

Grim Reaping? The Real State of the University

Introduction

We, Seton Hall's AAUP Chapter, share a vision for the University that takes shared governance seriously, where faculty expertise and experience are respected and fairly compensated, where we assess programs and curricula on their educational value, not only on their bottom line, and where we offer students a broad education and see them as whole humans and not just tuition dollars. We believe a better Seton Hall is possible and that, together, we can build a just workplace.

The current administration of Seton Hall consistently presents the university as a thriving institution, committed to student and faculty success. In the State of the University address, email communications from administrators, presentations at Faculty Senate meetings, as well as at the recent Seeds of Innovation events, the message is that the administration is working well with the faculty through shared governance and addressing the imbalance between spending on administration and on instruction. Administrators claim they have reduced non-instructional expenses through strategic reallocations related to the Seeds of Innovation plans and have hired “more than 40 full-time and tenure-track faculty members” (State of the University).

As the following report will demonstrate, the truth is more complicated. There are clear indications that genuine shared governance does not exist at Seton Hall, with administrators regularly ignoring faculty voices through duly constituted governance bodies at the collegiate and university levels. Any reductions in non-instructional expenses have not redounded to instruction, as faculty compensation has stagnated over time and remains considerably below that offered by peer institutions despite prior salary studies. As a result of the corresponding low faculty morale, many excellent professors have left Seton Hall or are in the process of leaving, often to pursue positions where their expertise is respected and valued. In fact, **Seton Hall had nearly 50 fewer tenure-line faculty in 2021 than in 2011 even though revenues increased by 127 million dollars**. Many of the new hires touted by the administration are not tenure-track faculty. They have fewer protections, fewer rights, and greater job precarity, which discourages investment in curriculum and program development and weakens shared governance. The most precarious positions are those held by adjunct faculty, who still make up over half the instructors at Seton Hall. Yet pay for adjunct faculty has remained so low that recruitment of part-time instructors has become notoriously difficult.

Student learning suffers when faculty are demoralized, undervalued, and looking for an exit. A truly thriving university is one where administrators prioritize education, which entails respecting faculty expertise through genuine shared governance and ensuring that revenues are spent on hiring and retaining top-notch faculty in tenure-line positions. A major Catholic university like Seton Hall should be thriving.

Shared Governance at Seton Hall University

According to the AAUP website, “Shared governance...refers to the responsibility shared among the different components of the institution—governing boards, administrations, and faculties—for its governance, and the specific areas of primary responsibility for each component.” Furthermore, “The role of the faculty is to have primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. The responsibility for faculty status includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.” AAUP principles centrally include the right to “meaningful participation of the faculty in institutional decision-making” and that “No important institutional decision should be made unilaterally by administrations or governing boards.”

Given this explanation of shared governance, the current SHU administration has violated the spirit of shared governance, undermining the role of the faculty in matters related to curriculum and academic programs through unilateral decisions that preclude *meaningful* faculty participation, which entails that decisions within the faculty’s primary responsibilities should be made by faculty governance organizations, not by administrative committees stacked with administrators appointed by the provost with a minor role for faculty. The administration’s lack of respect for faculty voices and its disregard for true shared governance manifest in the following ways:

Usurping faculty responsibility for curriculum

The administration introduced a new Program Review process (APSA, now renamed IPAD), despite clear attribution in the Faculty Guide of this process belonging to faculty. The process of developing APSA and IPAD fell short of the standards of shared governance.

Academic program review processes should be “primarily developed and approved by the faculty or their elected representatives” according to AAUP principles of shared governance. The suspension of programs under APSA also failed to meet the standard of shared governance in the Seton Hall Faculty Guide. The Guide’s Article 3.10.a.1 indicates that a dean’s decision to discontinue a program must be “ratified” by the college’s faculty, yet some degree programs were suspended without any faculty ratification:

- The Asian Studies MA program was eliminated via the administratively driven APSA process with no hope of returning, resulting in the loss of a full-time, tenure-track professor. (This elimination was despite the well-founded objections of the Asian Studies Program faculty, the Language, Literatures, and Cultures faculty, the Arts & Sciences College Planning Committee, and, initially, the Dean of Arts & Sciences.)
- The MA in History was eliminated despite legitimate questions regarding the method used to determine its a financial liability, with no recourse.
- Two departments opted to eliminate programs under attack by APSA process: the Psychology MA and the online Nonprofit Management degree in Public Administration.

(Ironically, after eliminating MA programs, the Provost’s Office now laments that the number of MA students has declined.)

