Memo

To: Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Concerns

From: Dr. Lyn Lepre, President

Date: April 12, 2024

RE: Ad Hoc Committee Report on Faculty Concerns

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the faculty concerns outlined in the memo sent to me from Faculty Senate President Deneen Long-White. Over the course of the past few months, many of the answers to the concerns voiced in this report have been answered in other settings, so I will make reference when relevant to those presentations. Many were answered in the Special Faculty Meeting regarding the budget held on March 5th. In this memo, as I respond to the questions, I will make reference to certain parts of that presentation, which can be found here, and Senator David Keifer's excellent minutes that add context to the presentation slides, found here.

Priority Number 1: Budget

Budgetary control of PIN lines

The President and Cabinet have full control of how PIN lines are allocated and how money associated with PIN lines is used. It is not clear to Faculty how the President and Cabinet have been making decisions regarding those PIN lines. Faculty strongly believe that decisions regarding PIN lines originally designated for Faculty should remain at the Academic Affairs level.

Moreover, many requests for Faculty searches have remained unapproved for an extended period. The administration's justification for the delay is that the next academic year's budget will be more accurately known once enrollment numbers are solidified in the spring. However, Faculty searches are typically done in the fall, so waiting to approve them until the spring means that those searches will likely be unsuccessful.

- We addressed the PIN line request process and the process for decision making at the Special Faculty Meeting (see slides 25-27). If there are additional questions, please direct them to Provost Couch and we will work to provide additional clarity.

Proliferation of administrative positions

According to SU's FY 2023 budget report, Faculty positions (including Librarians) have increased by 4.8% since FY 2014, while non-Faculty, exempt PIN positions have increased by 31.0%. Most of that time period was before the current President took office, yet it reflects a trend that seems to be continuing. While it has been difficult to hire new Faculty recently (see above concern), it seems to be relatively easy to hire administrators in new positions such as the Senior Advisor to the President, the Deputy Chief of

Staff for Engagement, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications. It is not clear to Faculty why those new positions were necessary or what roles they fulfill on campus.

- In the Special Faculty Meeting, we addressed a similar question. Please see slides 49-52.
- In addition, VPAF Edenhart-Pepe sent the following message to Faculty Senate in response to a follow-up question that was asked during the Special Faculty Meeting, which asked the same question about the percent increases in positions. I include it here as the response to this question:

---Start of VPAF message---

Dear Faculty Senate,

We appreciate everyone engaging with us at last week's senate meeting and asking follow up questions regarding our budget presentation. In specific, two questions have been asked with a request to follow up at today's senate meeting. The questions were in regards to labor, PIN lines, and increases in salaries between FY18 and FY23.

Labor-related questions are particularly challenging to accurately address because the information sits between teams and systems. For instance, our financial reports align with the state budget process and are handled by our finance team. Reports that provide salary data are handled by our HR department and are currently transitioning from GullNet to Workday. Because it is challenging, it is also time-consuming.

Getting to the questions asked at the budget presentation, we need to start with the data the FFOC shared. A significant amount of time was devoted to analyzing these questions. In doing so, we discovered that several assumptions had been made that do not align with the ways in which we capture personnel data. Here are some examples:

- *The data referred to in question 1 (see below) compares all PIN faculty and contractual faculty (including C2/C1/adjuncts and overloads) <u>annual earnings</u> to a small random sample of exempt staff (65) <u>annual salaries</u>, not all of whom would classify as administration. Per USM reporting, an administrative position is defined as an AVP/Dean and above.*
- *The State of MD provides COLA/merit based on job classification such as C2/C1/adjunct and PIN employees. Not all position types work for the same duration of time. For example, adjuncts can work for only one semester at a time. Including them as part of the faculty increase analysis would skew the results.*
- *During FY18-FY23 PIN progression and job changes are not reflected accurately. Thus, it appears that certain employees received substantive raises when in reality, they merely changed jobs. For example, in 2018 Eli Modlin was paid as the Deputy Chief of Staff. Now, he is paid as the Chief of Staff/VP of Public Affairs. Same person, different position.*
- *Dual appointments (faculty/admin) were counted solely in the administrative column.*
- *Departures that require additional pay and/or overlap positions were counted twice.*
- *Portions of the public salary data gathered is incorrect.*
- *The US Department of Labor required employers to change several non-exempt positions to exempt positions during the timeframe presented.*

