

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Professional and Scientific Council

Special Report to Council - May 4, 2017

17SP02 - Statement to the Iowa Board of Regents on Salary Policies for FY2018

Report from:

Clayton Johnson, 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:

Clayton Johnson, Professional and Scientific Council President provided the following statement to the Iowa Board of Regents, on April 20, 2017.

On behalf of the Professional and Scientific Employees of Iowa State University, I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak today. The Professional and Scientific employees at ISU are a vibrant, energetic, and enthusiastic group of people. We are fiercely loyal to our university, but we also have some areas of concerns that I would like to share today.

With over 3,000 employees located across the state of Iowa, Professional and Scientific employees represent the largest employee group at Iowa State University. The work of Professional and Scientific employees is varied and affect every function of our university. Every division of ISU employs Professional and Scientific employees. Because of our wide-ranging duties, the needs of Professional and Scientific employees are very diverse. However, some common themes cut across the entire university.

Regardless of our positions, all Professional and Scientific employees continue to advance the mission of Iowa State University: to "Create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place." We work directly with students, we work directly with research, and we work directly with Iowans. Over the past several years, we have seen our work increase in all of these aspects.

Professional and Scientific employees have accepted this challenge, and worked diligently to help our university maintain its status as a top-tier research and education center. As a great example of this, I would like to highlight ISU Student Counseling Services. Since 2011, ISU has seen a 22.6% increase in its overall student body. During that same amount of time, Student Counseling Services has seen an increase of 46.2% in intake appointments, and an increase of 41% in crisis appointments. The employees of Student Counseling Services have faced this need

head-on working in creative and innovative ways to serve increased student numbers, including services like group counseling, support groups focusing on specific campus communities, and integrating biofeedback technology within their work.

Even with creative approaches to meet the student mental health needs on campus, Student Counseling Services is facing a common need at ISU, which is the need for more space, and updated spaces, to adequately serve students, conduct research, and serve lowans. With decreased state appropriations and the mid-year budget revisions of the past few months, many "deferred maintenance" projects have been delayed even further so ISU can continue to meet the immediate needs of its constituency.

Student Counseling Services is just one example of many of the offices at our university that are meeting their increased needs head-on and creating new and innovative ways to serve our community. However, maintaining morale has been difficult in this environment of increased workload, maintaining quality service, lack of space, and salary stagnation with little or no recognition.

Salaries for Professional and Scientific employees have remained stagnant over the past several years. Over the past five years, Professional and Scientific employee salaries have increased an average of 1.4% per year. In a similar timespan, cost of living expenses have continued to outpace these increases significantly. One example of this is housing costs in Ames. Since 2013, the average sale price of homes in Ames have risen over 10%. A factor that exacerbates this problem is that ISU does not currently have any centralized tools by which supervisors can effectively evaluate employee performance. This means that previous increases have been largely "across the board" increases rather than performance based in nature—which does not financially incentivize employees to continue to improve.

Iowa State University is on the precipice of numerous major changes. We have several new administrators who will be hired within the next year, including a new President. We also have several new systems and processes that will fundamentally change the way we complete our work—including (but not limited to) a complete review of the classification and compensation system, a new learning management system, and the rollout of a campus-wide enterprise resource planning system. Professional and Scientific employees will play a central role in implementing all of these changes.

While change is exciting, it is going to take a lot of work. The upcoming changes will require a significant effort of the entire ISU community, including its 3,000 Professional and Scientific employees. We welcome the new chapter upon which ISU is embarking, and we are looking forward to the challenge. However, we need your help, and frankly, we need additional resources.

To everyone listening today: the Regents, campus administrators, and all constituents: please remember the value and resource provided by Iowa State University, the other public universities of the state of Iowa, and the employees serving these institutions. Please help us to retain our valuable employees and maintain the excellent service we provide on a daily basis. Please help us to continue the work to support Iowa State University and the state of Iowa. Thank you.