The newly dubbed IPAD process continues despite the repeated objections by the Faculty Senate. To date, the Provost's Office has refused to allow faculty to deliberate over and vote on the process or the criteria for IPAD. While the Faculty Senate has voted to refuse to implement IPAD provisions calling for immediate, out-of-cycle Senate Program Review of flagged programs, administrators' presentations about IPAD do not respond to concerns raised by faculty committees like the Faculty Senate's Graduate Studies Committee.

Top-down curricular initiatives and demands for innovation have displaced genuine and sustained consultation with faculty about resources for developing programs. The Provost's Office asks faculty to approve programs it conceived and hires it prioritized rather than the faculty developing curriculum and prioritizing the hires the faculty deems necessary.

Merging colleges over faculty objections, Ignoring faculty votes

Two colleges: The College of Communications and the Arts (COAR) and the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) are currently being merged despite strong objections from the faculty, administration, and staff. For example, faculty (and others) in COAR and CEHS voted to reject the merger and the Faculty Senate passed several resolutions objecting to the timeline and process. The planned merger of the College of Nursing and School of Health & Medical Sciences (SHMS) was postponed yet there are fears it is still in process despite the faculty in the College of Nursing voting against the merger and writing to the Board of Trustees urging them to reject it. The Faculty Senate resolution of September 17, 2021 strongly objected to the planned mergers and process as inconsistent with shared governance and called upon the Board of Trustees to reject the plan. This resolution was rejected by the Provost.

The merger of CEHS and COAR is underway – and is taking a great deal of faculty time and energy. Few of the promised benefits (e.g., new tenure-track hires) have materialized. The top-down management style is inconsistent with shared governance principles and important issues regarding faculty governance (particularly the role of administrators) have not yet been resolved. There are significant faculty concerns about administrative interference with faculty hiring (job descriptions) and therefore curriculum. For example, department-approved replacement hiring requests remain unanswered while the Provost is approving hires in adjacent areas (e.g., STEAM and DEI) with little to no faculty input.

While setting aside faculty votes on mergers, the administration has also failed to respect votes on faculty governance even when those votes were the culmination of sustained collaboration with deans. In May 2022, after receiving a report by the College Planning Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty unanimously voted to create a Department of Social Work effective July 2023. The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences officially approved the change in February 2023. Although the Faculty Guide (Article 11.4) clearly places such a change under the purview of College Governance, the Provost has delayed implementation, requested additional information, including copies of past Department and College meeting minutes, and required a meeting with financial officers.

Rejecting and ignoring Faculty Senate resolutions

An analysis of Faculty Senate resolutions during the tenure of the current Provost reveals that a high percentage are rejected or remain under review for prolonged periods. Of the 105 resolutions requiring the Provost's response from June 2020 to December 2022, 32 have been rejected and 12 are awaiting response or under review. Over one-third of Senate resolutions have

thus been rejected or await response. The average response time to resolutions is roughly 60 days, ranging from one week (seven days) to just over 10 months (312 days). While most of the resolutions awaiting response are from this academic year, several resolutions have been awaiting response for more than six months.

There is a clear pattern in the resolutions that are approved and those that are denied, delayed, and ignored. The resolutions still awaiting a response and the resolutions that the Provost has rejected focus on key areas of faculty governance and compensation. Many of them address critical provisions in the Faculty Guide regarding governance and hiring processes, while the others have a direct financial impact on faculty, including tenure clock extensions, hiring and retention, including extending contracts, and salary increases at a time of high inflation. Regarding approvals, the vast majority of resolutions that were approved by the Provost are those that propose new programs, including dual undergraduate or undergraduate plus graduate programs (i.e., 3+3 or 3+2 models), minors, or certificate programs.

Undermining faculty representation on committees

The administration's practice is to add a few selected faculty members to administrative committees in lieu of using already established Faculty Senate committees for initiatives related to curricular programs. For many, if not all, of these committees, these faculty are not elected to their positions. They are also typically in the minority and do not have a controlling voice in the committee's decision making. Faculty can provide "feedback" but rarely affect outcomes. In some cases, the administration has rejected faculty for membership on these administrative committees despite having their name forwarded by their colleagues.

Faculty Compensation at Seton Hall University

In January of 2022, Professor Howard Bunsis provided an evaluation of Seton Hall's finances and budget priorities. It had several key findings. Among the most important are:

- Compared with 12 peer institutions, Seton Hall ranked #1 for spending on "institutional support" (salaries for high-level administrators).
- Compared with 12 peer institutions, Seton Hall ranked #13 for spending on instructional salaries and research.
- Seton Hall faculty salaries are well below that of most of its peers despite our location in one of the most expensive regions of the country, and 11% less than the peer average.
- From 2015 to 2021, Seton Hall faculty real wages declined; while the average faculty salary increased 7.3%, inflation increased 11.2%.
- Annual compensation and yearly raises for Seton Hall's top managers and administrators are much higher than for faculty.

