

MEMORANDUM

September 15, 2023

To: Kim Howard, Chair, Faculty Council

From Maureen O'Rourke, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

RE: Salary Equity Report

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss Faculty Council's questions regarding the salary data posted on its web site. The memo below: (i) provides additional context regarding why the data is presented as it is, including why some fields have been obscured; (ii) process changes we are considering; (iii) and how we assess gender equity as an ongoing matter.

Briefly, the numbers reported on the Faculty Council web site represent aggregate (i.e. not department level) data, and we have obscured particular items when numbers are small and might allow calculation of an individual's salary. We are in the process of working with BU's Analytical Services & Institutional Research team to develop a rubric for identifying and codifying the conditions and rationale for when we will obscure data and also providing that rubric annually as part of the Faculty Council's report.

Please know that we have always and will continue to take gender equity very seriously. My office annually provides Deans with reports comparing faculty by both "years since degree" and "years in rank" by school or college, department, rank, and gender. My office then analyzes faculty increase recommendations, identifying any potential areas of concern, and contacting the Deans to understand their rationale. It is important to keep in mind that equity does not mean all faculty members with, for example, the same years in rank, make the same base salary. Differences based on merit are acceptable and appropriate but must be documented by Chairs and Deans and fact-based.

We also appreciate that some data posted could raise equity concerns if viewed in isolation and without context. In most cases these perceptions arise for understandable reasons: For example,

- We generally do not remove "outliers," in reports to Faculty Council. Outliers are, for example, former deans or high-level administrators who have returned to the faculty; They can skew the numbers considerably particularly in small groups.
- Aggregating the data obscures disciplinary differences. For example, CAS has departments spanning a wide range of fields loosely grouped into Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Mathematical & Computational Sciences. The market in these areas is quite different. My group analyzes the data by department and by these four groupings, but we post the overall numbers, consistent with the practice of our peer institutions.

- When we hire laterally, these new faculty members may earn more in base salary than our “home-grown” faculty. Often, this occurs because of their prior experience. Running reports by “years from degree” helps us to determine whether equity issues exist in these cases.

I will keep you updated on our progress in improving our data disclosure. As always, thank you for all of your work, and please let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.