

BOV report

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Point 1: I know enough about how other institutions operate to know how lucky we are to have a supportive board—so thank you.

Point 2: That said, I'd like to provide a "facts on the ground" report concerning the consequences of our current faculty salary scale.

I'll share two stories with you--each of them true--each of them drawn from my own direct experiences.

#### Story One:

On a Thursday, in March of 2010, at precisely 10:00, I realized the stomach bug I had witnessed (with horror) work its way through my children over the past two weeks had officially found me. This presented me with a significant personal problem, but more importantly, a significant professional problem: for at noon that same day, I was committed to picking up a job candidate—my search committee's *top* candidate—at the Richmond airport, and then to escorting her to and around Farmville for the day—lunch, coffee, dinner, etc. By the grace of God, and through secretly syncopated breathing, I managed to make it through the day. I dropped the candidate off after dinner at 6:30, called my wife and informed her I would never be able to drive all the way home, headed to the Hampton Inn, and proceeded to allow the virus to run its course for most of the night.

I'm telling you this story in part because it is an illustrative, if extreme, example of how *difficult* it can be to hire the right people at Longwood, and how *hard* we work to attract and land the kind of faculty members our students and their parents expect and deserve. *And* this story had a happy ending. She took the job. We managed to hire *precisely* the person we wanted, a first-rate young professional dedicated to the teacher/scholar model, to sustained interaction with students, to investing in the future of Longwood. And she has been just as good as we thought she would be—a model colleague and teacher.

Of course, I'm sure you noted I said "had a happy ending." The colleague in question has as of two weeks ago accepted another position, where she will start over as a first-year assistant professor. Her starting salary will be 15% higher—than *my* current salary. I've been at Longwood for 12 years.

#### Story 2:

Another search we conducted in the recent past. And, again, we found an ideal candidate—this person was prepared to bring to Longwood a truly stunning array of innovative ideas, including summer programs that would have been unlike anything we're currently doing. Just awesome, and quite frankly money-making, stuff.

And everything was going *perfectly*—until the moment we made our offer. From that point forward, the hiring process fell utterly apart—I wish I could show you the trail of depressing emails as this candidate worked with the committee to try to find some way to justify to herself accepting a job that she couldn't afford to take. And she didn't.

But as I suggested, my two stories are meant to illustrate a widely shared sense of the problems we face as an institution. I asked department chairs to send me their own hiring/retention stories and received a whole host of like-minded responses (read below).

So what's the point? The point is not "faculty hate the new University Center." That's not it. We understand the need to stay competitive with other institutions, and we understand that money can't be moved around as easily as we might like. The point, rather, is urgency. The administration identified a problem—Lankford—and developed a plan to deal with it. Where is the urgency on *this* issue? Perhaps it's there—but if it is, I don't think faculty *think* it's there.

Please understand: I say all of this as someone who loves Longwood. Seriously--who doesn't love Longwood? But as one of my colleagues put it to me the other day, and I quote, "we've got to stop relying on the fact that everyone loves Longwood." We all love Longwood--it's true. But so does the person in Story 1. And so did the person in Story 2. And neither will be here next year.

Quotes from department chairs:

1. Where do I begin?? The best instructor [in an unnamed area] we had left b/c of salary. We recently conducted a search in which all three candidates turned us down flat.
2. One year ago [my department] lost a highly respected junior faculty member, due in large part to the fact that the entry-level salary at [another institution] was \$12,000 higher than what he had been making in his fourth year here at LU. This marked a 26% increase for him. During his consideration of this offer, he mentioned several [times] that he was perfectly happy with his duties, students, and colleagues at Longwood, but the money really mattered.
3. If faculty stay here because the economy is terrible and there aren't many alternatives, or because they have family or other connections to the area—these are simply factors—they do not constitute a faculty retention strategy.
4. I will very likely finish two three-year terms as chair without ever having had the opportunity to award merit raises to members of my department. Quite frankly, if I was a newer assistant professor in that position, I likely would have already left Longwood (and of course the issue of salary compression is a problem for senior faculty). [We] tout the close mentoring between faculty and students, and students emphasize that their relationship with particular faculty members was their favorite Longwood experience[. . .] The development and retention of quality faculty (including paying a competitive salary) should be the highest priority for the administration and the board,