New information and additional analysis confirm these findings demonstrating the administration's undervaluing of faculty and the unbalanced compensation for administration and faculty. The new analyses paint an even grimmer picture than the Bunsis report. For example, according to the recently released 2021-22 AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey Results, Seton Hall ranked 151st among doctoral universities for average full-time faculty salary, at \$94,200. (This is an

average. The vast majority of faculty at Seton Hall, do not make this much and, in the case of adjunct faculty, make considerably less.) In 2019, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* survey, the Seton Hall president's pay ranked 77th among private colleges at \$938,192 in total compensation, nearly 10 times what the average full-time faculty member makes.

The most recent Seton Hall tax returns, Form 990, list the president's total compensation at \$1,296,601 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. By comparison, adjunct faculty in Seton Hall's College of Arts & Sciences make barely over \$3,000 per course per semester and cannot teach more than two courses per semester, yielding a maximum of about \$12,000 per year, 100 times less than the president.

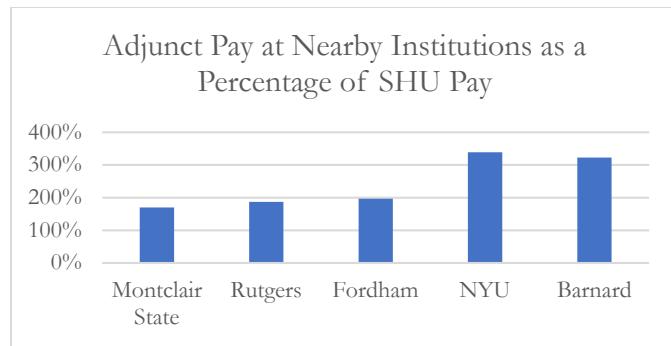
Using Seton Hall Fact Books and Form 990s from the past, we can also assess the salary trends and budget priorities over a longer period of time. (The Fact Books stopped publishing faculty salary averages after 2012 and were later replaced by the Data Trends reports, with much less information provided.) The first thing to note is that Seton Hall's revenues increased by 37 percent over ten years, going from \$346 million in 2011 to \$473 million in 2021. Where did the extra \$127 million go? Not to faculty salaries.

In 2011, the average salary for an assistant professor was roughly \$70,000. The president's compensation at the time was \$542,000. In 2021, the average salary for an assistant professor was roughly \$74,000 (according to IPEDS data); the president's compensation was \$1,296,601. While average assistant professor wages increased 5.7 percent, the president's compensation increased 139 percent. More generally, the Form 990s show that while spending on salaries in general (faculty and staff) increased by 12 percent, compensation for high-level administrators increased by 53 percent.

The wages of adjunct faculty at Seton Hall are, by any measure, exploitative, but especially when compared to the wages offered by nearby universities. Adjuncts represent 30% of instructional faculty at Seton Hall according to IPEDS data. They earn significantly less than adjuncts at area universities. For example, at Seton Hall, adjuncts in the College of Arts and Sciences earn \$3,100 per course if they hold a PhD and \$2,800 per course if they hold an MA (these numbers are in line with Seton Hall's average adjunct pay of \$3,100 as reported on Seton Hall's HR website (<https://www.shu.edu/human-resources/adjunct-faculty.cfm>)). Other colleges on campus pay similar rates or slightly higher, up to \$4,500 per course in the School of Diplomacy, for example.

By comparison, Montclair State offers faculty \$5265 per course. Montclair State is bound by an AFT agreement that requires all New Jersey State Schools to pay this minimum (see: www.kean.edu/media/kuaff-adjunct-faulty-agreement-2019-2023). Rutgers University pays its adjunct faculty \$5799 per course. Fordham pays adjuncts from \$4600 to \$8000 per course, depending on the college and seniority. Fordham's new tentative agreement with adjunct faculty, however, offers raises of \$1500 to \$2500 per course over the next three years and includes health benefits. Barnard pays \$10,000 per course and NYU offers \$10,500 per course. Thus, Seton Hall adjunct faculty make approximately 60% of the wages they could earn at a nearby university and in some cases as little as 30% of those wages (see chart below). Meanwhile, adjunct faculty at Seton Hall receive no health benefits, have no job security, and often don't even have offices where they meet with students, grade, or prepare for class. While they are sometimes long-time instructors, many adjuncts are transient faculty, who cannot, because of their job circumstances, offer students mentorship, recommendations, or guidance in the long-term. They also do not perform university,

college, or department service, leaving a dwindling staff of tenure-line and fulltime faculty to take on more of that work.



