Faculty Senate Bill 426 – Faculty Senate Response to the UAH President and Provost Response to Faculty Senate Resolution 17/18/12

**Whereas**, the President and Provost of UAH rejected Faculty Senate Resolution 17/18-12.

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that the UAH Faculty Senate ask for a re-evaluation of the rejection.

Dear President Altenkirch,

As a Faculty Senate response to your response to Faculty Senate Resolution 17/18-12, Compensation of Faculty with Increased Teaching Levels. It is our opinion that several of your responses and concerns are not correct and do not follow the intention of the Faculty Senate Resolution.

In your response, under 2) Incremental Compensation for Increased Teaching Levels of 35, 45, 55, and 80 students, you list three areas of concern: Fairness, Detrimental Consequences, and Legal Issues.

Fairness: In your response, you state, correctly, that some programs do not have much opportunity to teach large classes. You also state that “while not having the opportunity for extra compensation”. The Resolution that was voted on by the Senate has a provision to take these situations into account. The submitted resolution contains a provision, that if the retention rate of the course is 90% or greater, then the faculty member will receive compensation equivalent to teaching a 35 student class. As has been pointed out in many discussions in the Faculty Senate, Faculty who support and encourage the performance of students so that they achieve passing grades and are retained, should be acknowledged. Other concerns in your response as to whether or not faculty who teach two or three, depending on faculty load, courses of 34 students are recognition and financially disadvantaged compared to faculty to teach one course with 30 students, and another course with 38 students. This should be a non-issue that could be rectified by the Department Chairman and Dean of the College that recognizes a faculty member in the former situation. Another of your concerns is for a faculty member who teaches a 5-credit hour course with 30 students versus a 3-credit hour course with 50 students. Any potential problems with this scenario can be rectified by either the retention rate of 90% recognition, or again by recommendations of the Department Chair or the Dean, that the faculty members service falls within the “intent” of the Resolution, but due to mitigating circumstance does not meet the specified values. The last two examples that are include can readily be rectified by fair application of the intent of the Resolution, rather than a strict legal interpretation. There is nothing in the submitted Faculty Senate Resolution that denied compensation and recognition under other circumstances that conform to the intent of the Resolution.

Detrimental Consequences. In your response, you suppose that assistant professors will sign up to teach large classes just so that they can receive the extra compensation. A survey of several departments at UAH clearly show that nearly-all, or all, of the Assistant Professors in Departments are teaching courses that would give them the opportunity for compensation and recognition. These Assistant Professors are currently performing to the specifications in the Resolution, which may therefore be affecting their research performance, without any recognition of compensation. The Resolution does not specify what the compensation or recognition for teaching large classes will be. While there are some historical compensation values, these were not included in the Resolution, as they were left for the President, Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs to decide. The Faculty Senate do not believe that Assistant Professors are going to request large classes strictly for fiscal compensation; Faculty generally agree to teach courses that are more in their area of expertise. Furthermore, the decision on which classes are taught by which professors is the decision of the Department Chair and College, not an individual faculty member’s decision. Faculty who offer to teach a course out of their area of expertise risk lower SIE evaluations which would be detrimental to the faculty member’s Departmental Evaluations. If this situation were to develop, the Faculty Senate hopes that the Department Chair and senior Department members would counsel the Faculty Member.

Legal Issues. The response to the Resolution includes the concern that faculty members will “recruit” students to certain classes or sections in order to receive the compensation or recognition. A survey of courses at UAH show that the larger, and largest, classes are courses required by the Programs of Study for Degree completion. As you point out your response “Whether such extra compensation would lead to abuse at UAH is known.” You state in our response that faculty have recruited students to courses. However, as there is currently no extra compensation for large classes, compensation does not appear to be the dominate reason for such “recruiting” efforts. Often, Faculty will suggest that students take certain or “extra” courses to increase their preparation for the workforce, or to increase their skills in areas where the student’s abilities are lacking. Faculty should be cautioned on the Federal law issues with recruiting students just for extra compensation. However, as UAH is more typically struggling to clear waitlists for classes, it is difficult to justify this an excuse for not recognizing or compensating faculty for extra efforts.