

Board of Regent Meeting
May 29, 2008

Testimony Pertaining to Disclosure of Executive Administrative Salary

For many years I have testified before this Board concerning the disclosure of excluded, executive administrative salaries and salary increases. Pending again this year on the Governor's desk is a bill passed by the Legislature that would require disclosure at least 6 days before the Regents' meeting in order to facilitate informed public comment.

As an example of the need for this disclosure requirement, there is on the agenda today a proposed "special" salary adjustment for UHH Chancellor Rose Tseng, retroactive to July 1, 2007. Neither her salary nor the amount of the adjustment is listed on the agenda, although the salary for community college chancellors Manny Cabral, Helen Cox, and interim Mike Rota, also executive appointments, are listed. I have heard these individuals were given a choice to have the amounts to be approved by the Regents listed, and apparently Chancellor Tseng declined. The permissive aspect of this policy on disclosure is certainly another reason for a statutory mandate to require disclosure.

However, with respect to actions on behalf of Chancellor Tseng, there is even more. Chancellor Tseng, in addition to a retroactive salary increase after just having a new contract issued in, I believe, 2007, is also to be granted a "Professional Improvement Leave" for an entire year ("January 1, 2010-December 30, 2010.") I assume this is an administrative form of a sabbatical leave. I also assume that the leave is at full pay, but again the BOR agenda does not speak to the amount of salary to be received in that year. The final aspect of this recommendation is a "Waiver of Return Service Obligation," which means at the end of this full year of paid leave she'll not have to return to the UH. Sabbatical leaves require faculty to return for at least the length of time for which the leave is granted, and faculty

members on year long sabbaticals leaves only receive half-pay. The idea and tradition is that what the faculty member gains from the sabbatical should be returned by additional service to the university. That will not be the case with respect to Chancellor Tseng, and it is highly unusual for such a leave to be granted more than 18 months ahead of time unless this is just a separation package disguised as a merit salary increase and a sabbatical. It appears this practice has gained new favor in the administrative ranks beginning with past-President Dobelle. What public purpose could possibly be served by this practice?

I believe that the public has a right to at least know the details of an action such as this before the Regents actually vote, even if the discussion and voting take place in executive session. However, it is difficult for me to formulate good public testimony in the absence of any information concerning the salary increase or the amount of salary to be paid through 2010. This is why I have advocated the legislation now over the last two years.

Respectfully submitted,

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