There is simply no question that faculty at Seton Hall are underpaid compared to faculty at peer institutions and underpaid compared to administrators, and that these inequalities are getting worse over time, despite the salary study that was started in 2011 and only completed several years later. This is one of the key reasons that Seton Hall's budget invests so little on instruction relative to other areas of the budget. Despite claims that this lopsidedness is improving, the most recent IPEDS data shows that the percentage of the budget spent on instruction continued to decline in 2021, down to 42% from 48% in 2020, while spending on "institutional support" rose to 20% in 2021, up from 19% in 2020.

Significant Decline in Tenure-Eligible Faculty

Since 2011, the university has seen a significant decline in tenure-line (i.e., tenured or tenure-track) faculty. According to data provided by university administration in Fact Books and Data Trends reports, over the five-year period from the fall of 2011 to the fall of 2021, the total number of tenure-line faculty declined from 322 to 273, or 15%. Over this same period, the number of full-time non-tenure-eligible faculty grew substantially, from 134 to 188, or 40%. At the same time, full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment increased from 7,844 students to 8,395 students, or 7%. Given increased enrollment, it is clear that there has been no diminishment in the need for tenure-line faculty. Taken together, these trends reflect a detrimental and sustained shift from employing tenure-line faculty to employing full-time faculty off the tenure track.

The data, detailed below, is taken from the Seton Hall University 2011-12 Fact Book and the Seton Hall University 2020-21 Data Trends.

Fall 2011:

FTE Students 7,844
FT faculty 456
322 tenure-eligible
134 not eligible for tenure
71% tenure-eligible; 29% not tenure-eligible

Fall 2021:

FTE Students 8,395
FT faculty 461 FT faculty
273 tenure-eligible
188 not eligible for tenure
59% tenure-eligible; 41% not tenure-eligible

Data found in the Bunsis report supports these conclusions; that report reflects a 9.2% decline in tenure-eligible faculty from 2015 to 2021 and a 25.8% increase in non-tenure-eligible faculty over that same period.

Significantly, even when departments have stable or increased (and sometimes considerably increased) enrollments, the number of tenure-line faculty in the department is typically in rapid decline. Data provided by individual departments illustrates this. According to figures supplied by the Department of Biology, for example, since AY2017-18, the total number of students has risen from 665 to 900, or +35%; at the same time, the total number of full-time faculty has remained at 16 and the number of tenure-line faculty has declined from 13 to 9, or -31%. To provide a second example, according to figures supplied by the Department of Religion, since 2015, the total number of students has remained steady, while, at the same time, a staggering 9 tenured and tenure-track faculty will have retired or left the university by the end of Spring 2023 and 0 have been replaced.

The decline in the number of tenure-line faculty started in around 2011, when there were 322 tenured or tenure-track faculty and 134 non-tenure-track faculty. Both types of full-time faculty grew during the 2000s, but in the 2010s, the number of tenure-line faculty declined while the non-tenure track faculty continued to grow. The current administration does not seem to be interested in reversing that trend.

Tenure-line faculty are vitally important to the health of the university. Tenure-line positions represent serious investment in faculty research and teaching and in institutional well-being; a decline in such positions represents a decline in academic freedom and a weakening of the university. As the American Association of University Professors notes, “The principal purpose of tenure is to safeguard academic freedom, which is necessary for all who teach and conduct research in higher education”; further, “[t]enure promotes stability. Faculty members who are committed to the institution can develop ties with the local community, pursue ongoing research projects, and mentor students and beginning scholars over the long term.” Because non-tenure-eligible positions are less attractive to top faculty, the increase in such positions also weakens the university’s ability to attract and retain top talent.

Failure to Recruit and Retain Tenure-Line Faculty Since 2015

Overall declines in the number of tenure-line faculty reflect not only the administration’s shift to hiring full-time faculty in non-tenure-eligible positions but its failure to successfully recruit and retain tenure-line faculty. Indeed, talented tenure-line faculty routinely leave, often noting the administration’s refusal to make a competitive offer to retain them; the remaining faculty often can’t effectively recruit for open lines, despite a desirable location in the New York City metro area, because of the university administration’s failure to offer adequate compensation packages and other support to desirable candidates. Anecdotally, several tenure-line faculty searches have recently failed, despite the search committee identifying appropriate candidates and extending offers, due to the inappropriately low and noncompetitive compensation packages approved by the administration.

