

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Professional and Scientific Council

Special Report to Council - May 3, 2018

18SP01 - Statement to the Iowa Board of Regents on Salary Policies for FY2019

Report from:

Jessica Bell, Professional and Scientific Council President, on behalf of the Professional and Scientific Council Executive Committee, Iowa State University

Background:

The Iowa Board of Regents invited the Iowa State University Professional and Scientific Council to make a brief statement on behalf of Professional and Scientific employees, as a non-represented staff group, during the April Board of Regents meeting at the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Response Provided:

Jessica Bell, Professional and Scientific Council President provided the following statement to the Iowa Board of Regents, on April 12, 2018.

I am before you today representing the more than 3000 Professional and Scientific Employees of Iowa State University. Professional and Scientific Employees have a variety of responsibilities, from advising and advocating for students, conducting and assisting with research, and providing many types of outreach and direct assistance to people across Iowa and the world. While sometimes not as visible as faculty and students, each Professional and Scientific Employee is of vital importance and adds incredible value to our University and the Regent's System. We are dedicated to creating, sharing and applying knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place and to fulfilling the mission of Iowa State University. However, we are challenged to complete this mission due to several factors facing not only Iowa State University, but the Regent's System, and the state of Iowa as a whole. In my time with you today, I am going to outline a few of the many challenges currently facing Professional and Scientific employees of Iowa State University.

We are challenged to complete the mission with diminishing resources. Professional and Scientific Council recently honored 51 of our peers for going above and beyond to assist in the mission of Iowa State. Many of these honorees were nominated for taking on additional responsibilities due to the loss of resources, the need to complete additional projects including infrastructure and efficiency projects, additional students that need to be served, or work from a position that has been vacated and has not or will not be filled. Unfortunately, these stories are all too common at Iowa State University. Many P&S Employees are challenged to complete the additional duties while waiting to hear about the impacts of state appropriations and tuition on the university's budget. Open positions aren't being filled, but the vital and necessary work remains. Our institution's effectiveness and efficiency are being questioned while

the data shows that we are administratively the leanest university in our peer group and we have been doing more with less for several years.

Now not only are we having to do more with less, we are being asked to do so without the hope of meaningful salary increases. It is not hard to calculate the long-term loss of funds and buying power that results from a consistent lack of salary increases that at least match the rate of inflation. This hurts employees and the state economy as a whole. Two consecutive years of mid-year de-appropriations have left many of us working more hours, over stressed, and without any prospects for improvement in sight. Employee morale is at a dangerously low level. Salary increases are not necessarily an overarching solution to low morale, but it would go a long way to addressing some of the systemic concerns we are facing.

We are challenged to retain high-quality employees, let alone attract new employees. Employees and job candidates are aware that professional and scientific positions are undervalued in the job market and the lack of consistent meaningful salary increases mean it will stay that way. Our ISU extension employees work side-by-side with county employees, who are hired at a significantly higher salary, yet doing essentially the same job. Dissatisfied employees are seeking other opportunities, for considerably more pay. As I said to President Wintersteen in January, my concern for P&S Employees, and the university as it is today, grows. Many of us work for Iowa State University because we are proud to work in a place that provides such value to the state and to improving the lives of Iowans. We truly believe in the mission of the university, but it becomes difficult when the message employees receive is that the state doesn't value our university's mission, we hear from them that our work doesn't matter.

I asked P&S Employees across the university to share their stories with me. I have heard sadness and concern. We love Iowa State, but we aren't able to continue for much longer at status quo. As employees in the State of Iowa, we struggle to pay our increased property taxes, child care costs, and to feel our work isn't valued. A fellow employee shared with me the following, "If Faculty are the Brains of this organization, and Merit are the Braun, P&S is the Heart and Soul. We keep the oxygen, blood and electrical impulses moving along to make the whole thing work." Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sad to say that Iowa State University's heart and soul are breaking. President Wintersteen recognizes these worrying circumstances and even now has remained committed to prioritizing a nominal salary increase for this year. I ask that you do whatever you can to help her accomplish this, and I ask you today to remember the value and expertise of my fellow Professional and Scientific Employees as you consider tuition rates and all other decisions that are made affecting Iowa State University.