

TRIENNIAL MERIT PROPOSAL ACCEPTED BY FACULTY – FALL 2006

September 20, 2006

I. The FEC Charge to the FRB

The FEC asks the FRB to devise a method of recommending tenure-track faculty for merit pay awards on a biennial or triennial basis. Procedures and frequency of reviews could differ for tenured and untenured faculty. We recognize that in the process of developing this new method the FRB may wish to propose qualitative changes to the current system

The new system should contain a merit component, it should retain the current FRB role, and it should be uncomplicated, transparent, and fair.

In developing this new system, the FRB is asked to solicit input from faculty, to collect data on systems used at other, similar institutions, and to consult with the Compensation Committee or other governance bodies when deemed appropriate.

The FEC understands that the amount of money set aside for merit awards and their dollar values will be determined by the academic deans in consultation with the Faculty Executive Committee, which will seek the advice of the Compensation Committee in forming its recommendations.

As with any formal FRB policy recommendation, proposed changes to the merit system will be sent to the faculty for a vote.

II. Goals of New Proposal (With ample borrowing and sometimes outright copying from the 1996 proposal)

The overarching goal of a merit system is to create and retain an accomplished and diverse faculty that is actively engaged in the education of students, ongoing scholarship and professional activity, and in the life of the college community.

The principles guiding the creation of a system that can achieve this goal are as follows:

1. The system should recognize clearly and consistently what the college values. Teaching, scholarly and professional activity, and College service all deserve reward.
2. The new system should be uncomplicated, transparent, and fair. Faculty should understand what is encouraged and how salary decisions are made.
3. Moving away from annual merit review should encourage more in-depth evaluations from department chairs and the FRB, and should result in better feedback and more accurate assessments of faculty accomplishments.
4. Developmental efforts are important to assist faculty to accomplish what is expected and desired. Recognition should be made of progress toward desired goals, and encouragement to experiment should be present.

5. The current role of the FRB in determining the level of merit for all faculty members should be retained in order to establish and maintain college-wide standards based on peer evaluation, with administrative input.
6. Merit pay awards should become part of faculty members' base pay.
7. Adoption of a new merit system will not affect the manner in which the pool for faculty raises is computed.
8. The merit award structure should not create salary compression or inversion issues over time that are likely to be larger than seems equitable. If many faculty members cannot ever expect to receive awards in spite of solid performance, this may be a problem.

III. Proposed triennial merit system

This system would assign separate ratings for teaching, research and service. Each faculty member would receive a rating of exceptional, commendable, or developmental in each category. These ratings would be reported on salary letters (e.g., "Your merit award is based on an FRB rating of "exceptional" in teaching and "commendable" in research and service.") We expect that each separate category will have a majority of faculty members in the "commendable" category. A faculty member who received a ranking of "developmental" in two or more categories would not receive a merit award. Academically-oriented activities with students outside the classroom would be classified as teaching. Service awards would be assigned half the monetary value of teaching and research awards. Service activities would include, but are not limited to, administrative and committee work.

IV. Comments

1. Faculty will be evaluated by the Faculty Review Board for merit pay increases on a triennial basis. Annual merit evaluations will be eliminated, and although faculty will still fill out an FAS at the end of the year, department chairs will not need to evaluate a faculty member's activities until the end of the three-year cycle. The FAS will be revised to reflect changes in the merit process.
2. In separating research, teaching and service, this plan provides feedback about performance in specific areas. Thus, the plan is transparent in that everyone will know the components of his or her overall rating.
3. Current triennial merit cohorts will remain the same, but will be shuffled in the future as new hires and retirements require. (This is done now for the present system of triennial merit.)
4. Junior faculty will be included in the merit pool – the first review will occur in their fourth year (after the reappointment review) and the second will occur after the tenure review. The first review will cover years 2 and 3.

