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# Salary Compression: What is the administration doing (or planning to do) to address the problem of Salary Compression?

Submitted by: Richard Flynn

4/21/2004

## Question:

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Salary Compression: What is the administration doing (or planning to do) to address the problem of salary compression? Like many of my colleagues, I find that, as a full professor, I am being paid about the same salary as a newly-hired assistant professor in my department. More specifically, will the administration address the idea of giving back-merit-pay to those of us who have done exemplary work in the years of no raises to bring our salaries up to what we deserve? I would like to hear this problem addressed forthrightly by the administration in such a way that the answer is widely disseminated to the faculty.

## Rationale:

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While the problem may be most pronounced in colleges like CLASS, where professors are traditionally under-compensated, I believe it is most likely a University-wide problem, Senior Faculty are the heart and soul of this institution. We have invested many years and much energy to the mission of Georgia Southern. We are loyal to this institution in was that new hires are not. We are the professors the University is so proud of putting in the classroom: at Georgia Southern, you get a professor, not a graduate student. And yet, we are in danger of being compensated like graduate students. When I read in The Chronicle of Higher Education that my salary is roughly equivalent to the average salary of assistant professors, and when I know, for a fact, that my own department is hiring new assistant professors at a salary very close to my own salary as a full professor, it is hard not to feel demoralized. The most recent AAUP

salary survey for 2004 shows that, for the first time since the year 2000, the average salaries of full and associate professors at Georgia Southern have declined. It is now documented that we are losing ground.

## **Senate Response:**

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Minutes 6/23/2004 Salary Compression: What is the administration doing (or planning to do) to address the problem of salary compression? Like many of my colleagues, I find that, as a full professor, I am being paid about the same salary as a newly-hired assistant professor in my department. More specifically, will the administration address the idea of giving back-merit-pay to those of us who have done exemplary work in the years of no raises to bring our salaries up to what we deserve? I would like to hear this problem addressed forthrightly by the administration in such a way that the answer is widely disseminated to the faculty.

Cyr (SEC Chair) reported that the Senate Executive Committee received one information request from Richard Flynn, which noted that many associate and full-professors who had served at Georgia Southern for many years are being paid at about the same rate as newly hired assistant professors, and that according to the AAUP, full and associate professors at Georgia Southern have seen their salaries decline in 2004, the first time since 2000. Flynn asked if such salary compression is being addressed by the administration, and specifically asked that when funding becomes available would back merit pay be considered for those who have had high levels of achievement in these recent years of dearth. Cyr (SEC Chair) noted that President Grube responded to this request by pointing out that Georgia Southern ranks #1 for full and assistant professor salaries among the 34 schools of the University System of Georgia according to The Chronicle of Higher Education (not counting the research institutions) and #2 for associate professors. Georgia Southern has slipped in relation to other southern region states, and the Chancellor, the President and all concerned are working to improve the situation. Any fund established to level up the salaries of some associate and full professors would have to come off the top of any raise monies given by the legislature. President Grube added that the Provost had compiled a list of the most serious cases in terms of equity and compression and that approximately half of those have been addressed. He noted that this year he is serving on the Budget Advisory Committee to the Chancellor, who recently asked for Georgia Southern's top priorities for the '06 budget. Dr. Grube's first, second and third priorities were for faculty and staff salaries, restoration of operational funds and maintenance of our funds that allow us to repair and maintain our physical facilities. Cyr (SEC Chair) added that Provost Vandegrift brought to his attention that one reason the gap between new assistant salaries and long-tenure full-professor salaries has closed in recent years is that the administration has worked to raise salary offers to new hires in order to make Georgia Southern more

competitive. The perception that full-professors are losing ground is due to the University making up-ground on the assistant professor front. On the question of back merit pay, Cyr (SEC Chair) reported that President Grube advised there was no such thing. Cyr noted that he sent a follow up query about whether, when money becomes available, unit heads could be directed to consider a longer period than the most recent year or two when figuring merit raises, but has not heard back on that issue.