

FAMU Employees Get Bonus

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But students ask, "What about us?"

The Florida A&M University board of trustees, during its Oct. 8 meeting, agreed to grant one-time \$1,000 bonuses to full-time faculty and staff .

Hearing the news, Roselyn Williams, associate math professor, said she respects the board's decision.

"I support the board of trustees because I believe in their judgment for the good of the order," Williams said. "I know sometimes they have to make tough decisions and whatever decisions they make I'm confident."

Board member Karl White said that the board did what it could, but wanted to do more.

FAMU faculty and staff have not had a raise in nearly five years as opposed to Florida State University where salaries increased three percent this school year.

However, some students worry that the money given to faculty could be given to the students for assistance.

Randall Kelly, a fourth-year architecture student from Jacksonville, believes that the students' needs should be met first.

"The tuition fees that we pay are contributed to teacher salaries," Kelly said. "So if students still do not have financial aid but teachers are getting bonuses, how is that fair?"

The board said even with students waiting to hear from their lenders, they will help provide a solution to student financial issues.

Tywanna Gillens, a freshman from Miami, said that tuition needs should be taken care of before faculty receives bonuses.

"I still do not have all of my finances," she said. "I understand that the professors need to be appreciated but I also need my tuition covered."

Shelia McDevitt , chairwoman of the Florida Board of Governors, which oversees the state's university system, said her main objective is helping students financially.

"We need more financial aid for students," said McDevitt, who attended the meeting.

McDevitt said that employing a new system of efficiency that includes addressing faulty salaries and working together with the board of trustees will help the university improve its financial standing.

Andrew Collins, FAMU's Student Government Association president, said funds are being distributed fairly.

"I think as a whole, we have a lot of sources of funding whether it be grants or loans," he said. "When the funding comes to FAMU we basically put the money where we know some needs need to be met."

According to McDevitt, as many as 40 percent of students still have not received financial aid due to the recent bank crisis and pell-grants will decrease in 2009.

Lending companies like EdAmerica have struggled to give funds to students. Those using EdAmerica may have to wait until late October or early November to receive their funds.

The financial aid crisis, employee bonuses and the unveiling of the new FAMU Developmental Research School plan were the focal points of the meeting.

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Keara Jones writes for The Famuan, the Florida A&M University student newspaper, which originally published a version of this article.