

February 2021

Dear President Christian and Provost Lyman,

We are writing to express our collective concern about your rejection of the Faculty Senate leadership's proposal to suspend the 2020 DSI process in favor of an across-the-board, flat-rate distribution. The proposal was a compassionate and thoughtful response to recognize an overburdened faculty and staff during extraordinary times. Additionally, the proposal allowed for the incorporation of both 2020 and 2021 Faculty Annual Reports into the 2021 DSI cycle. We are asking you to reconsider your decision in light of widespread support across UUP membership.

As you have pointed out on several occasions since the beginning of the pandemic, our campus community has worked above and beyond baseline expectations to keep SUNY New Paltz going despite numerous obstacles. There has been much personal and professional sacrifice on behalf of our members in order to support the mission of our college, and to maintain the academic reputation and integrity of our institution during the extraordinary circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many cogent reasons for recommending a universal DSI for 2020 put forth by the governance Executive Committee that are sensitive to the realities of work-life during the pandemic, and to the truly diverse and uneven impacts felt by our members, especially caregivers and BIPOC members who have been disproportionately and acutely impacted by the pandemic. We assert that all our members are deserving of a 2020 DSI.

We, the undersigned, urge you to reconsider,

Petition signatories (collected in <3 days)

1. Aaron Isabelle, Teaching & Learning
2. Abby Gondek, WGSS
3. Adam Mastropaolo, Art
4. Adam Stephens, Psychology
5. Adolfo Bejar Lara, Languages, Literatures & Cultures
6. Amanda Merritt, School of Education
7. Amy Papaalias, Art
8. Andrea F. Gatzke, History
9. Andrea Moreau, Art
10. Anna Gjika, Sociology
11. Anne Deutsch, Sojourner Truth Library
12. Anne R. Roschelle, Sociology
13. Becky Adae, Academic Computing
14. Bobby Xuan Bui, Psychology
15. Brian Obach, Sociology
16. Carol (Carolita) Johnson, English
17. Carol Ward, Sojourner Truth Library
18. Carolyn Corrado, Sociology
19. César Barros A., LLC
20. Chris Vickery, IT
21. Chris Whitaker, School of Education
22. Chrissy O'Grady, STL
23. Christopher Livecchi, Geography
24. Cruz Caridad Bueno, Black Studies
25. Dawn McCaw, Student Affairs
26. Deyanira Rojas-Sosa, Languages
27. Donna Flayhan, Department of Communication

