

Salary Equity Study (SES) Committee Report 2020-2021

Chair: Allison Redlich (CHSS)

Committee Members: Rachelle Holmes Perkins (ASLS); Danielle Rudes (CHSS); Kyle Warfield (Equity Office Appointee).¹

Due to COVID, the SES met virtually this past year and held discussions via email. The first meeting was held on September 22, 2020 at which time we elected a chair and discussed the accomplishments of the SES from the previous year. We next met with VP Lester Arnold and other HR personnel on Oct. 29, 2020. At this meeting, we were presented with a multi-phased plan being conducted by Mason's HR office (via PowerPoint slides) in regards to the study of faculty salary equity. At the end of this meeting, our committee asked for either the slides or a written summary to share with faculty senate. VP Arnold said that he had to check with legal and would get back to us. The Chair of the SESC requested this information approximately three times and never received a response.

In early February 2021, the SES Chair was contacted by a member of the COS working group developing a pilot compensation tool. The SES committee met with this individual on Feb. 11, 2021. Concerns were discussed about the lack of transparency and apparent exclusion of the SES in discussions directly relevant to the committee's charge, and about the potential for gender and ethnicity bias in the development of the pilot compensation tool.

On March 2, 2021, the committee met with VP Arnold, members of his staff, and others concerned about salary equity. We were again updated on the multi-phased plan being carried out by Mason. We voiced our concerns about transparency, exclusion of our committee, and the potential for bias. Although a request was made for concrete next steps, VP Arnold was non-committal. A request was again made to obtain copies of the PowerPoint presentation, which VP Arnold indicated should be fine but he needed to think about the best way to do this. When asked about making sure the SES committee was included in future meetings, VP Arnold's response was that he needed to strategize with his staff and get back to us. We note here that we are aware of subsequent meetings on salary equity and this committee has not been invited to any, nor have we ever received written information about the multi-phased plan.

For the March 3, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting, the below statement was submitted by this committee.

“Members of the Salary Equity Study (SES) Committee recently met with a representative of the College of Science (COS) workgroup charged with developing a compensation tool for COS faculty. We were surprised and alarmed to learn of the COS workgroup and their charge, as their work appears to be directly relevant to the SES committee. The manner in which we were learned of this COS workgroup was not from Mason HR representatives (despite repeated requests for information that went unanswered) but rather from a person intimately connected to the COS process. We are alarmed because this lack of transparency appears to violate the tenets of shared

¹ On October 26, 2020, we were informed that Prof. PJ Maddux was to serve as the Provost representative to this committee. However, this person did not respond to email or attend meetings.

governance that we at Mason value and strive for. The lack of involvement of the SES committee in a process directly concerned with compensation prompted us to refer our concerns to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. In addition, we will be working with the Organizations and Operations Committee to reassess the charge and name of the SES committee. Without access to relevant data, it has been difficult to impossible to effectively engage in studies of salary equity.”

As indicated in this statement, an important next step will be to revisit the charge of this committee. In essence, this committee was unable to meet their charge this year because we did not have access to salary data and were not invited to have a seat at the table at which relevant discussions took place.

1. During the past calendar year has the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President (or their respective offices) announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

As noted above, the President and a Senior VP were engaged in matters directly relevant to the charge of this committee. We were not consulted. We do believe we should have been consulted and our input could have been helpful, and importantly, adhere to Mason’s ideals for shared faculty governance.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

For the most part, we do not believe that the Senior VP responded adequately and in a timely manner. Multiple emails and prompts needed to be sent, and most often, our requests were ignored.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost, Senior Vice President and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

Depending on whether and if so, how, the charge of this committee changes, a direct point person in HR should be appointed. If the charge remains the same, this committee will need reliable access to salary data.

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President, Provost, Senior Vice President, or their staff.

As the chair of this committee, I can say that I found my interactions to be frustrating and unsatisfactory.