*Once these assumptions are corrected the analysis looks different. Each year we are required to report salaries to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). This data is audited for accuracy and reported on by the state. We just passed the audit with no findings thus we can be assured that this data is correct. Using this data, we can compare the average base salary of all exempt staff (including administration) to the average base salary of all faculty, **not including** C2/C1/adjuncts or overload pay (this accounts for the difference in the total faculty earnings that the FFOC is using for their average salary increase analysis). It is also important to note that exempt staff are typically 12-month employees, whereas most faculty are 10-month employees. Below we've shown the salary comparison between 2016-2023, 2017-2023 and 2018-2023.*

2016		2023		2016 - 2023	
74,123	Avg Exempt Salary	95,872	Avg Exempt Salary	29.34%	% Increase to Exempt Salary
77,787	Avg Faculty Salary	98,652	Avg Faculty Salary	26.82%	% Increase to Faculty Salary
17,789,437	Total Filled Exempt Salaries	28,569,832	Total Filled Exempt Salaries		
29,948,153	Total Filled Faculty Salaries	38,770,173	Total Filled Faculty Salaries		
2017		2023		2017 - 2023	
75,426	Avg Exempt Salary	95,872	Avg Exempt Salary	27.11%	% Increase to Exempt Salary
78,325	Avg Faculty Salary	98,652	Avg Faculty Salary	25.95%	% Increase to Faculty Salary
18,781,037	Total Filled Exempt Salaries	28,569,832	Total Filled Exempt Salaries		
31,408,206	Total Filled Faculty Salaries	38,770,173	Total Filled Faculty Salaries		
2018		2023		2018 - 2023	
76,423	Avg Exempt Salary	95,872	Avg Exempt Salary	25.45%	% Increase to Exempt Salary
78,507	Avg Faculty Salary	98,652	Avg Faculty Salary	25.66%	% Increase to Faculty Salary
20,939,839	Total Filled Exempt Salaries	28,569,832	Total Filled Exempt Salaries		
31,245,982	Total Filled Faculty Salaries	38,770,173	Total Filled Faculty Salaries		

This data shows that the average exempt staff base salary (including administration) is lower than the average faculty base salary from 2016-2023. Although the percentage increase is slightly higher for exempt staff in the 2016 and 2017 data, the gap closes significantly in 2018.

Note: The appropriate audited data was used to answer these questions.

__Question 1:__ What is the explanation for the higher percentage increase in admin salaries vs faculty salaries? One explanation could be that it is the addition of admin PINs which would be a connection to the second question.

__Response 1:__ Looking at the COLA/merit information provided at the [budget presentation](), you can see that increases were applied equally to all PIN faculty and PIN staff employed at the time of the increase. Looking at FY18-FY23, this was a total increase of 21.5%. If you were an employee during this entire time period you would have received a total COLA/merit increase of 21.5%. Looking at the data used, not all 65 exempt staff or faculty cited were employed during that entire time period. This leads to an inaccurate picture. A more equitable comparison would be to compare all faculty and exempt staff employed during FY18-FY23 that were not promoted, did not move into a different job, were not reclassified, and did not take on any additional assignments during the timeframe.

Looking more closely, the salary data shared points to a particular <u>individual</u>. In several of the positions listed in the FFOC exempt data set, the individual has changed jobs/roles at the University and is now in a different job with a salary that is commensurate with the new position they are in. For example, Lynn Adkins was promoted from the head of Finance at the Foundation to the AVP of Finance for the University. Additionally, there are the several faculty-to-administrator changes, such as the director of the School of Nursing, and their salary changes are due to moving from a 10-month faculty position to a 12-month administrative position.

