

JANET FORREST: OVER PAID OR UNDER VALUED?

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Fred Monfort, Chairman of the Marketing Department at Regents State University, had filled one of two tenure-track faculty positions for the next academic year, but late in the spring he had no acceptable candidates for the other. David Jewett, a faculty colleague who headed the recruiting committee, suggested that Monfort consider hiring Janet Forrest, one of their advanced doctoral students for the position. Monfort was initially startled by the suggestion that the Department hire an advanced doctoral student in their program who held a one-year appointment as instructor. Monfort thought "hiring your own" was clearly outside the norms of good academic practice.

Upon further exploration and thought, Monfort was persuaded that rehiring Forrest for another year would make sense for the Department and fit Forrest's personal need to remain in the area for the next year. After Monfort negotiated an agreement acceptable to Forrest and submitted a hiring proposal to the University administration, the Office of Institutional Equity rejected the proposal, claiming that the recommended large pay increase was not justified and would worsen pay equity problems. Faced with the rejection of his solution to the faculty staffing shortage, Monfort struggled to find a solution to his problem.

INTRODUCTION

"With the acceptance of our offer by the fellow from the University of Florida, we still have one position to fill. The recruiting committee met yesterday, and we don't think any of the applicants remaining in the pool are that attractive for what we need. Though there are some good people, no one seems to have the right combination of academic training, research capability, and teaching experience that we want for a tenure-track position. Since it's now May and we need to hire another faculty member for fall, we might need to go with a one-year appointment," David suggested. Hesitating for a moment, he continued. "But I do have an idea. You probably hadn't thought about this option, but what about hiring Janet Forrest next year for that open position?"

Fred, looking startled, responded, “What! Hire Janet? That’s one of the crazier things I’ve heard of, David. One of our own doctorates for a tenure-track position? You know that the good schools don’t do that! A moment later, he added, “And, if we did hire her, it would set a dangerous precedent for our department and the college. Besides, Janet is still in the Ph.D. program. She’s trying to find a teaching job in the area for next year that pays more than she’s making as an instructor for us.”

David replied, “Wait a minute, Fred. I’m not talking about a tenure-track slot but rather another one-year position as a visiting faculty member. With her background and work in the Ph.D. program, she could handle both the intro marketing courses and the open sections of advertising that are on the schedule for next year. She is well into her dissertation and will finish this summer. She wants to complete her degree before she hits the market. And her husband will be here for another year to complete physical therapy school, so they want to stay in the area for now. So, maybe their needs and ours would mesh!”

Taking this in, Fred responded, “I can’t deny that it would be good to have another doctorally qualified faculty member on staff, especially since we have an accreditation review coming up. More faculty with doctorates would help us, given the faculty qualification requirements. But I’m not sure that we could hire her even if we wanted to since she’d probably wants to get assistant professor pay – which is more than we could offer her for this position. But, let me look into this and give it some thought.”

BACKGROUND

Fred Monfort was Chairman of the Department of Marketing in the College of Business at Regents State University, a large university in the Southeast. The College of Business had nearly 3,000 students and offered degree programs at the bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels. David Jewett was a professor in the Marketing Department who also headed the faculty recruiting committee for the Department. Jewett had stopped in to meet with Monfort that spring morning to update him on the status of the faculty recruiting activities and discuss staffing needs for the upcoming academic year. The Marketing Department had 16 full-time faculty positions and had expected to fill the two open slots with tenure-track faculty for the upcoming year. However, it was now May, and only one faculty member had been hired, thus the possibility of filling the position on a temporary basis with a one-year appointee had surfaced.

Recruitment of new business school faculty was a major responsibility of the department chairman’s position. Though a recruiting committee of faculty

members assisted, the hiring decisions at Regents State were largely in the hands of the department chairs and the dean's office. The hiring of new faculty, especially those on tenure-track positions (which have the possibility of becoming permanent employees as opposed to one-year appointees) was a critical decision at Regents. For tenure-track faculty, the Department sought to hire candidates who were well-trained in their disciplinary specialty, had successful teaching and professional experience, and had excellent potential for conducting and publishing research in the leading journals in their fields. If a search for a tenure-track faculty member did not produce acceptable candidates, the practice at Regents was to defer the tenure-track hire and secure a temporary faculty member on a one-year appointment, usually with the title of instructor.

In planning for the upcoming year, Monfort needed to make sure that the faculty could meet the staffing needs of the Department. Though the full-time tenure-track faculty were the core of the academic staff, the Department also utilized some instructors and part-time faculty and doctoral students who typically taught one or two courses per semester.

