

To: David Turnbull, Chair of Senate

From: Stephen Hines, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee

Date: February 25, 2021

RE: *Changes to the Faculty Manual (Section III C 9)*

Faculty furlough and/or temporary salary reduction in a time of budgetary crisis

On behalf of the FAC, I am writing to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the attached revisions to the WSU Faculty Manual. The proposal was passed by a unanimous vote of the Faculty Affairs Committee on February 24, 2021.

Goal = In recognition that state and university budget crises have inordinate effects on career track faculty, administrative professional staff, and civil service staff, our goal is to create via changes to the WSU Faculty Manual an additional option by which the university might respond.

- We have tried to develop a thoughtfully developed option by which crisis-precipitated budgetary burdens can be more equitably shared by tenured and tenure track faculty.
- The option also provides for “check-points” in that any proposed faculty salary reductions or furloughs must be approved by the faculty via the WSU Faculty Senate Steering Committee and a vote of the Faculty Senate.
- There have been, in our opinion, extraordinary efforts to solicit and incorporate feedback from faculty on all WSU campuses. We are grateful to the many WSU faculty who read the initiative carefully, considered the overarching goals and specifics, and provided input we could work from. The current proposal is very much a reflection of that input.

For anyone who has not read and considered the previous iterations of this proposal, we ask that you first consider this from the FAC’s original **PREAMBLE**:

What this initiative is NOT:

It is NOT a proposal to impose faculty salary reductions or furloughs.

What this initiative IS:

It is a proposal to develop a **PROCESS** by which, in certain defined circumstances (i.e. budgetary crises) and with specific expectations, the WSU administration might propose faculty salary reductions and/or furloughs for a defined period of no more than 1 (one) year. No salary

reductions or furloughs would be enacted through the proposed process without Faculty Senate approval.

WHY?

The university's options for responding to a true budgetary crisis are currently limited. As a result, the burdens of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., the resulting budget cuts) fall disproportionately on a particular group of faculty and staff – namely career track faculty, administrative professional staff, and civil service staff. During a budgetary crisis, it is these people who are most likely to lose their jobs or face reductions in their FTE. **The overall goal of this initiative is to help protect the most vulnerable members of our WSU family by sharing the burdens of crisis-precipitated budget cuts in more just and equitable ways.** By doing so we will also safeguard our strength as an institution in meeting our teaching, research, and outreach missions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The university administration has discussed some budget initiatives and practices that the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) members think are inappropriate and/or wrong. Perhaps the most disturbing example is a recent proposal to the Board of Regents (BoR) to use monies from the university's general fund to help address the budget deficit in WSU Athletics. This BoR initiative contributes to a general sense of distrust and supports the concept that the values of WSU leadership are not aligned with its faculty. Nevertheless, FAC believes these are separate issues that should not cause us to abandon our primary goal. We seek to develop a process that provides necessary checkpoints and allows such disagreements to be negotiated. At a minimum, we hope to provide a process that might be in place for future budgetary crises.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION

FAC believes it essential that the process to develop these proposed Faculty Manual changes is absolutely transparent. The Faculty Senate must also do everything in its power to broadly and accurately communicate the goals, acknowledged concerns, and specific components of the initiative to the WSU community. We ask that everyone consider the goals and specific elements without prejudice or malice, and with an eye for nuance. These are complicated matters for which there are no simple solutions.

Please find attached – a single 3-page document

1. Clean (untracked) version of a new section to be added to the WSU Faculty Manual