In other cases, the salary data shared points to a particular <u>position</u>, such as the President. Finally, some positions that were shared had been reclassified and/or received equity adjustments along with COLA, which skewed the data. For example, the Business Manager in Perdue and the Business Manager in Henson. As you can see, these are not equal comparisons that complicate the question being asked and therefore make it more challenging to accurately answer.

In conclusion, we have determined the following:

o   *Using the DLS data, when adjuncts, overload pay and contingent faculty are removed from the analysis, the average salary increase between FY18-FY23 for faculty is 25.66%.*
o   *When we remove the individuals/positions who were either moved to new positions but the salary tracks back to their old position **OR** they were faculty who moved into administrative roles but the salary starts with their former faculty salary, the average increase becomes 23%.*
o   *Using the DLS data, which compares position data as opposed to individuals in positions, there is essentially no difference between faculty and exempt staff over the time frame of 2018-2023. That said, we can conclude that the primary reason for differences in the FFOC data is that the data being analyzed is not being interpreted in the correct context and does not consider turnover, reclassifications, adjustments or job changes.*

__Question 2:__ According to <u>SU's FY 2023 budget report</u>, Faculty positions (including Librarians) have increased by 4.8% since FY 2014, while non-Faculty, exempt PIN positions have increased by 31.0%. Most of that time period was before the current President took office, yet it reflects a trend that seems to be continuing.

__Response 2:__ This was answered during the <u>budget presentation</u> when answering questions 8 and 9. Please see those slides, which include a breakdown of all hired exempt positions. Here are the relevant data:

o   *In FY13 we had 379 faculty PINs.*
o   *In FY23 we had 403 faculty PINs (an increase of 24 faculty positions).*
o   *Over the last 10 years, we have added 105 exempt positions; 55 of those were new exempt positions; and 50 exempt positions were converted from either faculty (11) or non-exempt (39) positions.*
o   *In 2021, 6 exempt positions were given back.*

Our current faculty-to-student ratio is among the most favorable in the state. Staff positions have increased to meet student needs and reduce faculty workload (e.g. academic advisors).
   ---End of VPAF message---

- We addressed the positions hired in the President's Office at the Special Faculty Meeting (please see slides 31-34).

Contracts for non-tenure track Faculty

Several non-tenure track Faculty have had the lengths of their contracts reduced from five years to year-by-year contracts. At least one non-tenure track Faculty member has left SU, largely due to this change. It is also difficult to hire quality non-tenure track Faculty due to non-competitive wages. All those factors reduce job security, increase job pressure, and lead to lower Faculty morale.

