

Faculty Association
Report for the District Governing Board
April 2021

Background:

Faculty Association is a thriving participant of shared governance at NPC. All faculty are members of the association, which meets monthly to address challenges and successes related to instructional practices and college activities. Faculty Association supports the college and provides input on a variety of topics from integrated strategic planning to college policies and procedures.

Successes for March 2021

In addition to instruction and advisement responsibilities, Faculty Association members conducted the following activities:

- Faculty participated in presidential search activities, including many who attend all three hours of each of the candidate finalists.
- Faculty worked to improve practices and increase student engagement by attending multiple professional development activities including conference events on engaging students via virtual learning, and improved instructional strategies.
- Faculty supported students through scholarship applications and writing individualized letters of recommendation for upcoming scholarship reviews.
- Faculty partnered with community members to engage development of potential new programs to be offered at NPC.
- Faculty served on multiple search and probation committees.

Meeting the Challenges

- Faculty continue to adapt to changing environment with modified courses and in-person instruction, particularly in the area of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Extra planning as well as individualized and department specific plans have been developed and implemented.
- Faculty continue to support students through a variety of personal and academic challenges including connecting them to services related to domestic violence, grief, illness, depression, child loss, homelessness, and job loss.

Recommendations to the Board

- Faculty Association recommends reconsidering tuition rates for county and out of county residents due to the significant, potential damage of demonstrating favor for one county over another in our service area. (See attached Memo).
- Faculty Association urges the board to support the **joint recommendation** between FA, CASO and the college's executive leadership of a **pay increase of 5% for fiscal year 2022**. We request that the board approve the joint proposal as described in the March board packet. To maintain

viability and sustain the college through future events, we must ensure a highly qualified faculty and staff to meet the college's mission and vision. NPC continues to lose the best and brightest candidates due to our significantly low salaries relative to other colleges in the state and the region.

All college employees, including faculty have demonstrated their deep commitment to the success of students and the college, particularly through the pandemic. During the move to remote teaching and operations, faculty and staff have been asked to pay out of pocket to keep doing their jobs. They are using personal cell phones for work calls, using their personal internet access, and heating and cooling costs shifted from NPC to staff, etc. We see the effects of this transfer by looking at the operating expenses for the months of March, April, and May of 2020 (the period of our first 'lock-down') when operating expenses fell by roughly \$800,000 from the previous year for the same period. These expenses did not simply disappear. Instead, they have been absorbed by college employees who are now paying their own operating expenses. This represents a material transfer of wealth from college employees to NPC. (All this during one of the worst economic downturns in recent history.)

Additionally, the cost of inflation has eaten into annual wage increases such that faculty and staff haven't seen meaningful changes in salaries for more than a decade. From FY 06-07 to FY 20-21 wage increases for faculty and staff have averaged about 2.3%. Over that same time-frame inflation (Consumer Price Index-Urban) has averaged about 2%.

In FY21, Faculty Association and CASO agreed to a COLA only increase due to the unknown impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and a threatened "skinny budget" by the state. However, the anticipated budget responses did not occur, and the decision to only adopt COLA in FY21 further stagnated NPC salaries. This means that faculty and staff have been merely treading water in terms of their compensation, and at times bringing home less in net wages.

Finally, we applaud the Board's decision to adjust the presidential salary range to attract a high-quality candidate. NPC also needs to retain and attract high quality faculty and staff. To ensure the college salaries remain competitive in the state, an increase above COLA is needed. Currently NPC faculty salaries are the amidst the lowest in the state, higher only than Dine, TOCC, and Pima. NPC salaries are surpassed by more than 5% by Central Arizona, Cochise, Eastern Arizona, and Yavapai College. Furthermore, a 5% increase would simply keep NPC faculty salaries in its current relative position presuming other colleges provide COLA only increases.

Please demonstrate your support of NPC as a quality institution by approving the 5% recommended increase to faculty and staff wages.

