

Guiding Principles for Faculty Compensation at Fairfield University

Universal Principles for Merit Plans

The committee expects that plans will conform to these principles for use by 2005 and that a committee with faculty representation will review the plans and report to the Academic Vice President. Before 2005, applications for merit will be reviewed according to the school's current merit plan.

- 1. There must be consistency between the plans and the mission, goals and objectives of the university.**
 - a. All plans must make effective teaching a criterion for determining sustained merit. Each plan must state clearly that effective teaching and mentoring are fundamental promises we make to our students. Plans must include submission and evaluation of evidence of teaching effectiveness.
 - b. The University, schools, and departments should be encouraged to develop increasingly useful instruments for evaluation of effective teaching.

- 2. The merit review process should be distinct from the rank and tenure review process.**
 - a. Whereas rank and tenure evaluations necessarily insist on strong contributions in all areas, annual reviews may recognize and reward distinct strengths and contributions.
 - b. Whereas the *Faculty Handbook* does not spell out the particular importance of various forms of teaching, research, and especially service in the various schools, the merit plans may well seek to do so and encourage faculty members to make contributions in these areas.
 - c. The standards and criteria for tenure and promotion in the *Faculty Handbook* and the standards and criteria stated in the various school plans must correlate.
 - d. All plans need to incorporate criteria addressing the three areas of teaching, scholarship, and service into their plans.
 - e. Annual merit reviews must be dependent on submission of an annual report addressing each school's criteria for merit.

- 3. Each plan should have a three level system of merit: 1) no merit, 2) sustained merit, and 3) additional merit.**
 - a. In all plans, sustained merit must be a prerequisite for being considered for additional merit.
 - b. Those who have earned sustained merit will receive a fixed percentage of their salary or of the mean of the rank whichever is higher. This percent will be consistent across the university to be added to their base salary.
 - c. The concept of sustained merit is an appropriate minimum for every faculty member who is meeting the explicit written criteria for all faculty in that department or school or college. This should be a minimum standard and be a common percentage across all schools.

- d. Appropriate distribution of funds in the system should be discussed among the AVP, deans, and the Faculty Salary Committee.
 - e. For merit plans to be effective, the committee considers that sustained merit should reasonably allow faculty members to retain or increase buying power over the years. In time periods where increases cannot exceed cost of living, serious consideration should be given to judging only for sustained merit.
 - f. Plans should have at least two levels of application review. Deans and faculty should work collaboratively to determine an appropriate procedure to present merit recommendations to the Dean.
- 4. Criteria for each level of merit should be developed by faculty, as charged by the Board of Trustees, in terms that are concrete and observable to insure that the process is as clear and transparent as possible.**
- a. Plans must avoid arbitrary distribution of awards.
 - b. Qualifying criteria for merit may differ in details for different schools.
 - c. Chairs and deans should acknowledge that individual faculty members have the potential to make distinct contributions.
 - d. In addition to considering teaching and scholarship, schools should consider various necessary activities such as community outreach, internship supervision, adjunct supervision, professional accreditation and assessment as part of the possible criteria for merit review.
 - e. The plans should take a holistic view of their areas and encourage each faculty member to contribute to the larger goals of the department, school and university. For example, a faculty member might be particularly strong in mentoring and advising. That faculty member might be encouraged to take on a greater number of advisees as a way of making a significant contribution to the goals of the department. In this way, merit reviews might help chairs and deans allocate the needed workload of the department or school as well as building on the strengths of each faculty member.
- 5. All school plans should be seen as works in progress, “living documents” that should be evaluated periodically and revised by faculty in accordance with these principles.**
- a. Deans and faculty should be open to new ideas and share them with colleagues.
 - b. Best practices from other schools might be examined.
 - c. One-year, two-year or even three-year “moving window” evaluations are all reasonable topics for discussion and debate within the schools.
 - d. Plans should be reviewed by a committee composed of representatives from faculty and administration to insure conformity to these principles, before the 2005 implementation date.
- 6. The plans should consider the formative and planning possibilities of merit reviews.**
- a. Although plans should certainly include a review of the accomplishments of the previous time period, the most effective merit plans will set individual and

collective goals and objectives for the future which can then be evaluated by the department chair and/or dean in consultation with the faculty member.

- b. By stressing a formative as well as evaluative methodology, merit plans will minimize punitive evaluations of work not done, and increase opportunities to explore and encourage faculty contributions related to the expertise and interests of the individual faculty member.

7. Appropriate feedback is an important component of a merit review and should be provided by the department chair or dean.

8. There should be a fair and appropriate process for appeals. (i.e. Appeals Committee with faculty representation, Ombudsperson, etc.)

Respectfully submitted by the Academic Council Ad-Hoc Committee on Guiding Principles and Procedural Guidelines for Faculty Compensation.

Members: Margaret Deignan, Joe Dennin, Paula Gill Lopez (Chair), Phil Greiner, Orin Grossman, Walt Hlawitschka, Timothy Law Snyder, Kraig Steffen, Maggie Wills

Approved by the Academic Council on 06/30/2004
Approved by the General Faculty on 09/17/2004