- To help answer this question, I asked Provost Couch for insight into this decision, as it was made within Academic Affairs.
- This change was made more than a year ago. In the past, FTNTT faculty could have 3- or even 5-year contracts. According to the contract language, although there were longer contracts, they still were one-year in effect because they contained a clause that said renewals occurred annually; however, having the longer appointment period provided personal benefits to faculty that are important (such as helping them get auto loans and mortgages).
- Provost Couch shared that she is open to revisiting this policy and would welcome the opportunity to look further into this situation and engage with faculty to consider a new path forward.
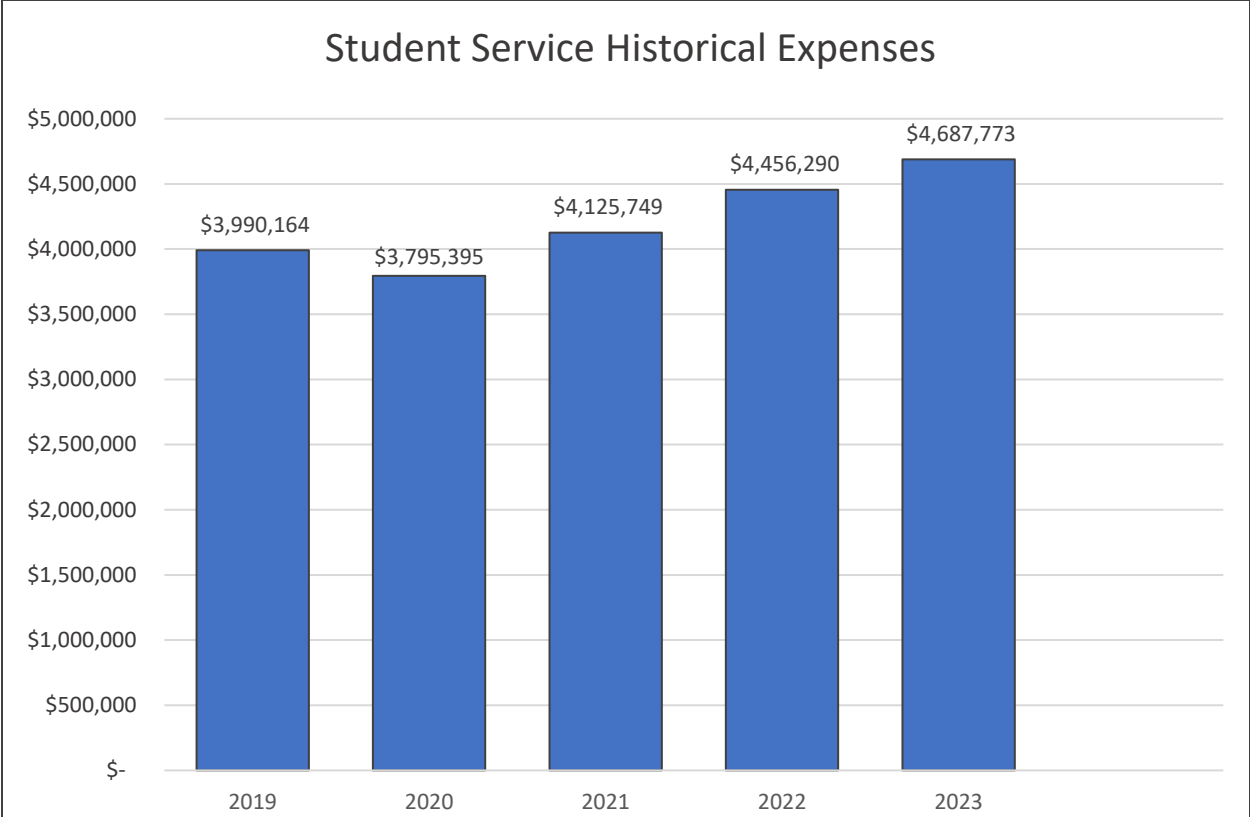
Underfunded student resources

Faculty expressed concerns about underfunded student support services, such as the Disability Resource Center, University Writing Center, and the Counseling Center. One result of not funding student support services sufficiently is an increased workload for Faculty, who feel that they must take on some of the work of those services. This is expanded on in Priority Number 2 below.

- Below please find charts that outline the budgets and expenses for the student support services areas noted in the question above. As you can see, the data show that each student support service area's budget has increased over time, except for ODI, which saw a decrease in FY 23. That said, it does not mean that we do not have to continue to evaluate if these areas are funded appropriately given the needs of our students. We all strive to provide the best possible support and resources for our students. Therefore, we are continuously evaluating the methods and approaches we use to serve them, which includes looking at best practices.

