

SENATE ACTION FORM

No. 1267

Subject:

President/Designated Administrative Officer

Date

FACULTY SENATE POLICY PROPOSAL/MOTION

Subject:

Faculty Senate Resolution on Budgetary Realignment

Resolution to Address the Growing Disparity Between Instructional and Administrative Costs in the University Budget and Prioritize Mission-Critical Roles

Whereas, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) is dedicated to its *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030* strategic plan, prioritizing a student-first mission with high-quality instruction, mentorship, and academic excellence at its core, as well as investing in faculty sense of well-being and belonging; and

Whereas, UNC's mission fundamentally depends on faculty members, who directly impact student success, academic engagement, and community development; and

Whereas, recent trends show a disproportionate increase in spending on administrative personnel relative to faculty and instructional resources, leading to financial shifts that are likely to contribute to tuition increases; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate acknowledges that recent annual salary adjustments have reduced—but not fully closed—the disparity between UNC faculty salaries and those at peer institutions, particularly as the high cost of living in Greeley (104.3 cost of living index and 126.8 housing index) affects recruitment and retention efforts; and

Whereas, UNC is committed to achieving salary parity with peer institutions to ensure competitive faculty pay and support its academic mission, but low salaries hinder recruitment and retention, as qualified applicants may be discouraged by below-median compensation and faculty may leave for better-compensated opportunities; and

Whereas, the compensation gap between faculty and staff has grown significantly since FY2019, which contributes to continuous budget challenges; and

Whereas, achieving 100% faculty salary parity with peers will require a targeted base pay increase of \$2.4 to \$2.9 million, representing a modest fraction of the millions of dollars in staff compensation increases over the last five years, an investment necessary to attract and retain high-quality faculty; and

Whereas, UNC's Board Policy Manual Section 1-1-201(5) specifies that 55% of the budget should be allocated to Instruction, which emphasizes that instruction is the primary function of a University;

Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. **UNC Realign Budget Priorities Toward the Core Academic Mission:** The Faculty Senate urges the administration to realign budget priorities to support instructional resources and student-focused initiatives, addressing imbalances created by rising administrative costs to protect the university's ability to provide accessible, high-quality education.
2. **Equitable Adjustments to Address Pay Gap:** The Faculty Senate recommends implementing differentiated salary increases for faculty to compensate for the recent imbalance in faculty and staff compensation. Once adjusted, future salary increases should be applied equitably across faculty and staff to prevent further inequity.
3. **Transparent Policies on Hiring to Support Instructional Priorities:** The Faculty Senate calls for the development of transparent policies that codify the criteria and processes for hiring faculty

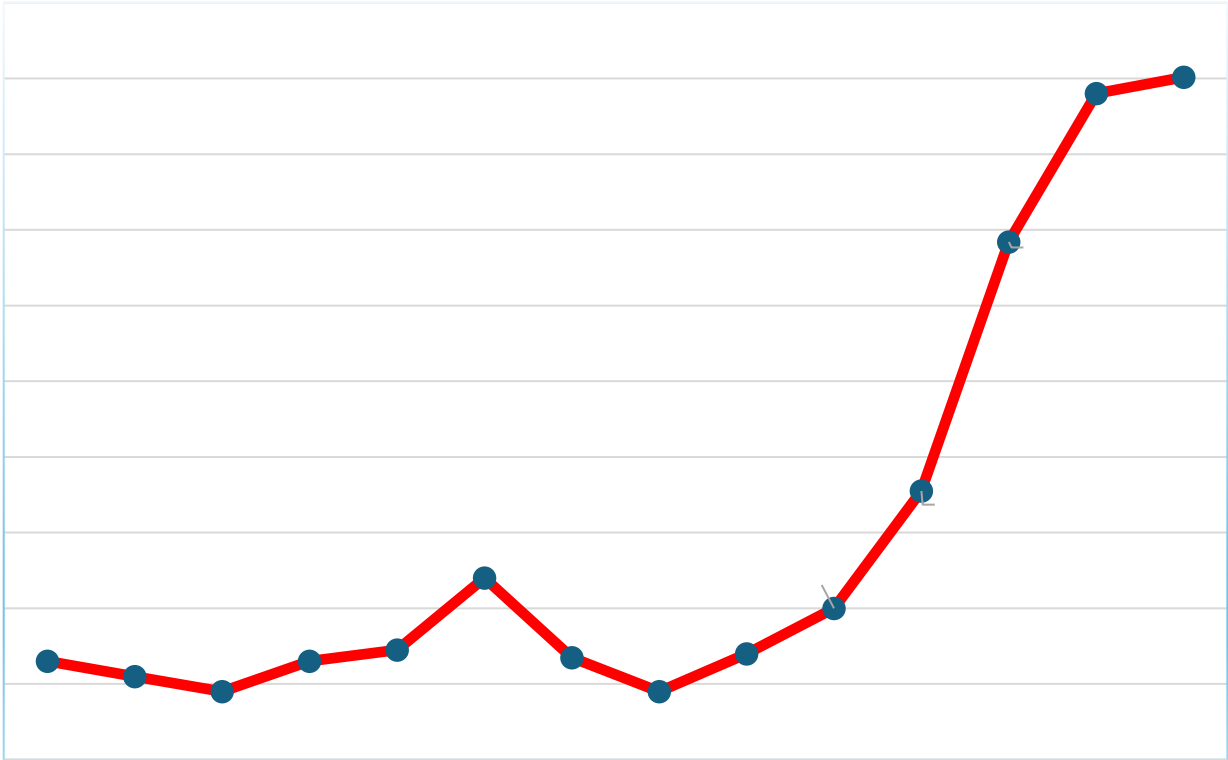
and staff, ensuring that instructional roles are prioritized to support UNC's commitment to academic excellence.

