

**Task Force to Study Salary Increases
tied to Faculty Promotions**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Delivered to Provost Linda Bleicken

on

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Task Force Members

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Executive Summary

- Task force composition and charge. At the end of the spring 2005 semester, Provost Linda Bleicken constituted a task force consisting of Dr. Robert Costomiris, associate professor in the Department of Literature and Philosophy, Dr. Ming Fang He, associate professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading, and Dr. Ronald E. Shiffler, dean of the College of Business Administration. She charged the task force with analyzing the competitiveness of the block salary increases awarded to faculty who achieved promotion to a higher rank and making recommendations for changes, if warranted, by the fall 2005 semester.
- Current block salary increases. Currently, the following block salary increases are awarded to faculty that earn promotions:
 - \$1,000 for promotion from instructor to assistant professor;
 - \$1,500 for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor; and
 - \$2,000 for promotion from associate professor to full professor.These amounts have not changed in over a dozen years, as far as we can tell.
- Methodology. The task force created an initial list of almost 50 institutions for comparison, and narrowed the list to a cross-section of institutions that became the comparison group. (A list of the universities is included in Appendix A.) The task force collected salary increase information and analyzed the data in terms of raw dollar increases and percent increases (relative to average faculty salaries).
- Observations. The task force determined that Georgia Southern's increases were highly consistent with those awarded by other in-state universities. However, our increases were near the bottom of the distributions – in terms of both raw dollars and percentages – relative to the set of comparison schools.
- Recommendations.
 1. The task force recommends the following salary increases:

**\$2,000 for promotion from instructor to assistant professor;
\$3,000 for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor; and
\$5,000 for promotion from associate professor to full professor.**
 2. Further, the task force recommends that an automatic four-year review cycle be established to regularly analyze the competitiveness of these bumps.
 3. The task force also recommends that the revised salary increases be awarded to those faculty who earn promotions during the 2005-06 academic year (which would impact the budget for fiscal year 2007). In other words, faculty that earn promotions this year would receive the recommended block increases in their salaries next year.

Section 1 – Rationale

For the past twelve years Georgia Southern University has not increased the dollar amounts awarded to faculty upon promotion and, as a result, has fallen behind most of its peer and aspirational institutions in this area. Besides cost of living increases and merit raises, which are constrained by state budgets and therefore not guaranteed even in years when a faculty member receives very high annual evaluations, the two promotions in rank (from assistant to associate professor and from associate to full professor) are the only opportunities in a faculty member's career to increase salary significantly. Therefore, it is important that the university use these milestones to recognize faculty members' contributions to the university and their disciplines and reward them appropriately.

Obviously, increasing the amount of money paid to faculty upon promotion is likely to increase (all other expenditures holding steady) the university's overall annual expenditure. Nevertheless, the members of the task force believe that it is in the best interests of the university to increase these monetary awards for the following reasons:

- **Recognize faculty excellence.** Promotion in rank is a high point in a faculty person's career and is the culmination of six years' hard work. The university can encourage faculty and acknowledge their work with a noticeable increase in salary.
- **Retain the best faculty.** Faculty members often seek posts at other universities in order to improve their financial situation. The university might stem the flow by offering a greater financial incentive to remain at Georgia Southern.
- **Attract the best faculty.** Competitive salaries are essential in order to attract the best faculty. Knowing that one can expect a significant increase in salary upon promotion will give prospective faculty a positive impression of Georgia Southern's commitment to excellence.
- **Relieve salary compression.** Given the upward trend in starting salaries, the university often finds seasoned faculty earning less than new arrivals. Higher levels of compensation at the two levels of promotion will help to alleviate this problem.
- **Recognize Georgia Southern's mission.** Joining the top tier of comprehensive universities in the country entails attracting faculty with terminal degrees who are committed to being teachers and scholars. To remain competitive in this arena Georgia Southern must compensate its faculty at levels commensurate with the institutions it aspires to join.
- **Recognize the economic landscape.** The university can no longer depend on large annual salary increases from the state to reward faculty for their achievements. In an era of 0-2% salary increases the university must institute reasonable salary increases for promotion that faculty members can count on as they work towards the academic goals that we all agree are essential to making Georgia Southern University a great institution.