Student Services

Fiscal Year	Department	01 Ending Budget	01 Expenses	02 Ending Budget	02 Expenses	03 Ending Budget	03 Expenses	Total Ending Budget	Total Expenses	% of Ending Budget Spent
2019	129066 Academic Advising	788,514	757,512	77,135	73,168	243,721	243,813	1,109,370	1,074,493	96.9%
2020	129066 Academic Advising	830,382	837,352	55,230	58,649	248,589	214,747	1,134,201	1,110,748	97.9%
2021	129066 Academic Advising	860,137	854,476	41,392	32,919	251,996	248,291	1,153,525	1,135,687	98.5%
2022	129066 Academic Advising	962,533	981,222	26,264	8,984	250,296	195,116	1,239,093	1,185,322	95.7%
2023	129066 Academic Advising	1,022,849	928,605	-	-	262,452	258,586	1,285,301	1,187,191	92.4%
2019	144060 Center for Student Achievement	278,318	267,268	391,689	382,596	24,733	24,470	694,740	674,334	97.1%
2020	144060 Center for Student Achievement	263,419	261,250	329,775	298,606	10,950	4,951	604,144	564,807	93.5%
2021	144060 Center for Student Achievement	303,745	303,763	271,693	270,052	14,984	14,497	590,422	588,312	99.6%
2022	144060 Center for Student Achievement	387,546	384,317	219,259	215,805	16,659	17,337	623,464	617,459	99.0%
2023	144060 Center for Student Achievement	395,903	370,380	223,503	198,112	11,500	61,008	630,906	629,499	99.8%
2019	ODI (Depts 129090, 144270, 360215)	317,280	320,660	187,120	144,768	77,874	58,481	582,274	523,909	90.0%
2020	ODI (Depts 129090, 144270, 360215, 360235)	220,578	239,581	105,921	115,282	48,899	29,759	375,398	384,622	102.5%
2021	ODI (Depts 129090, 144270, 360215, 360235)	336,433	309,709	106,768	81,265	125,737	101,741	568,939	492,714	86.6%
2022	ODI (Depts 129090, 144270, 144271, 360215, 360235)	192,040	175,932	129,563	136,171	278,393	212,860	599,996	524,963	87.5%
2023	ODI (Depts 129090, 144270, 144271, 360215, 360235)	179,054	170,608	81,177	151,870	114,218	101,969	374,449	424,448	113.4%
2019	TRiO	-	-	-	194,501	-	28,640	-	223,141	0.0%
2020	TRiO	-	-	-	166,874	-	66,067	-	232,941	0.0%
2021	TRiO	-	-	-	210,831	-	47,937	-	258,768	0.0%
2022	TRiO	-	-	-	217,769	-	33,591	-	251,360	0.0%
2023	TRiO	-	-	-	228,167	-	31,626	-	259,793	0.0%
2019	144105 Counseling Center	540,029	493,290	50,244	11,207	18,197	18,344	608,470	522,841	85.9%
2020	144105 Counseling Center	520,921	494,059	130,566	56,568	13,674	23,009	665,161	573,636	86.2%
2021	144105 Counseling Center	672,609	502,906	135,161	78,178	59,274	44,255	867,044	625,339	72.1%
2022	144105 Counseling Center	695,351	486,295	89,204	43,820	236,140	239,916	1,020,695	770,031	75.4%
2023	144105 Counseling Center	604,627	594,369	75,551	49,266	174,901	310,160	855,079	953,795	111.5%
2019	144095 Career Services	371,711	372,874	71,349	56,999	35,625	36,396	478,685	466,270	97.4%
2020	144095 Career Services	389,182	387,025	47,451	43,915	39,135	32,106	475,768	463,046	97.3%
2021	144095 Career Services	395,573	394,635	29,944	43,362	23,336	23,515	448,853	461,513	102.8%
2022	144095 Career Services	420,697	424,843	35,986	45,102	13,662	21,378	470,345	491,323	104.5%
2023	144095 Career Services	385,592	342,364	104,727	131,136	26,817	30,051	517,136	503,550	97.4%
2019	112415 Writing Center	96,495	96,872	140,500	109,487	8,083	7,832	245,078	214,191	87.4%
2020	112415 Writing Center	124,736	140,975	80,556	78,106	11,677	11,677	216,969	230,758	106.4%
2021	112415 Writing Center	177,463	178,782	60,169	38,505	17,866	15,822	255,498	233,109	91.2%
2022	112415 Writing Center	186,609	188,830	57,686	48,445	11,228	9,397	255,523	246,672	96.5%
2023	112415 Writing Center	203,114	220,113	67,749	78,566	22,806	22,802	293,669	321,481	109.5%
2019	144078 Disability Resource Center	244,203	243,615	25,056	23,942	67,305	23,429	336,564	290,986	86.5%
2020	144078 Disability Resource Center	248,559	187,678	30,654	29,762	39,364	17,397	318,577	234,838	73.7%
2021	144078 Disability Resource Center	274,845	268,615	30,207	24,045	39,156	37,647	344,208	330,307	96.0%
2022	144078 Disability Resource Center	358,855	300,834	29,929	22,340	50,743	45,986	439,527	369,160	84.0%
2023	144078 Disability Resource Center	342,786	359,085	18,367	14,564	38,389	34,366	399,541	408,015	102.1%
2019	Total 2019	2,636,550	2,552,091	943,093	996,668	475,538	441,405	4,055,180	3,990,164	98.4%
2020	Total 2020	2,597,777	2,547,919	780,153	847,763	412,288	399,713	3,790,218	3,795,395	100.1%
2021	Total 2021	3,020,806	2,812,886	675,334	779,158	532,349	533,704	4,228,488	4,125,749	97.6%
2022	Total 2022	3,203,631	2,942,274	587,891	738,435	857,121	775,580	4,648,643	4,456,290	95.9%
2023	Total 2023	3,133,925	2,985,524	571,074	851,680	651,083	850,568	4,356,081	4,687,773	107.6%

