

HCC BOT Meeting (08-24-2022)

Hearing of the Faculty Speakers

1. Sherry Sippel, Math, DM, FUSA President (impasse, and salary history)
2. Rick Gaspar, English, YB, Chief Negotiator (local comparisons and funding)
3. Cheri Borman, English, YB (Drop income)
4. Jeremy Bullian, Librarian, YB (Upholding the contract)
5. Janet Sibol, Math, DM (Non-tenured, newly hired)
6. Kathryn Smith, Nursing, DM (Hiring Nurses)
7. Danielle Clark, Business, DM (Productivity)
8. Krista Noreen-Santmeyer, Science, BR (Lab Points)
9. Gina Oviedo-Martinez, Librarian, PC (recently tenured salaries)
10. Christopher Lue, Science, DM (Success – teamwork from admin)
11. Ashley Harrier, Computer Science, PC (Hiring Committees) – written

Written versions follow for those who submitted them.

Madam Chair, Members of the Board and Dr. Atwater,

My name is Sherry Sippel. I have been a math faculty at HCC for 22 years and am the current FUSA President. FUSA has a long history of successful bargaining with the Administration, so it is with immense disappointment that we are now at an impasse over economics, and furthermore, that we feel the need to come before this Board to speak about it.

Faculty have a step pay system, which is only effective if 1) the steps are paid each year, and 2) the overall pay ranges are periodically adjusted. At this time the College is doing neither.

In the 2016 contract, the placement of faculty in the 30-step system fixed compression, but the pay range minimums and maximums were not raised.

In the 2019 contract, FUSA proposed pay range increases, but were told that no funds were available, as the Administrative and Staff salary studies were in progress, and for faculty to wait until the next contract. In good faith, FUSA agreed.

Now this year, while bargaining the 2022 contract, we have been told again there are no funds for faculty pay range increases, though the timeline for such increases is long overdue. Every HCC salary study recommends pay ranges be addressed every 1 to 5 years. The pay range minimums for faculty have not changed since 2014, and have only increased \$1700 since 2008.

Meanwhile, since 2017, the Administrative Pay ranges have had tremendous increases, and there is a proposal to raise the Staff pay ranges for a second time. In both cases, funds have been allocated and the raises deemed necessary in order to have competitive salaries for administrators and staff in the local market. The College needs to find the funding now and apply that same rationale to the faculty.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row that faculty steps have been delayed or not paid. Morale is at an all-time low. Hundreds of hours have been spent on both sides debating or defending this. It is time to come to a fair resolution so we can get back to devoting all of our time to our students.

Thank you for time and your consideration.

Sherry Sippel  
Professor of Math  
Faculty United Service Association (FUSA) President  
Hillsborough Community College

Distinguished Board,

I am Dr. Richard F. Gaspar, a proud HCC graduate, and the student commencement speaker for the class of 1990.

I would like to congratulate this board for the conservative management of the budget which has allowed significant accomplishments recently.

Specifically, in the past two years, the board has been able to add millions of dollars to the reserve funds, and pay off multi-million dollar construction loans four years early.

This year, the college has saved enough money that in June, the board approved an average increase of 30% to the administration salary minimum pay ranges; and, today, you will have the opportunity to approve a staff salary increase that that will result in a 56% increase to the Grade 1 mins since 2016.

However, today, you will not be voting on any Economics packages for faculty. We are at an impasse.

Unfortunately, the administration has determined there are \$0 dollars left for increases to the faculty mins and maxes, and they also informed faculty that there would be a permanent loss of a year of service in the step system, due to the lack of any pay increases last year.

We are now significantly behind all beginning teacher pay ranges in Hillsborough County and all surrounding counties. We are also below the state average for faculty salaries in the Florida College System.

In closing, these economics practices have left faculty behind, and each day, we are getting "behinder."

Thank you.

Richard Gaspar  
Professor of Mass Communications  
Ybor City Campus

Madam Chair & Members of the Board,

My name is Jeremy Bullian. I am a 21-year, full-time faculty member and current vice president of FUSA.

Prior to FUSA negotiating the salary step-system with administration, I was among those faculty experiencing severe salary compression. Having recently started a family, I seriously contemplated leaving HCC due to this economic crunch that saw me making less than some new faculty hires. But when we reached an agreement with administration over the step-system, I thought both sides came out ahead: the college now had a tried-and-true tool to budget salary increases over the life of the contract and faculty would have peace of mind knowing they were placed fairly and their salaries would follow modest, yet predictable steps up the scale.

