Faculty Report to the Board of Trustees  
Feb. 7, 2012

As the president, provost and members of the Recruitment Task Force on the Humanities and Social Sciences have reported, the institution, administration and faculty are on the move, building a cross-cultural general education curriculum and other programs that distinguish Carroll University. At our luncheon marking the start of the spring semester, President Hastad commended the “excellence creep” across all parts of the institution, from our number one national ranking in nursing to the national and internationally recognized scholarship by Carroll faculty across the disciplines. Enrollment continues at a success rate greater than the space we can provide for students who want to come – and stay – at Carroll. Staff, students, administrators, faculty and you, the trustees, are working collaboratively to nurture our growing excellence (students in my recent African American Literature class had the honor of a conversation with Dr. Howard Fuller and I have been in conversation with Dr. Russ Harland about exciting graduate possibilities in the humanities). But, as Oscar Wilde once said, “The Irish have an abiding sense of tragedy that sees them through temporary periods of joy.” So it has been my way as faculty president, whose term is quickly approaching its end, to applaud the joys of our success and turn directly to addressing the tasks that will help maintain and extend our success.

My message is not tragic, but it is serious. Like the academic imbalance we have acknowledged and begun to address to protect Carroll University’s reputation as a place where the liberal arts and professional programs flourish together, I signal a second issue that needs institution attention.

Faculty salary frustration at Carroll University is real. To be sure, the problem is national, as academic institutions have experienced the same economic challenges as those in the corporate sector. In fact, a recent study by the Association of American University Professors (AAUP), “A Very Slow Recovery,” shows that while tuition has significantly increased, faculty salaries over the last 10 years have stagnated and continue to fall behind the rate of inflation. The study shows that the national average of a 1.8 percent faculty salary increase has “been swallowed up by a 3 percent inflation rate.”

And yet, as many colleges and universities have experienced enrollment and financial problems, Carroll has simultaneously experienced phenomenal growth. Faculty have been at the forefront of that success, designing an exciting and innovative curriculum, and delivering that curriculum through teaching excellence devoted to students. The growth in student enrollment, in staff support, in faculty and staff hires, and in the physical campus follows from the product faculty shape and deliver. Yet Carroll faculty salaries lag behind those at peer institutions and, we believe, are not commensurate with our credentials and our substantial contributions to the institution.

Let me describe some of the reasons for the growing faculty frustration. Despite the nation’s recent economic hard times, Carroll faculty have, indeed, received salary increases and bonuses. But those raises have been small in the context of our acclaimed growing excellence. According to our annual faculty letters of employment, our accumulated faculty salary increases from 2009 to 2012 totaled 5 percent. We have examined a sample of faculty salaries going back to 2007, and pay increases have varied from 1-3.5 percent per year. During that same time period according to our Public Disclosure Tax statements, our top six administrators saw their compensation packages rise between 26 percent and 33.3 percent. At Carroll, according to a national survey, that gap between administrators and faculty is much wider than at comparable institutions.

According to “The Chronicle of Higher Education” national faculty salary survey, Carroll posted its average faculty salaries as $48,400 for instructors, $54,600 at the assistant professor level, $67,100 at

the associate professor level and $91,500 at the level of full professor. These numbers do not give an
accurate picture. They are especially skewed at the associate and full professor levels by a small number
whose salaries are significantly above the average. They are skewed, too, by faculty members whose
salaries are supplemented by service as department chairs, additional administrative duties and by
outside grant stipends they have labored to win.

While Carroll is not far below the average for an assistant professor, the disparity significantly
widens at the levels of associate and full professor. For example, at Carroll, the salary increase from
assistant to associate is $2,000. In 2011, according to the AAUP, at comparable religious baccalaureate
institutions in our neighborhood, that same status increase can bring with it between $7,100 and
$11,096. Here, the jump from associate to full professor provides only a $4,000 increase.

Although the Faculty Executive Committee has limited access to salary information, it estimates
that a majority of faculty earn between $55,000 and $65,000, and have been at that salary bracket for a
long time – perhaps a decade. Faculty salary compression is a national issue, but, as with other data I’ve
noted, it is especially so at Carroll. Some faculty members who have been here 10, 20, even 25 years –
and who continue to demonstrate teaching and scholarly excellence – sense accurately that new hires are
not far behind their income scale, sometimes as little as a $7,000 difference. At the same time, there
appears to be no compression problem in administrative salaries or in student services.

Faculty salary frustration is real and demonstrated in a few common examples. One young
colleague pointed out to me recently that should we continue on our current course and she achieves full
professor status, she will likely see only a $6,000 salary increase, plus minimal cost of living raises over
the course of her career at Carroll. Another colleague who has been here seven years and is the primary
family breadwinner earns under $52,000; of the $3,000 monthly net, $1,800 goes to the mortgage, $230
to car payment and $151 to a $70,000 student loan payment. Several nursing faculty members must
supplement their salaries by taking on extra clinical shifts to pay the bills – working beyond what is
required for their annual accreditation. Some faculty members have reported to me that they rarely
access their very good health insurance because they cannot afford the co-pays.