Student Service Historical Expenses

Year	Expense
2019	$3,990,164
2020	$3,795,395
2021	$4,125,749
2022	$4,456,290
2023	$4,687,773

- Budgets for support services must be balanced with the needs of other units across the campus. With limited budgetary resources, we are required to make choices that ensure we meet student needs effectively while also upholding the quality of services provided in all areas across campus, including Academic Affairs. In other words, we understand the concerns, and are actively working to adequately provide the staffing and resources needed to support our students, and that might mean that other areas on campus will see positions lost or budgets reduced in order to do so. We would welcome Faculty Senate's participation in seeking and developing strategies to help inform these decisions.
- Best practices for student support services often include collaboration with faculty, for instance in supporting students with disabilities. Faculty members play an integral role in implementing accommodations and ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all students. By working closely with student support services, faculty can learn more about the specific needs of students with disabilities and learn effective strategies for accommodating those needs in the classroom. This collaboration fosters a more supportive and inclusive academic environment, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience for all students. That said, this is another area that Faculty Senate could provide much needed input and collaboration into faculty workload and how we can create an environment where students receive best in class support and learning environments and our faculty feel supported to do their critical work.

Expensive consultants

Faculty are concerned about the overreliance on third-party consultants: training consultants, brand consultants, consultants to investigate a marching band, consultants to investigate HR practices, etc. Undoubtedly consultants have value, but in some cases, it may be possible to draw on the expertise already on campus rather than paying for expensive consulting.

- I absolutely agree that we should not over rely on third-party consultants. That said, we have been told repeatedly that faculty feel overworked and are having difficulty balancing teaching with other service responsibilities. Therefore, while I agree that we should not over rely, sometimes we need to make a judgment call, balancing the need to move ahead with needed changes or initiatives with the time and energy that someone on campus with expertise might have to give.
- For example, during my listening tour, issues related to HR and our hiring processes were referenced repeatedly, including issues surrounding outdated processes, confusing instructions, and multiple forms. In addition, Dr. Wormack stepped down in late spring and our new VPAF had not yet started (she did not join us until October 2023). After consulting with USM colleagues and other on-campus stakeholders about how best to improve the situation, it was my assessment that having a consultant do a detailed analysis resulting in a roadmap forward with improvements would enable our new VPAF to move quickly upon arrival allowing us to improve in the most expeditious and efficient way possible and for our campus to see the changes as quickly as possible.
- It is worth noting that when we make decisions about hiring consultants, it is not in a vacuum. For example, this section singles out the consultants to investigate a marching band. We first spent time talking with stakeholders in academic affairs and athletics about what we would need to understand to relaunch a marching band. It was concluded that having an outside expert provide us with a roadmap and an evaluation of how prepared our campus would be for this initiative would be highly beneficial. In this case, the consultants were not expensive. The three experts who gave their time to us did so for only a few hundred dollars. We now have data and information that we did not have previously that will allow us to make decisions.
- In sum, we agree that consultants should not be over-relied on, and that we have an incredible amount of talent and expertise in our faculty. As we move forward, and have more discussions about faculty workload and ways that we can work together on projects and initiatives that are important to SU, I hope to find new ways to best support our campus. For example, Provost Couch is considering the development of a Faculty Fellows leadership development program. The program would allow a few faculty each year to work on special campus leadership projects for which they have particular expertise. In exchange, the Fellows would participate in a year-long leadership training opportunity.