5. Lecturers would be considered for merit awards for teaching and service on the same basis as tenure-track faculty, with the exception that a “developmental” in either teaching or service category is sufficient to result in no merit award.
6. The current annual and triennial merit pools will be merged.
7. Under the current system (1-7), ratings below 4 are rarely used. Consequently, the funding associated with levels 1-4 essentially amounts to an across-the-board raise in which everyone receives the same dollar amount. Under the new plan, this portion of current merit funding, which equals approximately 2/3 of current annual merit fund (approximately \$100,000 on average in recent years) would be merged with other across-the-board funds and would be distributed on a percentage-of-salary basis. “Merit” henceforth would refer only to funds distributed on the basis of differences in performance (“differential merit”).
8. Payments would be made annually, based on merit ratings that are determined triennially. This helps to ensure cohort-neutrality (the monetary value of merit awards does not depend on the triennial cohort).
9. Those in each cohort who do not receive merit awards will normally receive across-the-board raises except in rare instances of unacceptable performance, in which case the FRB may recommend denial of part or all of the across-the-board raise. Such a decision would be reconsidered annually rather than waiting until the next triennial review.
10. Dean’s discretionary awards will continue to be used to reward activities, including service, that benefit the College but are not well-rewarded by the merit system.
11. Please note that the FRB does not make recommendations regarding the size of merit awards, the level of funding in the merit pool, or the division of that pool between across-the-board raises and merit raises. These decisions are made by the administration in consultation with the FEC, which in turn is advised by the Faculty Compensation Committee. One possibility is for the merit pool to equal the current triennial merit pool plus the normal funding for “differential” merit. These add up to approximately \$75,000 in a typical year. This amount would grow with inflation and would be assigned to merit regardless of whether the across-the-board raise is larger or smaller than the cost-of-living increase for that year.
12. Dollar amounts of merit awards would vary annually, depending on the size of the merit pool and on the number of each type of award given. The following table gives a *rough* estimate of the annual dollar awards associated with each rating.

	Exceptional	Commendable	Developmental
Teaching	\$300	\$150	\$0
Research	\$300	\$150	\$0
Service	\$150	\$75	\$0

CHART C
Legislative Flow Chart for Faculty Review Board (May 2000)

1. The Faculty Review Board (FRB) receives formal proposals from its subcommittees, from its own members, or from Department Heads.
2. The FRB passes a formal policy recommendation.
3. At a meeting of the General Faculty called within thirty days, the General Faculty may
 - Approve (by majority vote) the policy recommendation as it stands, in which case the policy recommendation is forwarded to the Dean of the Faculty and the President for formal approval and implementation; or
 - Return the recommendation to the FRB with suggested amendments; or
 - Reject (by majority vote) the policy recommendation, in which case the proposal is defeated and may not be reconsidered during the current academic year.
4. If the recommendation is returned to the Faculty Review Board by the General Faculty, the FRB has thirty days in the academic calendar to take action. It may
 - Withdraw the policy recommendation, in which case the same recommendation may not be reconsidered during the current academic year; or
 - Return the initial proposal to the General Faculty, explaining why it has not incorporated suggested amendments; or
 - Resubmit a modified proposal to the General Faculty
5. The General Faculty shall meet within ten days in the academic calendar of receiving again the policy recommendation of the FRB (either the resubmitted initial proposal or a modified proposal). The General Faculty may
 - Approve by majority vote the proposal submitted to it by the FRB, in which case the proposal is forwarded to the Dean of the Faculty and the President for formal approval and implementation; or
 - Fail to approve by majority vote the proposal, in which case the proposal is defeated and may not be reconsidered during the current academic year.
6. The Dean of the Faculty and President must receive the recommendation of the Council and formally approve or disapprove the recommendation within ten days in the academic calendar. In the unusual instance that the Dean of the Faculty or President vetoes the policy recommendation of the FRB, such disapproval must be communicated in writing to the Chair of the FRB within the ten-day period, explaining the reason for rejection. On receipt of such a rejection message, the FRB may begin again at Step 1.