The College of Business would soon face an accreditation review by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International), the major professional accrediting body for business schools. In preparation for the upcoming accreditation, Monfort had reviewed the AACSB-accreditation standards and attended seminars to update his knowledge of these requirements. Though the accreditation standards of AACSB addressed many facets of collegiate business education, a key measure of the intellectual capacity of a business school was the quality of its faculty which focused on the academic education and professional experience of faculty members and their continuing activities to maintain currency and relevance of knowledge in their disciplines. In assessing the quality of a business school's faculty, AACSB reviewers expected to find a large percentage of the faculty with doctoral qualifications with evidence that they are current in their fields, so-called "academically qualified" faculty. For AACSB purposes, faculty members with new doctorates were generally considered to be current for five years from receipt of the degree; those who had met all doctoral-degree requirements except the dissertation, so called "ABDs," were viewed as current for three years. In looking at faculty employment decisions, Monfort was attentive to hiring those who would contribute to meeting these accreditation requirements.

Janet Forrest was in her fourth year of the doctoral program, had passed her comprehensive exams, had defended her dissertation proposal, and was well along with writing her dissertation, expecting to complete it early in the summer. She had taught marketing courses while in the doctoral program and was regarded as

an effective and innovative teacher, especially for one with limited teaching experience. Forrest had also had over eight years of industry experience in sales and marketing that enhanced her teaching and her credibility with students. Although it was rare at Regents State to hire Ph.D. students as full-time employees, Forrest had been hired as a one-year instructor due to her talents and the late resignation of a faculty member.

MAKING IT WORK

The more that Fred Monfort thought about the possibility of rehiring Janet Forrest, the more appealing it became. He thought that Forrest was well trained for an academic position, had very good professional experience in marketing, was a good teacher, and had submitted a couple papers for publication. Also, since she was nearly finished with her doctorate, she would “count” as an academically qualified faculty member for accreditation purposes, a real plus. (The typical candidate for an instructor position has relevant business experience and an MBA or MS degree and thus would not normally be considered academically qualified under the accreditation standards.)

A few days later, Monfort met with the Associate Dean of the College, George Bentley, to present the idea that Forrest be hired on another one-year appointment – but at a significantly higher salary than she made at present. Bentley listened carefully to Monfort’s proposal and offered his opinion:

Look, Fred. I’m concerned about the idea of hiring our own graduates to teach in our program. I can see why she would be an attractive hire for this slot, but I have some reservations. Most schools just don’t do it as a matter of policy, whether written or not. Now, I know that you are thinking of hiring her for only one additional year, but will that set a precedent that we aren’t comfortable with? In the future, might we be expected to hire more of our own graduates to fill our temporary positions? By the way, do you know what salary she would be expecting if we were to offer her a position? Since she is nearing degree completion, would she expect an assistant professor salary? That would be over \$100,000 and would be a problem. And we’d have to stay with the instructor title since the assistant professor rank is typically tied to a tenure-track appointment.

Monfort responded:

I understand your concern, George, but I think you can see that this could advantage both us and her, since she really wants to find a job in the area until her husband finishes his degree in physical therapy. If we worked

out the terms and conditions with her, that would keep her in town which she would prefer. This is an exceptional case, and we are talking about only next year. I don't know what her compensation expectations are, but I'm sure we'd need to give her a good increase over her present salary. You know that a marketing candidate with a doctorate is much more valuable in the marketplace than one with only a master's degree, which is what our instructors typically have.

"OK, why don't you talk with her about the possibility of being an instructor again next year and see what you can work out with her on the salary matter," Bentley suggested. "And remember, all of this is tentative and not a done deal, since we could have difficulty with our internal bureaucracy getting this approved," he cautioned.

Two days later Monfort met with Forrest. Monfort was pleased with the possibility of continuing for an additional year as an instructor. However, she told him that she was considering a tenure-track, assistant professor position at another school that offered her a big pay increase over what she currently made. Though she would need to commute over 60 miles each way, three days a week for that job, she said that the pay was really attractive. Forrest said that she would consider an offer to stay, but she would need a good salary adjustment to do so.

Over the next week, Monfort talked with Bentley about details of the possible appointment. Bentley informed him that he would need to convert the open tenure-track assistant professor position to a one-year instructor position with a different job description with higher qualifications, since he expected to significantly increase Forrest's pay if she were hired. Monfort revised the position description to include language requesting a doctoral degree or ABD status, initiated the job search, and arranged the advertising. The posting was open for two weeks.

Three weeks later, over a dozen applications had come in. Following the search committee's review and interviews of the finalists, the committee chair informed Monfort that Forrest was judged to be clearly the best qualified of the applicants. Monfort conferred with Bentley about possible salary arrangements and scheduled a meeting with Forrest for that Friday afternoon. In the meeting, he told her that, subject to administrative approvals, he would offer her an Instructor appointment for the following year but with a salary increase of \$25,000. Forrest responded favorably to the proposal but said that the salary was less than her offer from another school in the area. She thanked Monfort for the offer and said she needed to "mull it over and talk with my husband," and that she would notify him on Monday.