4. **Clear Policies for Discretionary Salary Increases:** The Faculty Senate requests the establishment of transparent guidelines for discretionary salary increases to ensure fair and mission-aligned application across both faculty and staff, with clear prioritization of roles that directly support student outcomes.
5. **Assessment of Current Budget Alignment with Board Policy Manual Guidelines:** The Faculty Senate requests a transparent assessment of current budget allocations in relation to Board Policy Manual guidelines,

Table 1: Staff vs. faculty compensation and gap

FY	Faculty Pay (Million \$)	Exempt Staff Pay (Million \$)	Classified Staff Pay (Million \$)	All Staff Pay (Million \$)
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Figure 1: Staff vs. faculty pay gap



Exponential Growth in Pay Gap: The graph shows an accelerating increase in the pay gap between staff and faculty, with the gap widening more sharply in recent years. This trend suggests an increasingly disproportionate allocation of resources favoring staff compensation over faculty.

Notable Shift Around FY23-FY24: There appears to be a marked shift in the trajectory of the gap starting around FY2023, where the rate of increase in the pay gap becomes steeper.

Implications for Future Equity Initiatives: The graph underscores the urgent need for interventions to address this growing disparity. Without corrective measures, the gap is likely to continue expanding, challenging efforts toward equity and potentially affecting faculty recruitment, retention, and morale.

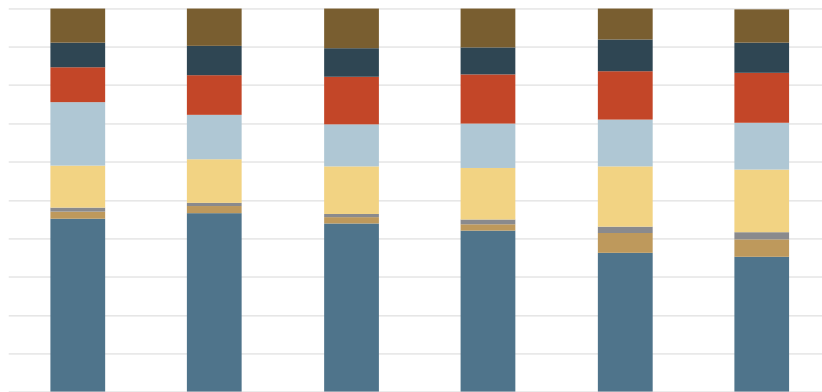
Figure 2:

Diverging Compensation Trajectories: Figure 2 shows staff pay rising steadily while faculty pay remains relatively stagnant or declines, creating a widening compensation gap. This divergence, especially when viewed alongside employee FTE trends, highlights a disparity in resource allocation favoring staff.

Increasing Staff Pay Despite Declining Student Enrollment: The steady rise in staff pay, even as student FTE declines (Figure 3), suggests a decoupling of administrative spending from the reality of student population size.

Resource Allocation Shift Toward Administration: With faculty FTE and pay decreasing and staff compensation increasing, the data points to a shift in priorities and resources toward administrative roles.

Figure 4: Changes in Budget allocation between Instruction and others FY19-24



Instructional Spending Declines: The allocation for Instruction has seen the largest percentage decline since FY19, indicating a shift away from funding core academic functions.

Student Services Impacted: Budget allocation for Student Services, critical for supporting student success, has also decreased significantly during this period.

Figure 5: Instruction as a percentage of the total budget for UNC vs. peers (FY223)

Lowest Instructional Allocation: Among peer institutions, UNC dedicates the smallest percentage of its total budget to instruction, highlighting a critical misalignment with its core educational mission.

Overall, the data reveals a widening gap in compensation growth between faculty and staff, reflecting an institutional shift toward administrative expansion. This trend, if unaddressed, risks compromising the university's core mission to deliver high-quality education as faculty resources continue to diminish relative to administrative growth. The growing imbalance, with administrative

We are currently in year four of the five-year plan that the administration committed to in order to get all faculty to 100% of parity, and yet faculty salaries are at only 92.5% of peer parity, making it unlikely UNC will reach 100% parity by FY2026, as planned, without immediate action.