Let me shift perspectives here to one perhaps closer to your interests as trustees. Carroll has been
extremely lucky in its recent faculty hiring, in part due to the depressed market and our growing
reputation. We have hired exceptionally talented and productive teacher-scholars – notably with very
little increase in the academic operating budget, despite compression and regression issues. Many of
those young faculty members are not in tenure-track positions or do not yet have tenure. We run the very
real risk of losing some of those faculty members who might find salaries more commensurate with their
talents and credentials at other institutions. We already have.

In one department, we recently experienced a three-year failed job search due to salary offers,
and there have been other failed searches. So, beyond the risk of losing our young talented faculty, we
sacrifice top candidates to other institutions who accept better-paid job offers. We already have.

Another part of this problem is our pay for adjunct faculty, who earn $2,700 per course during
their first four semesters and reach a ceiling of $3,200 per course after six semesters, without benefits, a
scale well below other institutions in our neighborhood. We draw excellent part-time faculty from
Marquette, UWM and UW-Madison, and I can personally attest to the downright embarrassment of

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salaries-data-2012/131431#id=238458. For East North Central religiously affiliated baccalaureate
institutions (which includes WI), the AAUP posts similar average salaries, although notably lower at the level of
Professor: Assistant: $54,311; Associate: $65,065; Professor: $79,365.
hiring an adjunct faculty member who will earn little more than the cost of gas to drive from Madison or Milwaukee.

Individual full-time faculty members frustrated with salaries and often finding it difficult to make ends meet understandably negotiate private income bonuses and supplements, but this practice can increase frustration and even resentment among colleagues who work just as hard and are just as productive as those who negotiate privately. There is no question that salary frustration can affect faculty morale, which, in turn, can affect teaching, as a faculty member worrying about serious personal finances turns to a classroom of waiting students. Financial concerns certainly affect student morale, as faculty have been called on repeatedly to extend extra help and sensitivity to students whose families have been struck by the economic downturn. And faculty have done this, compassionately extending hours outside the classroom to work individually with students, extending deadlines and coaching them through assignments. And let me emphasize this: the frustration in no way compromises our faculty’s continued reach for teaching and scholarly excellence, nor the substantial service faculty give to shared governance at Carroll. Faculty have also responded willingly to Doug’s call to nurture a culture of giving, with more faculty giving back to Carroll, some for the first time in their years at Carroll.

Indeed, at the core of this argument for higher salaries is the excellence faculty achieve in teaching. Last spring, for example, in course evaluations across the institution on the question that addresses overall teaching effectiveness, students ranked Carroll University faculty an average of 4.24 on a five-point scale. But perhaps more notable is the caliber of scholarship Carroll faculty produce. The expectation of scholarship has been increasing as Carroll expands its professional and graduate programs. Carroll faculty compete at national and international levels for grants, fellowships and publication in peer-reviewed journals and presses. Other contributors at these venues represent our scholarship and compensation peers; this is our scholarly neighborhood. Faculty salaries should be based on, and more accurately reflect, those of our peers who teach at institutions in our neighborhood. Our salaries should be commensurate with our teaching, research and scholarly excellence across the disciplines.

Some might suggest that our salaries are fair for nine-month contracts and summers off, even though many Carroll faculty members are on ten- or eleven-month contracts – another element that skews our posted average salaries. Faculty on nine-month teaching contracts work hard throughout the summer, travelling with students on CCEs and NCEPS, supervising student fellowships, developing and improving courses, and concentrating on research and scholarly publication.

Some might even say that those faculty members unhappy with their salaries should go elsewhere. Some surely will, but that is no sound policy for an institution that prides itself in excellence. Carroll students and alumni often account much of their academic and professional success to faculty members they have grown up with, who have guided and supported their aspirations long after they leave their courses. Read any edition of the “Pioneer” and see who and what our alumni remember from their experience at Carroll; it is often the dedicated faculty and the courses they teach. It is often the support they gained from faculty with scholarly credentials writing letters of support for graduate studies.

I am not doing an end run in bringing this issue to your attention. I have spoken with Doug and Joanne about the faculty salary frustration. They have both addressed the faculty Senate on this issue.

You, the trustees of Carroll University, have not only an important stake in our institutional excellence; you have the combined experience and wisdom to join with the administration and faculty to address the problem of growing salary frustration. We can debate the numbers, but faculty salary frustration is real. Carroll can do better, given its consistent success in all dashboard indicators. Let us find a way to compensate faculty with salaries commensurate with their substantial talents and commitment to students, their disciplines and the institution.