On Monday morning, she called Monfort and told him she would accept the offer. Pleased with her response, Monfort saw this outcome as a win-win and was glad to call George Bentley to tell him the good news.

TROUBLE ALONG THE WAY

Monfort prepared the documents to submit the proposed appointment. The recommendation had to be approved by the Dean's office, then by the Provost, and finally by the Office of Institutional Equity, which dealt with issues of diversity, equal opportunity, and affirmative action. Monfort submitted the proposal to Associate Dean Bentley, who signed it, and sent it to the Provost, who approved it, and forwarded it to Institutional Equity.

A few days later, Monfort received a call from Bentley who seemed troubled as he shared the bad news: the hiring recommendation had been sent back by the Office of Institutional Equity:

Fred, Institutional Equity sent back the hiring recommendation on Forrest. Phil Connors, the new Director in that office, called me and said he has problems with this hire and doesn't want to approve it for several reasons. One, he said that Forrest is an instructor this year and, if reappointed next year, will be doing basically the same thing. Why is it necessary to give her nearly a 40% pay increase for that job? He said that would be a huge raise, and she is already the highest paid instructor in the Marketing Department. He also noted that the general pay raise for the faculty for next year is only an across-the-board 2.5%, which is almost nothing compared to what she's being recommended for. Connors also said that with that increased salary she would be way above the pay of other instructors in the College who have more years of service to the University. He emphasized that his office is concerned not only with affirmative action issues but with equitable employment practices, as indicated by the change in the name of the office from Affirmative Action to Institutional Equity. So, basically, Fred, he sees it as unfair. I just listened to him and did not respond but told him we'd review this and get back to him soon.

Now, Connors is new to this position and doesn't understand everything that is going on here. Maybe he sees this as just doing his job? That said, we've got some work to do if we want to convince him to approve this hire. Though the Provost already approved it, remember that Institutional Equity reports to the University President. Take a good look at the salaries of instructors in the Department and College and see what you can come up with. And you'll need to justify why Forrest should get the big

increase – I know that there are reasons, but you will need to lay out the arguments. I'd look at the recent AACSB salary data to see if that can provide some ammunition. Send your response to me so I can review it, and then we'll get this back to Connors. Let me know if I can help.

Monfort was not happy with this news, and told Bentley that he really didn't have time to "jump through hoops" for the central administration. Bentley was sympathetic to a point but said that this had to be done if they wanted to make the appointment. Biting his tongue, Monfort hung up the phone and began to think about how to deal with this problem.

Later that afternoon, he pulled out the faculty salary file for the Marketing Department and wrote down the current salaries of his four instructors:

Alex Jordan: \$49,700
Annette Mansfield: \$54,875
Ronnie Springfield: \$59,945
Janet Forrest: \$65,000

The salaries ranged from a low of \$49,700 to a high of \$65,000 (Forrest), and the average (mean) was \$57,380. Of this group, all had master's degrees in marketing or a related field, whereas Forrest had nearly completed her doctorate. All had some related business or professional experience, but Forrest had held more significant executive positions than the others prior to commencing the doctoral program.

With the 2.5% pay increase for the next year for the other Instructors and the proposed reappointment of Forrest at \$90,000, he understood that that amount could seem out of line with the others. But he thought that there were good reasons for this.

Monfort then went online to check out the salary data for the other 12 instructors in the College (salary records were available under the state open records law). Their pay ranged from a low of \$45,400 to a high of \$82,500, and he calculated an average of \$59,430. He later checked out the qualifications of these instructors and found that none had completed a doctorate, although two had some work beyond the master's degree.

Bentley had suggested that Monfort look at the most current salary data from the annual AACSB salary survey. Historically, Regents State did not pay as highly as many other research universities, but this was mitigated by the fact that area living costs were moderate and the state and local tax rates were low. Based on responses from over 600 schools, the AACSB survey showed an average salary

for marketing instructors of \$71,700, well above the average at Regents. Since Forrest was completing her doctorate and next year would be on the market for an assistant professor position, Monfort checked the corresponding salary data which showed the average salary for new doctorates in marketing was close to \$124,000. It's no wonder Forrest was not overwhelmed with the proposed pay increase, he reflected.

Monfort saw that it was now 11:30 and almost time for lunch – too late to start on his response to Phil Connors. But more than that, he needed some time to think as he puzzled over how he would put this justification together. Maybe a full stomach would help, he thought.