This failure to offer competitive compensation packages and retain talented faculty impedes the university’s research, teaching, and service missions. It deprives the university of top talent, some of which it has supported and cultivated over a significant number of years only to lose to other universities, an investment thereby squandered, and contributes to low faculty morale. It wastes

faculty time (high turnover and failed searches create a need to run a disproportionate number of searches, which are work-intensive, and to train and mentor a disproportionate number of new faculty members), concentrates many types of important departmental, college and university service among the reduced number of tenure-track and tenured faculty, creates a loss of institutional knowledge and stability, and impedes DEI efforts. It has a detrimental effect on current students, who feel the loss when faculty leave, and on alumni relationships with the university.

Here is a sample of tenure-line faculty who the university has failed to retain since 2015:

Dr. Rhonda Quinn, formerly chair and full professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice in the College of Arts & Sciences, left for an adjunct position at Bowling Green State University.

Dr. K.C. Choi, formerly chair of and full professor in the Department of Religion in the College of Arts & Sciences, left for Princeton University.

Dr. Zinaida Miller, formerly an associate professor in the School of Diplomacy left for Northeastern University.

Dr. Robert Kelchen, formerly an associate professor in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy in the College of Education and Human Services, left for University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Dr. Kelly Harris, formerly the director of the Africana Studies program and a visiting professor who has been offered a tenure-track appointment in the College of Arts & Sciences, left for the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Sara Moller, formerly an assistant professor in the School of Diplomacy, left for Georgetown University.

Professor Courtney Starrett, MFA, formerly an assistant professor in the College of Communication and the Arts, left for Texas A&M University.

Dr. Stephanie Hoover, formerly an assistant professor in the Department of Professional Psychology & Family Therapy in the College of Education and Human Services, left for UNC Chapel Hill.

Professor Brooke Duffy, MILS, MHAD, formerly an assistant professor in the Library, left for Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Professor Chelsea Barrett, MBA, MILS, assistant professor in the Library, is leaving for the Harvard Business School Library.

The faculty members listed above represented some of the top scholars, teachers, and leaders at the university; further, with a single exception, the group is entirely made up of female faculty and/or faculty of color. Their absence is felt by their former colleagues and students, and the university is worse off for their departures.

Lack of Appropriate Stewardship Since 2015

University leadership has recently overseen, failed to prevent, or implicated the university in a variety of financial boondoggles and scandals. For example, there was the costly School of Medicine debacle, which resulted in the medical school being sold at a significant loss before it opened; the embezzlement of university funds totaling roughly \$1 million dollars at the School of Law; and the morally appalling conduct of former archbishop McCarrick, which resulted in significant financial settlements. Moreover—per the Bunsis report—the university endowment “has the majority of investments in the riskiest securities, and the investment returns are lower than the market each and every year.” These funds also typically charge high management fees. Poor stewardship costs the university millions of dollars that could be invested in faculty development; undercuts faculty trust in administration; and lowers faculty morale.

Next Steps Seton Hall Should Take

For the University to get back on track towards genuinely thriving, the top administrators should take the following steps.

With regard to shared governance, the Provost’s Office should: suspend the IPAD process, respect the Faculty Senate-led program review process, and only resume IPAD if and when the Faculty Senate approves it; provide immediate responses to all outstanding Faculty Senate resolutions and motions, including those pertaining to the Faculty Guide; respect and comply with faculty governance bodies’ decisions in their areas of primary responsibility; consult with faculty before making decisions that affect shared faculty responsibilities; and agree to new guidelines for including faculty representatives on those committees that include administrators.

With regard to compensation, the administration should: provide a cost-of-living increase of 8% for AY2023-24 (or comply with Faculty Senate Resolution FS-62 from June 2022, which called for “future cost of living adjustments to be assessed for all faculty & administrators and then the absolute dollar amount be divided equally among all faculty & administrators”); raise faculty salaries to 100% of peer medians based on the salary study now in progress; plan for continued salary increases over time to keep up with the cost-of-living and peer standards; and provide a raise for adjuncts to the state school minimum of \$5265 per course for AY2023-204, as well as planning for continued raises based on seniority and inflation.

With regard to hiring, the administration should commit to hiring tenure-line faculty (equitably distributed across units), with decreased reliance on adjunct faculty, as well as to converting non-tenure track lines to tenure-track lines if departments request it.