This, it turns out, was naïve of me.

Faculty are now left wondering why the administration devalues them. It is hard to square why the administration is not compelled to honor the agreed upon, signed contract, regarding the salary step-system. It makes one wonder if there are other contracts the college doesn't honor. If there are none, why is it permissible to disregard the economic commitment outlined in the FUSA contract? If it is common practice for HCC to disregard other financial commitments, one is left to question the fiscal practices of the college.

I never thought that being tenured, with 21 years at the same institution, I would still be concerned about providing for my family. I urge the administration to come back to the table to bargain fair market rate economics and to honor the collective bargaining agreements it signs with faculty.

Thank you.

Jeremy Bullian  
Librarian  
Ybor City Campus

Good afternoon.

My name is Janet Sibol and I teach mathematics at the Dale Mabry campus. I have taught full time for our college for 28 years. Before that I worked here as an adjunct instructor and before that I was a tutor in our math lab. My first paycheck from HCC was in 1989. I am 56 years old, which means I have been a part of the HCC family for more than half my life. As a result, I am at the top of my pay range.

So, I am not here today to talk about my salary.

Instead, I would like to spend my time talking to you on behalf of the non-tenured faculty who may be reluctant to speak.

We are all experiencing the inflationary pressures at the gas pump and grocery store. Most of our new faculty are young and just beginning their careers. Therefore, in addition to those economic impacts, most of them are also responsible for student loans, childcare, mortgages (or rent), car payments, etc.

If I were just starting out at the bottom of the current salary range with no pay increase in sight, I would feel a looming sense of financial peril.

I have had the opportunity to learn the story of a “seasoned” faculty member that has just joined our college. The following information was shared with me:

<< quote >>

“I took a pay cut of about \$30,000 a year to work at HCC. While I knew I would likely not find a new job at the same pay as before, I was surprised that the first step was so low, and the maximum allowed step increase was 4, despite my having 25 years of experience. Because my family wanted to move to Florida, I was willing to take the position, but I must be honest that I have been considering other options. I love my HCC students, but I have always loved my students. The most important factors for me with regard to employment are that I love the work, can see myself staying for a long time, and can comfortably live on what I am paid. I can say that I love my work and the HCC students, but I'm not sure HCC considers me to be an important part of the college.” << end quote >>

Let me say the last part of that quote again: “I can say that I love my work and the HCC students, but I'm not sure HCC considers me to be an important part of the college.”

We are told over and over again that administration considers faculty important. What we are asking is for those words to be tangibly proven.

In closing, it is my sincere hope that during your deliberations, you can find real ways to make this faculty member and ALL our faculty members know that they are an important part of the college.

Thank you for your time and thank you in advance for your sincere and proactive consideration.

Janet Sibol  
Math Professor, Dale Mabry Campus

Greetings,

I am Dr. Kathryn Smith. I have been a nursing faculty at HCC for 27 years. I am very excited that the RN to BSN program has started at HCC. I worked on the BSN program for 3 years and very proud of the program that we have built for our HCC students. As the BSN program expands, we will need more nursing faculty. I am concerned that we will not be able to recruit new faculty. We already have difficulty recruiting and retaining new faculty because of the salary structure. For nursing faculty to teach ADN students in the classroom, per accreditation, the nursing faculty must have a minimum of a master's degree. Currently, the starting salary for a faculty with a masters' degree is \$44,248.00 per year. New faculty may be able to receive a little more based on experience, but not much more.

We need to compare the salaries that nurses can receive in the community. In the Tampa Bay area, a new ADN nursing graduate makes from \$56 to \$72 thousand per year. A nurse practitioner, who must have a minimum of a masters' degree, salary ranges from \$95 to \$128 thousand per year. I do understand that the HCC faculty positions are 9-month contracts. But these are great discrepancies in salary. So, it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified nursing faculty. I invite the administration to come back to the bargaining table with increased economics for all the HCC faculty.

Kathryn Smith  
Nursing, Dale Mabry Campus

Good Afternoon,

I wanted to share with you how the reduced load points for labs affects faculty teaching labs economically. But first I'd just like to describe what we do in labs because there's sometimes a mis-perception about what happens in a lab class. In lab students engage in active learning, getting hands-on experiences to help them understand abstract concepts, and which require them to use critical thinking and problem solving to accomplish tasks. During lab I am going around the room, engaging in 1-on-1 interactions with my students, trouble-shooting with them and helping them understand the connections between what they are learning in lecture and the applications in the lab, not to mention making sure they are safe while working in the lab.