Section 2 – Methodology

Step 1: The task force first identified an initial list of institutions for comparison. This preliminary list included all in-state universities, Georgia Southern’s peers and aspirants, and other universities from across the nation that appeared either comparable or aspirational. Through a variety of means, task force members sought additional information about the schools in this preliminary list, discussed the merits of continuing to include each one in the analysis, and eventually reduced the scope to 46 schools. (See Appendix A for a complete list of universities in the initial list.)

Step 2: Candace Griffith, assistant to the provost, contacted each of these schools and requested information about salary increases for faculty promotions. Most schools responded, but some did not. Ms. Griffith tried several times to contact the non-respondents.

Step 3: Based on additional discussion about the schools in the list, the task force further refined the set of potential schools in the analysis to 17 in the second stage of the analysis. (See Appendix A for the list of schools in the second stage of analysis.) In excluding schools from the initial stage to the second stage of analysis, the task force tried to find a set of highly comparable and/or homogeneous institutions to Georgia Southern, at least from our perspectives. Certainly, a different task force would no doubt find a different set of comparable institutions.

[Note: The College of Business Administration (COBA) recently attempted to identify peer business school institutions using a comprehensive data set from all accredited schools that its accrediting agency (AACSB International) maintains. The COBA task force used scientific methods such as cluster analysis, factor analysis, and correlational analysis to try to identify comparable peers. The results were inconclusive in identifying “the” set of peers. Hence, subjectivity is part of the selection of comparable institutions.]

Step 4: Once a manageable and appropriate set of comparable institutions had been identified in Step #3, the task force studied the salary increase data. However, the task force considered the raw data somewhat meaningless in the absence of data about average faculty salaries at each rank. We asked Ms. Griffith to collect additional data from the institutions on average salaries for each school to provide context for the salary increase amounts. From the list of 17 schools that remained from Step #3, the task force settled on a final group of seven comparison schools that included (in alphabetical order):

Appalachian State University
California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo
Kennesaw State University
Truman State University
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
Valdosta State University

Section 3 – Data Analysis

The task force compared Georgia Southern’s salary bumps to those for each school in the list in terms of both raw dollar amounts and percentage increases (relative to average faculty salaries). Table 1 shows Georgia Southern’s positioning in the comparison group in terms of raw dollar amounts when a faculty member is promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, ranked from high (1) to low (8).

Table 1. Assistant to Associate in Absolute terms (by Raw Dollar Salary Increases)

| Rank | School | Avg. Assistant Professor Salary | Salary Increase (raw \$\$) | Avg. Associate Professor Salary |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Cal Poly | \$57,800 | \$4,335 ¹ | \$69,000 |
| 2 | Wisc – Eau Claire | \$47,500 | \$3,400 | \$54,700 |
| 3 | NC – Wilmington | \$52,000 | \$3,000 | \$60,600 |
| 4 | Valdosta | \$47,000 | \$2,500 | \$53,500 |
| 5 | Kennesaw | \$48,400 | \$2,420 ² | \$57,800 |
| 6 | Truman State | \$42,200 | \$2,300 | \$51,500 |
| 7 | Georgia Southern | \$50,400 | \$1,500 | \$58,500 |
| 8 | Appalachian State | \$53,200 | \$1,000 | \$60,200 |

¹Cal Poly’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 7.5%

²Kennesaw’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 5%

From Table 1, we can see that Georgia Southern’s salary increase of \$1,500 is not consistent with most of the other schools in the comparison group. To see how we stack up in relative terms, we rearranged the data in Table 1 by percent increases, relative to an average assistant professor’s salary. Table 2 shows Georgia Southern’s positioning in the comparison group in terms of percentage increase when a faculty member is promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, ranked from high (1) to low (8).

Table 2. Assistant to Associate in Relative terms (by Percent Salary Increases)

| Rank | School | Avg. Assistant Professor Salary | Salary Increase (percent) | Avg. Associate Professor Salary |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Cal Poly | \$57,800 | 7.5% ¹ | \$69,000 |
| 2 | Wisc – Eau Claire | \$47,500 | 7.2% | \$54,700 |
| 3 | NC – Wilmington | \$52,000 | 5.8% | \$60,600 |
| 4 | Truman State | \$42,200 | 5.5% | \$51,500 |
| 5 | Valdosta | \$47,000 | 5.3% | \$53,500 |
| 6 | Kennesaw | \$48,400 | 5.0% ² | \$57,800 |
| 7 | Georgia Southern | \$50,400 | 3.0% | \$58,500 |
| 8 | Appalachian State | \$53,200 | 1.9% | \$60,200 |

¹Cal Poly’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 7.5%

²Kennesaw’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 5%

Again we see that Georgia Southern’s block salary increase of \$1,500 translates to a percentage raise on the average assistant professor’s salary of only 3.0 percent.