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28. Elissa Greene, Design & Construction
29. Ed Felton, Art
30. Fannely Valerio, Admissions
31. Felicia Hodges, Digital Media and Journalism
32. Ghader Eftekhari, Engineering
33. Gordana Garapic, Geology
34. Gowri Parameswaran, Educational Studies
35. Hamid Azari-Rad, Economics
36. Heather Hewett, WGS
37. Ilgu Ozler, Political Science and International Relations
38. Inge Anema, Communication Disorders
39. Jack L Harris, Communication
40. Jacqueline Murray, Special Education
41. Jan Mainzer, Art History
42. Janet Werther, WGSS
43. Janice W. Anderson, Communication
44. Jannett Dinsmore, Biology
45. Jason Serrano, Center for International Programs
46. Jeannette Sanchez, Residence Life
47. Jeff Reinking, Biology
48. Jennifer Turner Waldo, Biology
49. Jessica Pabón, WGSS
50. Jessica Purcell, EOP/Psychology
51. Jill M. Rothschild
52. Jill Parisi-Phillips, Art
53. Joel Oppenheimer, Student Affairs/Counseling Center
54. John Sharp, Geography
55. Judith Halasz, Sociology
56. Karl Bryant, Sociology and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
57. Karynn Zahedi, Educational Leadership
58. Kate McCoy, Educational Studies and Leadership
59. Katherine Raynor, Sociology
60. Kathleen Hunt, Communication
61. Kathryn Burke
62. Keely Heuer, Art History
63. Kelcy Chase Folsom, Art
64. Kiersten Greene, Teaching & Learning
65. Laura Morcone, Undergraduate Admission
66. Lauren Meeker, Anthropology
67. Lawrence McGlinn, Geography
68. Lisa Phillips, Digital Media and Journalism
69. Lizabeth Cain, Teaching and Learning
70. Luz Porras, Languages, Literatures, & Cultures
71. Madeline Veitch, Library
72. Malgorzata Oakes, Art
73. Marcia Villiers, Educational Studies
74. Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Theatre Arts
75. Matthieu Chapman, Theatre
76. Melissa Y. Rock, Geography
77. Michael Malloy
78. Michelle Combs, Student Affairs
79. Mona A Ali, Economics
80. Morgan Gwenwald, Library
81. Nancy Campos, AMP/CSTEP
82. Nataly Z Chesky, Teaching and Learning
83. Nathen Clerici, Languages, Literatures & Cultures
84. Nina JeckerByrne, Communication Disorders
85. Rachel Somerstein, Digital Media and Journalism
86. Rachmadian Wulandana, Mechanical Engineering
87. Rendesia Scott, School of Business
88. Robyn Sheridan, Educational Studies
89. Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, Geography
90. Sara Jecko, Music
91. Sarah Elia
92. Scott Le Vine, Geography
93. Stacie Nunes, Physics & Astronomy
94. Stephen Pampinella, Political Science
95. Sunita Bose, Sociology
96. Susan Smutny, Art History
97. Susan Stern, Teaching and Learning
98. Suzanne M Stokes, Art
99. Tim Vatovec, Geography
100. Wendy Vierow, Strategic Planning & Assessment



Open-ended comments posted by petition signatories (anonymized):

This is a no-brainer. But I don't have time to write much more. I have two elementary aged children who need constant supervision of their remote learning while I am working full-time. Somehow I manage to still deliver excellent teaching to my students and service to my department / school. And I have it easy compared to many other folks. Let's do what's right this year.

Please reconsider the proposal for evenly distributed DSIs. Nobody's pay should be stunted because of the global pandemic. I am someone who will likely receive a "major" award, but am willing to take less money so that everyone can get something.

Adjunct faculty have had to adapt to teaching online using our own equipment and without any compensation for the online training sessions necessary to transfer curricula for our in-person classes to an online format. Now, in addition to teaching, grading, and having lengthy email exchanges with our students, we are expected to put in more unpaid time preparing applications for the salary increases we've all clearly earned? It's insulting.

An across-the-board, flat-rate distribution of the 2020 DSI funds would only be fair given the unprecedented burdens COVID-19 has caused.

I may only have been a writer in residence but since I aspire to someday joining the faculty, I'm showing support herewith for this proposal, which I think is fair.

This is an opportunity to more equitably reward EVERYONE'S work during the pandemic. When the people speak from their heart, listen from your heart. And when opportunity knocks, answer it.

This is a sound proposal. It shows solidarity. Personally, I think DSI starts from a worrying premise: that those who work more than they are supposed to get a reward. I think doing our jobs, especially during times of austerity (organized abandonment by the State through disinvesting from SUNY) is already a difficult and shows exceptional performance. We need to stop following a mentality of competition and start working together so the State starts investing in us and our students, and that can only happen through the work of solidarity.

Prioritize BIPOC and primary givers!

I agree that we are all deserving of an across the board raise.

"We Not Me"

The way DSI is set up now, it is not always the hard worker who gets the award they deserve. I don't have an issue with it being split evenly.

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I am in favor of across the board, flat-rate distribution. It is important that we stand together as a community and express the value that all of our faculty have added to our institution. It will increase morale to all of our employees to know that our campus believes in equity, and it creates a sense of unity. This proposal is about impact versus intent. Though DSI intends to create a fair and just system to financially reward those who have worked hard, its the impact it creates that is troubling. In a year where everyone has overworked and increased their capacity for learning new systems and navigated through a pandemic-- the impact of DSI drives a wedge in a community that wants students to have a "we not me" but refuses to extend that message to its faculty. All of our professors have gone above and beyond this past year and a one-time flat-rate distribution will creates the most positive impact.