In my lab they are getting 1-on-1 interactions with me that are difficult to do in a lecture classroom while learning employable skills they can use as lab technicians in medicine or industry. Students have weekly assignments I have to grade, where I'm checking to be sure they are making measurements correctly, doing calculations correctly, and explaining their results using proper grammar. I normally go into lab 15-20 minutes before the start of lab to make sure all of the chemicals and equipment we need is there and organized properly so the students can be successful. The work I do for a lab class is actually a lot more than what I'm doing for a lecture class.

Economically, I'm sure it varies somewhat by discipline and by instructor how many labs are taught each semester, but I think my story is probably pretty comparable to what other faculty teaching lab courses are experiencing.

For the classes I teach there is a corequisite lab with each lecture. Both meet 2 hours and 30 minutes each week during a normal semester, so the contact hours for both are equivalent. The lecture is worth 30 load points and the lab is worth 24 load points. Using the overload rate of \$75 per load point, this means that for each lab I am being paid \$450. less than for a lecture, even though both have the same number of contact hours.

In a normal semester I will teach 4 lectures and 4 labs. Teaching 4 labs, that works out to be \$1800. per semester. For the spring and fall semesters that is \$3600. In the summer I normally teach 2 lectures and 2 labs, leading to an additional \$900. deficit for the classes I teach in the summer.

So, considering my normal teaching load, I am earning \$4500. less each year than my colleagues who are teaching the same number of contact hours. I have been teaching full time at HCC for 15 years now, which means I've earned a total of \$67,500. less than my colleagues during this time. You have been hearing from my colleagues about how the lack of a raise has been affecting them economically. I hope this helps raise awareness that faculty teaching labs are falling even further behind financially.

Krista Noren-Santmyer  
Associate Professor of Chemistry  
Hillsborough Community College, Brandon

Hi, my name is Gina Oviedo Martinez and I am a faculty librarian at the Dale Mabry campus.

I want to start out saying that I love my job, I worked here in 2010 and 2011 on grants and left the school to get the required experience to apply for a tenured faculty position which has been my dream since I was 10 years old. HCC was the place I wanted to be at, I feel at home here, and feel like I make a real difference in people's lives.

I was awarded tenure this Spring, but it was a bitter sweet experience as along with it I received my new contract with a 4<sup>th</sup> year of delayed or non-payment of step raises.

Counting inflation, in real dollars I am making \$10,000 less than when I started working toward tenure. That is an astounding cut in pay. I am losing money every year.

I am a team player, and when Covid happened, I understood the school didn't have money to pay us.

I carried on as usual, or not as usual, working from home, learning to use Teams, doing everything I could to help the students succeed.

But this is the 4<sup>th</sup> year with delayed or withheld step increases and it has had a detrimental impact on my family.

I cannot afford to live in Hillsborough County, so I drive 45 minutes a day from Pasco because I love HCC. With gas prices up, this is a much more costly expense in addition to the Veteran's tolls.

I have three college students living with me, and we have sold my husband's car, bought one for me to drive with better gas mileage, remortgaged the house and took out a home equity loan to keep up with the rising inflation. I knew I would never be rich in this profession, but I never expected to achieve tenure and bring home less than I did bartending in college. I believed in the value of education. Isn't that what we tell our students?

When unemployment was handed out, it was more than I was making, and that is supposed to be the minimum livable wage. While my friends bragged about their free money, I carried on as usual because I believe in what we do here.

I am going into my 4<sup>th</sup> year wondering if I will have money to fix my house. I am borrowing against my house to meet living expenses, and I am worried about how I will take on a second job with the long commute I already have.

