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Faculty Senate Resolution 014.10/11: Faculty Salary Study

Armstrong Atlantic State University

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Armstrong Atlantic State University
Faculty Senate Resolution 014.10/11: Faculty Salary Study

Presidential Action-Resolution
No Action Required

Delivered:

[Signature]

Date 3/3/11

NOTE: As discussed, the study committee should include a member of the Business and Finance administrative staff.

Armstrong Atlantic State University Faculty Senate

FSR 14.10/11 Approval February 21, 2011
RESOLUTION: Reconstitution of the Faculty Salary Study Committee

BACKGROUND
On December 4, 2007 the VPAA’s office charged the Vice Chair of the Executive Committee and Office of Institutional Research to conduct a Faculty Salary Study. The Committee used data from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) to compare AASU salaries to those of peer institutions. Their findings and recommendations can be found in the Executive Summary from the March, 2008 Faculty Salary Study (Appendix A). In 2008, based on their recommendations, the administration allocated funds to bring AASU salaries in better alignment with those of peer comparators.

The Faculty Welfare Committee was originally charged with reviewing the Faculty Salary Study and comparing it with CUPA-HR data from more recent academic years. The FWC compared salary data before and immediately following the salary adjustment of 2008 and shared our findings with Dr. Michael Toma, Co-Chair of the original Study Committee. His review highlighted numerous procedural issues and computational concerns regarding our analysis, including the following:

1) The constitution and bylaws adopted by the faculty indicate that it is not within the purview of the FWC to address individual cases for faculty members. The FWC can consider general policy matters regarding faculty welfare but not specific cases. This is why the VPAA’s office created the ad hoc committee to study the matter.

2) The Study Committee recommended that the Salary Study be repeated in three year intervals and now is the perfect time to request that the ad hoc committee be reconstituted.

The Faculty Welfare Committee shares these concerns and recognizes the need to reestablish the Study Committee to repeat the Salary Study. At present, the impact of the 2008 salary adjustments remain unclear as do the status of particular recommendations made in their original report. In the years since the original study, AASU faculty salaries have been frozen with a complete lack of merit-based annual adjustments. It is of critical importance that we accurately compare salaries at AASU with those of peer institutions. This information can be used to formulate a long-term strategy to implement necessary adjustments to bring AASU salaries in alignment with those of peer comparators and further reduce instances of salary compression and inversion.
RESOLUTION
Faculty Welfare asks the Faculty Senate to request that the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research work with the representatives of the Faculty Senate to reconstitute the Faculty Salary Study Committee. Faculty Welfare recommends that this occur during the spring 2011 semester and specifically requests the following:

1) Reconstitute the original ad hoc Study Committee with identical membership (if possible).

2) The Study Committee should convene in a timely manner to ensure that their report is completed prior to the end of this semester. If possible, the Committee should present their findings and recommendations in May to a special session of the Faculty Senate.

3) In addition to other pertinent issues, the Study Committee should examine how changes in the current salary adjustments given at promotion and tenure could help offset salary compression at AASU.
Appendix A

Executive Summary

On December 4, 2007, Dr. Whitford, Vice President for Academic Affairs, charged the Vice Chair of the Executive Committee, a committee of faculty representing the four colleges of the university, along with the Office of Institutional Research, with conducting a Faculty Salary Study. The committee agreed to use data from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) to conduct salary comparisons between AASU and peer institutions.

The AASU Office of Institutional Research submitted the university’s faculty salary data to CUPA-HR. After this data submission, the institution purchased CUPA-HR’s DataOnDemand analysis tool to begin the process of reviewing salary data from AASU’s peer group. The committee selected the peer group based on the following criteria: Public, Southern, Masters I, and Non-HBCU; including, for example, Appalachian State and College of Charleston. This returned a list of 45 institutions including AASU (Appendix A).

The analysis was run by discipline and rank. The resulting AASU means were then compared to the CUPA-HR means from our Comparator Group using the Multi-Discipline Report. The committee looked at areas in which the AASU salaries fell below the CUPA-HR mean. The committee employed a tiered approach that began considering those areas that were below 80% of the CUPA-HR mean, and assessing the cost to bring each of those areas up in 5% intervals. Example: Determine the level of funding required to bring those that were below 80% up to 80%; then that group would join the next tier, i.e. those below 85% of the CUPA-HR mean.

The committee also considered the cost of living in Savannah relative to the peer group. The most geographically comprehensive data on cost of living were available from Yahoo-Real Estate online. Based on this data, the cost of living in Savannah is 6% higher than the median cost of living in the remaining 44 institutions, and 2% higher than the mean for the 44 institutions. A 4% factor was applied to the salary adjustment computations.

The committee found that $933,744 (not including benefits, but including a cost of living adjustment of 4%) would be required to bring all areas now below the CUPA-HR mean up to the mean of the comparison group. To bring all areas that are below 95% of the CUPA-HR mean up to 95% of the CUPA-HR mean would require $440,692. To bring all areas that are below 90% of the CUPA-HR mean up to 90% of the CUPA-HR mean would require $143,780. To bring all areas that are below 85% of the CUPA-HR mean up to 85% of the CUPA-HR mean would require $44,200. To bring all areas that are below 80% of the CUPA-HR mean up to 80% of the CUPA-HR mean would require $6,932. This report suggests ways that funds, whether they are new sources or redirections of existing funds, can be used to offset areas that are below the means of the peer group.

In particular, the Faculty Salary Study Committee found that 17 AASU faculty in nine discipline and rank groups had the lowest mean salary among their 44 peer comparator institutions. The committee strongly recommends that these areas receive top priority for review and allocation of equity adjustments in salary. All of the areas listed can be adjusted to within
90% of the CUPA-HR mean for approximately $99,745 (not including benefits or the cost of living adjustment). The committee suggests that any supplemental funding for faculty salaries or redirection of institutional funds address the areas in a systematic way that will insure that AASU salaries better align with those of the peer comparators.

The committee reviewed salary compression and inversion as an element of its charge and found that salary compression is a problem of increasing concern at AASU. Salaries have become more compressed at AASU in the period from 1991 to 2006 as compared to AASU's sister institutions in the USG system. With respect to salary inversion, the committee identified 68 potential cases of inverted salaries (using rank-adjusted salary) that could require approximately $160,000 to $300,000 to remedy depending on whether the inversion warranted corrective action. The more pressing cases of potential cross-rank salary inversion would require approximately $65,000 to address, should they all warrant corrective action.

In order to address a long term factor that contributes to salary compression and inversion at AASU, the committee recommends the administration and faculty jointly investigate the salary adjustment for promotion to associate professor and to full professor. At AASU, the adjustments are $2,000 and $2,500, respectively. The lower the AASU promotion-related salary adjustments are with respect to its peers, the more compressed AASU faculty salaries will become through time as compared with faculty salaries at peer institutions.

This salary study should not be interpreted to suggest that faculty members ought to be paid at precisely the mean salary of their rank and discipline. There may be mitigating factors underlying why certain faculty members are paid below or above the mean salary for their rank and discipline. The formulaic methodology used by the salary study committee could not and did not consider these various mitigating factors. The findings reported in this document should be viewed as a starting point for further investigation on a case-by-case basis by relevant administrators (department head, dean, and vice president for academic affairs) in the chain of authority for a given faculty member to assess whether a salary adjustment is warranted.

Study Committee:
Dr. Michael Toma (Co-Chair)
Mr. Andy T. Clark (Co-Chair)
Dr. Joyce Bergin
Dr. James Brawner
Dr. Donna Brooks
Dr. Thomas Murphy