It is an encouraging factor for all faculty.

I support a flat DSI because these are extraordinary times

Distributing the DSI across the board equally will help boost faculty morale. This year everyone has worked hard to move classes online, and thus should receive productivity pay.

Given the pandemic, this is a reasonable and fair approach that will additionally reduce extra work.

I think that the petition outlines the situation well, and so have nothing to add

Adjunct faculty are already paid less than a living wage with no guarantee of continued employment or healthcare. Yet we provide the same high quality education, hold the same credentials, and in many cases produce the same quantity and quality of research as our full-time colleagues. Our continued reappointment should itself attest to the high quality of our work on behalf of the university. Indeed, the university has made it quite clear that it is under no obligation to continue our employment if our contributions are not _excellent_! Making us submit to a labor intensive review process for a marginal increase in our wages takes time away from our teaching duties--time that we will never be fully or adequately compensated for--and should not ever be required of adjunct faculty, least of all during a pandemic.

How are we to build back better if all we do is continue the cycle of the most powerful maintaining their privilege to frame and prioritize issues to their own advantage. As Jen Waldo said, the focus on publications comes about because it is the easiest category to count. However, it might not be the most important category for the institution to maintain itself in the future. And it really does nothing to recognize the significant sacrifices of our contingent faculty.

I am extremely concerned about my fellow colleagues, especially adjunct professors and those with children and other caregivers. The pandemic has taken an immeasurable toll on the well being of everyone, but especially so for them and their families; their time, patience, and physical, mental, and spiritual well being has been stretched to what would have been unthinkable limits only one year ago. These are members of our community who continue to work diligently under extraordinarily difficult circumstances to support our students. The idea to make DSI an across the board award this year prevents yet one more stress on them to put an application together in a narrow timeframe. It seems

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the most compassionate solution in this particular case. We have been charged with making our campus a more diverse, equitable and inclusive place overall, and this small thing is an easy way to uphold this important endeavor.

EQUITY!! EQUITY!! EQUITY!!

I fully support the proposal to award a flat-rate distribution of DSI money for 2020.

In light of the strategic delay of our contractual pay raise, this year's DSI feel like measly bread crumbs thrown to placate the disgruntled masses. As a new faculty member, I am dismayed at the way this process- under the guise of 'merit'- indeed creates a barrier to research productivity and other activities aimed at enhancing one's field in the academic sphere and, frankly, the status of our institution in the public sphere.

I find it rather painful to hear that folks who are new PT faculty to New Paltz will not be getting an increase. As stated in the required DSI, PT faculty will be rated based ONLY on their teaching accomplishments. However, we know that research, for majority of full-time teaching positions, is one of the most important components for a competitive application. Why wouldn't that count towards the assessment? Furthermore, I want to know how such 'teaching accomplishments' are assessed. Creating new curriculum for two classes and teaching said classes for a little over 6k (before taxes) a semester is absolutely wrong. Having taught at 6 universities thus far in my young career, this is the lowest I've ever been paid for the incredible job that I do.

I strongly support this proposal. In particular, I support it's attention to the way the pandemic has unevenly impacted caregivers and BIPOC members of our community.

Though I myself am not eligible for DSI this year due to a partial year leave, I hope that my colleagues can all have an equal share of this pay increase during a year in which there were incredible challenges. Though the proposed DSI application requires less documentation than in previous years, for faculty who have children at home, or others who they are caring for on top of their teaching, research, and service obligations, any application will be a steep climb - another thing on a to-do list that may not get done before the deadline because it's not "pressing". It seems the compassionate and empathetic thing would be to divide this evenly among all who have worked so hard to make it through this year, regardless of whether or not they have time to apply.