Study abroad

Faculty would like to better understand the "self-sustaining" budget model that the Center for International Education is now using. The new budget structure has changed the types of trips Faculty can make with students. It is also not clear who is involved in making these decisions about how global resources are used.

After conversations with VPAF Edenhart-Pepe and Provost Couch, our understanding of this change is this:

- When academic affairs was working through the budget challenges last year, then-Provost Olmstead made the decision to move to this self-sustaining model to allow for the budget that was originally allocated to study abroad to be distributed elsewhere in academic affairs. In addition, this change would help identify ways to make study abroad self-sustaining, which would incentivize programs that are either cost-neutral or bring in revenue, while balancing the desire to make study abroad more accessible for a broader range of students and to manage the risks involved with study abroad trips.
- We recognize that this is not working as intended in certain areas and will continue to explore the best options for all units.

Priority Number 2: Faculty Workload and Work-Life Balance

Due to the budget cuts, post-Covid recovery, and a perception of rising expectations, several Faculty expressed that they have had to take on excessive day-to-day work. Because campus resources like the Disability Resource Center and University Writing Center are stretched thin with few staff and appointment times available, Faculty have attempted to pick up this slack by providing support to individual students, including vital support for minority students. However, this work takes away from their prep time, research, committee work, and new projects. Library Faculty raised one such example of additional work from the administration prior to Inauguration Week. Librarians were asked to hold a Publication Night for Faculty research and projects with insufficient notice.

There is also an increasing emphasis on data collection at the course and program levels for administrative and promotional purposes, such as expecting departments to collect data on marketable skills and success on the job market. This adds hours of extra work and often goes against academic freedom. Faculty are concerned with how implementing constant data collection will affect the time and energy they have for teaching, service, and professional development. In addition, Faculty expressed a desire to implement more family-friendly work practices by, for example, facilitating child-care on campus and allowing for flexible meeting schedules.

This question touches on a variety of topics that are related but distinct and I will break down my responses in an attempt to answer as fully as possible.

Workload related to student support

- The first part of this question notes that faculty expressed that they have had to take on excessive day-to-day work related to campus resources being unavailable due to understaffing. As noted in my response to Priority 1 above, we have continued to invest in student support services and will continue to look for ways to increase support in line with best practices. Faculty play an important role in these services, as many students find the most impactful relationships are with their faculty mentors. I hope we can continue to try and find ways to create a workload system that allows for this important service work to take place and allow time for all the other things faculty do.

Administrative expectations

- To the example presented about Library Faculty being asked to do additional work prior to Inauguration Week and hold a Publication Night for Faculty Research and projects with insufficient notice. When planning the inauguration, we wanted to find ways to highlight our fantastic campus and its people. An inauguration happens infrequently and it is an opportunity to not only bring those who rarely if ever visit campus to SU, including elected officials, community members and alumni, but also to celebrate all that makes our campus special to internal audiences (faculty, staff and students) – hopefully reminding those who work and learn here why SU is a place to be proud of. Therefore, we filled the week with moments. Some of the events were pre-scheduled events including our multicultural festival, a lacrosse game, and a jazz ensemble performance that we aimed to promote to a wider audience by including them in the inauguration promotional materials. Others were events we wished to hold to take an uncommon occurrence (an inauguration) to spotlight our amazing people and the things we do for our community in additional ways. For example the SU Symposia, and the building of cancer care kits for the TidalHealth Cancer Center.
- The inauguration activities that occurred can be found [here](#), and you can see that we worked to find a day to spotlight Academic Affairs: teaching, research and service through a series of panels, and held a "thank you" recognition reception for faculty that evening.
- As a cabinet, we discussed various opportunities, and then-Provost Olmstead was asked to spearhead the development of what these academic affairs spotlight activities could be. It is my understanding that SU used to host "Pub Nights" at which faculty research, scholarship and creative activity was put on display. It is also my understanding that the format of these Pub Nights was similar to the celebration of faculty reception that was proposed. As I was not here for previous Pub Nights, I was unaware of the work involved with collecting the information we hoped to spotlight as I have always worked at institutions that had this type of faculty information at the ready through yearly reports. I now understand that this burdened our Library Faculty, and I am sorry! While I cannot go back in time and do things differently, I will work to make every effort to assure that in the future when we seek to celebrate and acknowledge faculty accomplishments, we are more cognizant of unintended workload impacts.