Respectfully,

Allison Landy

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Governing Board

FROM: Faculty Association *abl*

RE: DGB vote on Special In-County Tuition Rates

CC: Dr. Jeanne Swarthout

DATE: 2 April 2021

On April 2nd, 2021, the Faculty Association voted unanimously to communicate concerns regarding the special in-county tuition discount that was approved at the March DGB meeting.

While the Faculty Association appreciates that NPC District Governing Board members wish to recognize the special contributions of Navajo County taxpayers by offering discounted tuition to its residents, we discussed the potential ramifications of this action at length and hereby present two related but distinct arguments for reconsidering the decision. The first underscores potential harm to the relationship with our partners in Apache County; the second takes into consideration NPC's role within the larger system of higher education.

Whenever NPC represents itself to the world, it mentions our 22,000 square mile service area. Approximately half of that area is Apache County. Apache County students and employees see themselves as NPC students and employees - undifferentiated members of the college community. Faculty and staff from Apache County serve all NPC students, and Apache County students are important parts of the NPC community, many of whom physically take some of their courses in Navajo county, which already adds to their costs.

NPC provides services that many Apache County students need. That should not be lost in this discussion. However, this is essentially a financial question, and the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the two counties benefits both counties. In addition to the money Apache County pays via the IGA (which is of course supported by its taxpayers), Apache County students obviously add significantly to enrollment and FTSE count. Apache County students may take the difference in tuition as a reason to look elsewhere. NPC serves Apache County students better than other institutions can, so both NPC and Apache County students would be damaged by this move.

Even more significantly, this sends a message that may be politically unwise. Apache County has a new Superintendent of Schools and many new players who will influence any new IGA. If this move is taken as a slight, it could revive a movement in Apache County to seek a different arrangement with a college other than NPC. In addition to damaging student experiences and hurting NPC's FTSE, it would also mean that NPC would no longer be able to use Apache County demographics on grant applications, which would significantly hurt NPC's chances to receive

Title 3, Title 5 or other grants that focus on serving Native populations and/or providing services to economically disadvantaged communities. Even if there is no change to the IGA, using Apache county as part of the service area when it benefits NPC without treating it as a full part of the college is disingenuous at best.

At its core, this proposal makes a distinction that cuts against decades of work to build a college community that serves and represents both counties in Northeastern Arizona. The benefits would be negligible at best, and the costs could be significant.

Secondly, population projections for NPC's service area forecast significant declines. As a result, NPC will almost certainly face a reality that requires recruiting students residing outside the borders of Navajo County in order to have sufficient enrollment to fill classes. Encouraging students residing outside of Navajo County with an equitable tuition rate will provide NPC with a pool of students to supplement declining enrollment trends while preserving educational opportunities for Navajo County residents.

Offering tuition discounts to Navajo County residents, not all of whom pay property taxes, is unlikely to result in an increase in FTSE. For example, the tuition discount that the District Governing Board approved during the pandemic has not resulted in an increase in enrollment. In addition, it should be noted that the vast majority of our students do not actually pay their own tuition and instead rely on Pell Grant funding and third-party payers. We also know that Navajo County residents are aggressively recruited into other Arizona community colleges' online programs that have a higher tuition rate than our own. A further tuition discount for those students won't change this fact. For every student we lose to a competing community college, we should focus on gaining one from outside our service area and to such a student, a low tuition rate for all could be a deciding factor.

In order to sustain what we have and to even have a chance to grow into the future, we must recruit students from the entire state of Arizona and beyond. As it is today, and will be in the future, state funding related to FTSE will be more important than tuition revenue. NPC's low tuition rate for all students residing in Arizona will be a significant advantage in attracting students as we continue to leverage instructional technology that allows us to reach students at significant distances from Navajo County.

The Board's desire to assist Navajo County taxpayers with a tuition discount is appreciated, however, we hope we have shown that the benefits of this action are expected to be negligible, while the potential harm looms large.