as a top three area of concern among women in STEM. Leaders from both the ADVANCE team and WIMSE raised the priorities in a public meeting with President Herbst in 2012, to which President Herbst responded that pay equity was a departmental, rather than upper administrative level issue.

In the meantime, various constituents, including the AAUP, raised the question of pay equity with the upper administration. The AAUP commissioned a report on pay equity based on UConn data from 2003 through 2012. The report, initially released in October 2012 and revised in 2013, found a statistically significant pay gap between men and women. Despite that finding, the upper administration appears not to have responded to these findings. Committee W, also from the AAUP, more recently requested that the upper administration address pay equity based upon gender and under-represented minority groups (URM).

Another point that was brought to the attention of the SUBC is that Section 19.9 of the AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement covering 7/1/17 through 6/30/21 does mention a Provost Fund of \$300,000 for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2021 for:

“making increases in base salary as he/she sees fit in order to retain faculty in the face of market compression and inversion, to make equity adjustments, or to recognize special achievement. Faculty may also apply for such increases on the basis of salary disparity, including equity, or recent promotions before commencement of this Agreement.”

No one in the SUBC had a clear understanding of how this process is administered by the Provosts Office. Overall, it was concluded that there appears to be a lack of transparency surrounding the process whereby faculty may apply for these funds, but it is currently unclear how clarification may be obtained and by whom. For example, specific questions about the process of applying for and being allocated funds has been raised on the Senate floor in previous sessions, but no response was received at the time.

State budget challenges have resulted in faculty and staff at UConn experiencing pay freezes in 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, and 2019, in addition to those experienced in 2009 and 2011. Following considerable discussion, the SUBC acknowledged that the cumulative effects of pay freezes for seven out of the past 11 years could potentially exacerbate pay gaps for those who had been hired at the beginning of the cycle of cuts. This compression could potentially be exacerbated by the University adopting a practice of only providing pay increases to those receiving outside offers. As the academic literature is very clear that the practice of retention increases on the basis of outside offers is structurally biased against women and URMs, some in the SUBC raised questions about how this could potentially feed into pay equity. The SUBC concluded that any study of pay equity would necessarily need to understand the more generalized compression effects that may have been associated with the series of pay freezes. The SUBC decided to work with the Provost’s Office to undertake a rigorous, multi-dimensional pay equity study.

Provost Kennedy subsequently charged an outside consultant, Charles Rivers Associates, to conduct the study. The Head of the SUBC, Carol Atkinson-Palombo, along with Hedley Freake, the Head of the Senate Executive Committee and Amy Howell, the Head of the Diversity Committee, met with members of the Provost’s Office in December 2018 and January 2019 to discuss an appropriate methodology for such a study. The status of that study is unclear as of the time of writing of this report.

The SUBC does recognize that between Fall 2016 and Spring 2019, four different people have held the Provost position—Choi, Teitelbaum (interim), Kennedy, and Elliott (interim), and that this turnover may explain some of the lack of clarity surrounding the administration’s response to concerns from various constituents about pay equity.

3. Changes in Leadership at the Governor and Presidential levels: Two key changes in leadership were seen as critical to the University's fiscal health moving forward. The replacement of the Head of the Board of Trustees for UConn represents a third change in leadership that may affect university finances. The SUBC looks forward to learning more about how these three leaders will work together in the upcoming academic year.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Atkinson-Palombo (Chair for Fall 2018) and Nancy Bull (Chair for Spring 2019), on behalf of the Senate University Budget Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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