Data collection

- SU excels at fostering critical employability skills (e.g., critical thinking, teamwork, written and oral communication skills, etc.), and we are looking for new ways to share our successes with those we are recruiting – and with legislators, who regularly ask questions about the value of higher education and why it should continue to receive high levels public funding. One such way is to be able to illustrate how we teach these skills. Provost Couch started a pilot initiative this semester with Dean Pereboom and several liberal arts program volunteers to do a one-semester audit of how/where in the curriculum they foster the top eight transferrable skills that employers say they are looking for in new hires. Four programs volunteered (Art, Philosophy, English, and Political Science). Those programs are working with QA Commons to identify how they foster the skills and by the end of the summer they can earn certification as a career-ready program, which would help them have new ways to highlight their successes in skill development. These programs have not been asked to collect data to date, although I hope we can have conversations about why it is important (given the current public sentiment toward

the value of a college degree) for us to have data that show our students are successful and have that perfect combination of critical thinking, liberal arts foundation, and "marketable" skills. Of course it is up to each department to develop strategies to assess their programs, and as subject-matter experts we trust that faculty are in the best position to do so. We hope they will share meaningful evidence of their students' success in the process, and that SU can use that evidence to convince students and their families that our programs are valuable investments in their futures.

Family-friendly work practices

- In terms of working to be more family-friendly, we are currently exploring options related to child care, which has been shared at Faculty Senate, PAT meetings and in my Tuesday Reports. As far as allowing for flexible meeting schedules, I would encourage faculty departments to work together to determine the times/dates meetings take place, as those are primarily faculty-driven decisions.

Priority Number 3: Communication and Transparency

Budgetary communication

A list of Faculty concerns regarding budgetary constraints is detailed in Priority Number 1. Nonetheless, the communication surrounding these fiscal matters is disconcerting enough to Faculty to warrant its prominence in this report. Faculty requested more communication around PIN lines and hiring specifically, as detailed above. Faculty also feel there is not enough communication around the role of newly created administrative and Cabinet positions, such as the Senior Advisor to the President, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Engagement, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications. While the budget presentation on December 8 was a valuable demonstration of fiscal transparency and the university's finances, this was only a first step.

- Over the course of the last several months, we have added opportunities to discuss the budget and other issues related to SU. As presented at the Faculty Special Meeting, budget presentations will be occurring regularly moving forward (see slides 40-45).

Marketing and public relations

Faculty expressed a preference for a more candid style of communication with less emphasis on polished precision and corporate jargon. When issues are discussed on the surface, it feels dismissive to the Faculty struggling to bring forth substantive and critical issues. It also ensures those issues do not have a resolution.

- I understand that faculty members may prefer a more candid communication style that avoids polished precision and corporate jargon.
- I also prefer to speak candidly and openly! As president, though, I must strike a delicate balance. People pay close attention to what I say and how I say it. We live in an age that an off-hand comment from a university president – no matter how innocent or unintentional – can be negatively construed or misinterpreted and spread like wildfire on social media and in the news,

which impacts the school. I represent the university, and I believe I must do everything possible to protect SU, its reputation, and the reputations of all who work and learn here.

- I try to be as transparent and approachable as possible. I also believe that maintaining a level of professionalism and polish is also important. I don't think these are mutually exclusive traits. For instance, my role involves representing the institution to various stakeholders, including donors, alumni, and government entities, where clarity and precision are often expected – and I need to be able to be informal and approachable enough to develop strong relationships.
- I will continue to navigate as best I know how the complexities of communication while ensuring that faculty voices are heard and respected.