

**RESOLUTION FROM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR NOAH FEINSTEIN (DISTRICT 27)
REGARDING THE HR DESIGN STRATEGIC PLAN**

Justification

At our last meeting, Chancellor Ward described the need for a principled vision to take higher education into the future. We, the faculty of UW-Madison, believe that the new HR design strategic plan should embody our vision of what a university should be, rather than merely reflecting what other universities tend to do. Boldness does not lie in benchmarking and market-based comparisons; boldness lies in acting on our deeply held values, and choosing to diverge from the norm when our values so direct us.

There is much to applaud in the strategic plan, including the extension of a living wage guarantee to a larger number of UW-Madison employees, improved ability to hire for specialized positions, and a reduction in the burdensome complexity of our current title system. There are also many things that we are concerned about, many statements and principles the worth (or peril) of which will only be revealed when they are transformed into concrete policies over the coming years. Whether or not we admire the sentiments expressed in the strategic plan, we are justifiably wary of the devils that lurk in the details yet to come. Will the proposed Title and Total Compensation Study affirm our broad commitment to coherent family leave policies – a commitment clearly expressed in the earlier stages of this process? Will the equations that trigger salary adjustment truly respond to internal equity, or will they be overwhelmed by what external markets appear to demand? Will new management strategies and performance evaluations capture the full range of what we must do to make this university a premier place to teach, learn and conduct research?

Resolution

WHEREAS the HR design process has, despite several rounds of faculty engagement, failed to fully capture the scope and nature of faculty concerns; and

WHEREAS Chapter 36.09 (4) states: “. . . faculty shall have the primary responsibility for academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters”; and

WHEREAS we, the faculty, believe that the values of quality in education, respect for shared governance, and fairness in compensation should guide all current and future personnel decisions;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the faculty of UW-Madison, express our conditional support for this strategic plan, contingent on specific changes that reflect our deeply held institutional values:

(1) An unwavering commitment to **quality in education**. Our state expects that the University of Wisconsin-Madison will uphold and even raise the standard of education that we offer to our students, undergraduate and graduate. We can only give our full support to a strategic plan that explicitly emphasizes the quality of teaching (including instruction, advising, mentoring and supervision) as an important element, with material consequences, in all performance reviews for faculty and staff with an instructional role. The strategic plan should be altered to affirm explicitly that emphasis.

(2) A deep **respect for shared governance**. Our unique system of shared governance has led this university to greatness for over one hundred and fifty years. We can only give our full support to a strategic plan that honors the right of governance bodies to approve or reject policies – not merely offer advice and input to some uncertain end. The strategic plan should be altered to reflect this right.

(continued)

(3) Principled **fairness in compensation**. Our university relies on excellence from employees at all levels. To foster such excellence, it must place a high value on work that does not necessarily result in patents, products or property. It must also honor the need of all employees to earn a living wage. We cannot, therefore, accept a salary system that creates or exacerbates a caste system on campus. We can only give our full support to a strategic plan that guarantees that internal equity will have equal or greater weight than market comparisons in assigning or adjusting salaries, that strives to reduce, rather than increase, meaningful disparities across units, and that guarantees a living wage to contract employees as well as non-contract employees. We must preserve our ability to be better than our benchmarks, and better than the market, where it really matters. The strategic plan should be altered to reflect these commitments.

A strategic plan that enshrines these values – quality in education, respect for shared governance, and fairness in compensation – will carry us forward into the next hundred years with vision and pride.

Many people have invested time, energy, and intelligence in the development of this strategic plan. We applaud their hard work and their good intentions. We firmly believe that the changes listed above will allow the plan to have the greatest positive impact.