I appreciate the argument that the President/Provost has put forth but I feel that during this cycle, if we are truly interested in EDI/Anti Racism/Anti Oppression, this cycle needs to have a different approach. If for no other argument, it punishes those of us who have taken on more responsibility during the pandemic to help out other colleagues and are still trying against reason and logic to keep up a creative/scholarly agenda. I LITERALLY don't have time to put together a dossier because 1) I am choosing to work on my creative/scholarly agenda as opposed to put that time towards illustrating that I have a creative/scholarly agenda and 2) I continue to take on more responsibility within my dept and across the campus.

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How about instead of DSI raises, we hire more black faculty?

Flat rate distribution

My own view is that the DSIs should not be flat but downward targeted to those disproportionately affected by the crisis (caregivers, adjuncts, lecturers, instructors etc.) I personally think that this round of 'solidarity' DSIs should not be received by those earning more than 75K (solidarity tax).

They should extend DSI time to at least mirror the usual time frame from announcement to due date... and it should be even longer due to COVID impact.

Firstly, I think we need to acknowledge that the DSI policy is rooted in privilege and that this effort will not change that. That means the policy will always work best for those who fit neatly into academia and higher education. It seems odd to ask people to prove their worth every year, especially when there is little acknowledgement of the additional labor of visible Black and brown people that leads to the institution pointing in our direction to prove they're progressing and/or actual radical change for the better through our work. However, this year it seems even more insensitive to make anyone relive what occurred since the pandemic began in order to prove their worth. There is no way for people who did not go through what I have gone through this year and who do not share my background and identity as a brown Latina mother with immigrant and Indigenous family members who works primarily with Black and brown students with similar backgrounds and identities to fully understand what I have done to make 2020 work for my students, my program, my family and the institution. How can that be measured against others who were also dealing with a pandemic however they could? Worse yet, how can that be measured against those who were a lot less affected in terms of work and home energy and time and were able to still produce? By keeping the DSI policy the same, we continue to uphold a system that thrives on some of us overworking ourselves and others thinking everything is fine because it always works best for them. There is little transparency about how applications will be reviewed and what will be taken into account. We just have to hope reviewers know us and our situation or that we put more work into proving we deserve to be acknowledged monetarily at least. This isn't the time to go along with normal. Normal wasn't working and left out too much. It's at least time to try something different.

I support the flat distribution of DSI monies in this year because of the extraordinary strain on everyone and the odds that those who fulfill traditional criteria (e.g. journal article) were likely those who had the resources to weather the pandemic more smoothly. I do support the idea of merit-based salary increases, and would like to see that resume in future years.

The pandemic clearly has brought more than anticipated works in the year of 2020. Adjusting to remote technology, maneuvering through health protocols, understanding students live, maintaining the quality of education despite of complex challenges, and taking care of families and friends through this difficult time are some of the burden carried by the majority of faculty. I agree that we should simply consider a flat increase to everyone as every single one of faculty and staff did get the burden and they deserve recognition. It would be a pity if the campus/administration does not want to utilize this only and only one opportunity to recognize such sacrifice by faculty and staff through this difficult time.

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It will improve already low morale and make for long-term social sustainability in this college if salary increases were finally distributed equitably. This is decisively important at this juncture, with the pandemic still raging. At the very least, the application process could be simplified by using the FAR as a DSI application.

Personally I would like to see DSI for all, for all times, but I understand that hasn't gone through in contract negotiations in the past. For 2020, an alternative way of looking at it is that everyone deserves a DSI because EVERYONE has exceeded baseline expectations for teaching given that they have had to learn a whole new way of delivering classes online and even in the classroom.

I feel the DSI process is unfair and there is favoritism in our office/division.

I have also taught at a different SUNY campus where my DSI as an adjunct took no labor on my part. I'm stunned (and not in a good way) to learn the amount of labor expected of me to receive this small increase here at New Paltz. Even in a non-pandemic semester this labor would be burdensome for adjuncts, especially when we must already prove our worth daily to the university lest we lose the very shirts on our backs.