I am a loyal HCC employee, but it would be a lie to say that I don't feel demoralized not being given what I was promised, especially the year I made tenure. The staff and administration are receiving wage increases, so it causes me to pause and ask what my value is to this school, what our value as faculty is to the school that they will not honor the contract. It sends the message that we are the bottom of the totem pole of value and all of our years of study and dedication to the subject are not valuable to you. I looked up at my degrees today and wondered why I spent all that time studying and missing everything fun so I could earn graduate degrees that allow me to teach, instead I am making the same wages as I am very disappointed and disheartened that the administration has left the bargaining table without giving us a penny. I value the school and give it my all, but what I am to think when I am denied a small promised increase in income 4 years in a row? I believe if you want a strong and loyal teaching staff, you need to live up to the minimum of what you promised us. I am proud to be tenured librarian at this school but my pay is lower than the average librarian pay in 2004. How am I to manage on this budget? How would you manage? If staff and administration are getting a raise, faculty should be getting a raise. That is fair and that is all that I ask. I am humiliated to be standing here begging for money like a panhandler with a masters degree in one hand and a specialist degree in the other. I worked hard to get to this place, and I believe I and the rest of the faculty deserve the financial support we need to live and not have anxiety rule our lives while we should be teaching classes. Morale can only carry us so far, it does not pay the bills.

Gina Oviedo Martinez, Librarian, Dale Mabry Campus

Board of Trustees,

I want to remind everyone of the ultimate goal of the College, which is student success. Student success is more than an education and entails empowering students for success and their life pursuits. At the heart of student success is the faculty that teach them daily.

I once asked Karen Griffin, retired vice president of the associates in art program, how the administration roles came to be. At the time, I think she was implying that maybe the college did not need administrators, which cannot be further from what I was thinking. Having worked at several different colleges throughout my career, I saw that each institution had a unique administration organization. In the end, I think it boils down to that any student graduating from college should have an equal opportunity for success regardless of the institution from which the student earned a degree.

For example, the Department of Education oversees state colleges to help them maintain relevant academic standards. A similar board of regents oversees state universities. Hence there is a need for college administrators. Without the administration, faculty cannot do what they do best, which is to teach students.

Over the years, I have observed a culture where the faculty serve the administration. However, I feel it should be the opposite, where the administration assists the faculty in better serving the students.

I am sure most everyone in this room knows about the administration salary increases over the past 10 years. While the administration has enjoyed rises to keep their salaries competitive with other academic institutions, faculty, who are the essential part of a college, have seen no search raises. The college has refused to pay the most recent step increase in faculty salaries, which has resulted in arbitration.

In the most recent round of negotiations, despite faculty salaries daddy long overdue, we argued that a college faculty member should earn at a minimum what an equivalent public school teacher earns. A flat-out no told the faculty that they are valued less than a public school teacher. In other words, the college has taken the stance that without quality faculty, it can attract students and be a financially viable institution.

Regarding raises, it is not as if the faculty is asking for a large salary increase. Many of my colleagues have spouses and children who depend on their salaries. I am sure everyone has gone grocery shopping and noticed the unusually high prices due to inflation, the pandemic, and other reasons. All we are asking is to be fairly compensated for the work we do in and out to ensure student success.

Let me close by going back to the point I made that it seems as if the role of the faculty at Hillsborough Community College is to serve the pleasure of the administration, which I believe is the reverse of how a college should operate. The administration should serve the faculty to help in their endeavor to promote student success.

Christopher Lue  
Chemistry, Dale Mabry

Good afternoon,

My name is Ashley Blick Harrier and this coming January, will be my 20<sup>th</sup> year as a full-time Computer Science faculty member at the Plant City Campus. Over the course of my tenure at the college, and as a department chair, I have been part of numerous faculty hiring committees. I've noticed a dramatic decrease in the number of applicants for these positions.

Beginning in the late-fall of 2020, extending through February of 2022, I have been the chair for both the Computer Science and Business Intelligence search committees for the Ybor campus. Of the total of five (5) times these positions were advertised, the biggest applicant pool was five (5). Once, it was zero (0). One hire was made from the pool of five (5), however that faculty member resigned within the first year. I have been asked to chair the next iteration of search committees for these positions, however, I believe it will be extremely difficult to attract quality candidates, given the low starting salaries.

This past summer I was also part of the Computer Science hiring committee for the Southshore campus. Of the five (5) applicants, four (4) accepted the offer to be interviewed. Only three (3) attended. The committee decided that none of the candidates were strong enough to be hired.

This leaves two of the five main campuses at HCC without a full-time tenure track Computer Science instructors. I believe this is directly related to the low starting salaries, that are not in line with the other local colleges, and certainly well below salaries for computer science positions in industry. Unless we can attract quality faculty, it will continue to be a deterrent to our students.

I apologize for not being able to attend yesterday's board meeting. I did, however, still want to share my experiences.

Thank you,

Ashley Blick Harrier, MS  
Department Chair & Professor  
Computer Science