

ACADEMIC SALARY AFFAIRS TASK FORCE COMPLETES WORK; WORKSHEETS SENT TO DEANS

For some time, we have followed a process to appropriately address The University of Akron's comparative standing in faculty salary. The data are now available and indicate that, across academic disciplines, the average salaries of professors and associate professors at The University of Akron are 12% and 5%, respectively, below that observed at benchmark institutions. The data also indicate salary compression, when years of service in rank at The University of Akron are considered. Fortunately, salaries of faculty hired in rank during the last five years are more consistent with those seen at benchmark schools, and the average salary of assistant professors at The University of Akron is similar to that reported for other institutions in Ohio.

The University of Akron has embarked on a multi-phase process to address salary compression both within the University and in relation to average faculty salaries at benchmark schools. The ultimate goals of this process are the fair recognition of merit within The University of Akron and the elevation of average faculty salaries to a level equal to the 75th percentile of Ohio public universities. To that end, President Proenza created the Academic Salary Affairs Task Force charged with recommending a process to achieve these goals. In addition, he allocated \$1.2 million in salary adjustment money to be used in this regard.

The Task Force has recommended that these funds be divided into two pools, labeled Track I Funds and Track II Funds. Track I Funds will be used to bring average faculty salaries more in line with those seen at benchmark universities, while Track II Funds will be used to address salary compression at the professor and associate professor levels. The Task Force also recommended that the allocation of these two pools of money be divided between professors and associate professors. Within the pool set aside for eligible and deserving professors, the Task Force allocated approximately \$325,000 to be used as Track I Funds and \$400,000 to be used as Track II Funds. Within the pool set aside for eligible and deserving associate professors, the Task Force allocated approximately \$95,000 for Track I and \$200,000 for Track II.

Finally, \$180,000 is being held in reserve to retain some flexibility in dealing with potential oversights or corrective actions that may become necessary. Also, since benchmark data are not yet available for the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, a portion of the reserve fund may be needed for salary adjustments in that college. All reserve funds remaining will be used for a second round of salary adjustment allocations.

Track I Funds are to be distributed to faculty in disciplines that were identified by the Task Force as being adversely affected by salary compression relative to benchmark institutions. Funds are earmarked for eligible disciplines and cannot be used to adjust salaries in other disciplines. In addition to being allocated to specific disciplines, Track I Funds are further earmarked for faculty at a given rank. Funds designated for a specific rank cannot be used to increase the salaries of faculty in another rank. Track II Funds are,

likewise, allocated by discipline and rank, and must be distributed accordingly.

Faculty who are eligible to receive Track I and Track II salary adjustments are identified in printed and electronic spreadsheets that were provided to each Dean on Thursday, June 20. Only eligible faculty may receive salary adjustments. Ineligible faculty include those hired in rank within the last five years (based on HR information of 6/12/02), faculty terminating their employment with the University, and those faculty identified by the Task Force as having "high outlier" salaries (1.5 times the inter-quartile range). Salaries for high outliers are not to be adjusted upward or downward. Low outliers who merit salary increases should be earmarked for special attention during the distribution of Track I Funds.

The awarding of Track I Funds to eligible faculty must be based on merit. When making determinations of merit, judgments should be based on a period-of-service sufficient to provide a fair, accurate and defensible assessment of performance at The University of Akron. Under most circumstances assessments of merit should not be based on only one or two years of performance. The award of Track I Funds to individual faculty must be supported by evidence that is available upon request. Similar documentation must be compiled in circumstances where eligible faculty are not awarded Track I Funds.

The Track I Funds allocated to each college are shown in printed and electronic spreadsheets provided to each dean. Track I Funds not awarded during this process are to be returned to the Senior Vice President and Provost for placement in a Salary Adjustment Reserve Fund, which will be used for a second round of salary adjustment allocations.

Track II Funds must be allocated in a manner that takes into account salary compression within rank and with regard to years in rank at The University of Akron. Except in circumstances where the documented performance has been below expectations, faculty in each rank may receive the following amounts:

Eligible Full Professors

Years in Rank/Allocation

1-5/\$1100

6-15/\$2250

16 or more/\$1100

Eligible Associate Professors

Years in Rank/Allocation

1-5/\$1000

6-10/\$1100

11 or more/\$1000

Downward deviations from the above guidelines for allocating Track II Funds must be clearly documented and supported by evidence. Upward deviations are not allowed. All Track II Funds not awarded during this process are to be returned to the Senior Vice

President and Provost for placement in the Salary Adjustment Reserve Fund.

Each Dean's recommendations for Track I and Track II salary adjustments are to be in the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost by Wednesday, July 10th.

Any concerns expressed by faculty regarding the award of Track I or Track II Funds should follow reporting lines through the college, beginning with the department chair/division director. All monies remaining in the Salary Adjustment Reserve Fund will be allocated as Track I Funds following appropriate analyses by the Academic Salary Affairs Task Force and utilizing the same procedures as described above.

More information on the work of the Academic Salary Affairs Task Force, including data and analyses, will be posted on the University's web site by the end of the month.

(sent by email on June 20, 2002)