We repeated the two-step analysis of the salary increase from associate to full professor in Tables #3 and #4 below.

Table 3. Associate to Full in Absolute terms (by Raw Dollar Salary Increases)

| Rank | School | Avg. Associate Professor Salary | Salary Increase (raw \$\$) | Avg. Full Professor Salary |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Wisc – Eau Claire | \$54,700 | \$5,250 | \$66,500 |
| 2 | Cal Poly | \$69,000 | \$5,175 ¹ | \$83,800 |
| 3 | NC – Wilmington | \$60,600 | \$5,000 | \$75,300 |
| 4 | Truman State | \$51,500 | \$4,600 | \$65,400 |
| 5 | Valdosta | \$53,500 | \$3,500 | \$66,400 |
| 6 | Kennesaw | \$57,800 | \$2,890 ² | \$74,200 |
| 7 | Georgia Southern | \$58,500 | \$2,000 | \$73,700 |
| 8 | Appalachian State | \$60,200 | \$1,000 | \$73,000 |

¹Cal Poly’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 7.5%

²Kennesaw’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 5%

From associate to full professor, Georgia Southern’s salary increase in absolute terms is ranked 7th of eight schools in the comparison group.

Table 4. Associate to Full in Relative terms (by Percent Salary Increases)

| Rank | School | Avg. Associate Professor Salary | Salary Increase (percent) | Avg. Full Professor Salary |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Wisc – Eau Claire | \$54,700 | 9.6% | \$66,500 |
| 2 | Truman State | \$51,500 | 9.0% | \$65,400 |
| 3 | NC – Wilmington | \$60,600 | 8.3% | \$75,300 |
| 4 | Cal Poly | \$69,000 | 7.5% ¹ | \$83,800 |
| 5 | Valdosta | \$53,500 | 6.5% | \$66,400 |
| 6 | Kennesaw | \$57,800 | 5.0% ² | \$74,200 |
| 7 | Georgia Southern | \$58,500 | 3.4% | \$73,700 |
| 8 | Appalachian State | \$60,200 | 3.3% | \$73,000 |

¹Cal Poly’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 7.5%

²Kennesaw’s salary increase is stated in only percentage terms, 5%

Section 4 – Recommendations

Lest the reader think we hand-picked the set of schools in the comparison list to make Georgia Southern's salary increases look exceptionally low compared to the others, we refer the reader to the bold-faced print in Appendix A. Let us briefly summarize.

Recall that we had three sets of comparison schools: 46 in the initial list, 17 in the second stage, and then seven in the final analysis.

In the initial list of 46 schools, we were able to collect data from 34 of these schools. Twelve never responded. Georgia Southern's raise of \$1,500 from assistant to associate professor ranked (tied for) 29th lowest among the 35 schools for which we had data (the 34 schools that responded plus Georgia Southern).

In the second stage list of 17 schools, we collected data from 11 schools with six non-respondents. Georgia Southern's \$1,500 raise ranked 11th worst among the 12 schools (the 11 schools that responded plus Georgia Southern).

Georgia Southern's \$2,000 raise for being promoted from associate to full professor ranked (tied for) 29th lowest among the 35 schools in the initial list, and 11th lowest among the 12 schools in the second stage.

As a result, we tried hard to include a representative cross-section of schools in the final analysis and did not consciously pick all the schools with the largest increases. Any way you slice it, our promotion salary increases are among the lowest in any reasonable set of peers and aspirants.

Certainly, extraneous factors such as cost of living, rural/urban location, and size of university (among others) could be offered as explanations for why the salary increases differ among the schools in the analysis. While we agree that to some extent such factors are relevant to this discussion, we believe the more relevant argument is the one stated in the premise to our Capital Campaign: Georgia Southern is on a mission to become one of the top ten public comprehensive universities in the nation. To achieve this goal, we must retain our best faculty by tangibly rewarding them when they achieve promotions.

Recommendation #1a: The promotion from assistant professor to associate professor should result in a reward that is competitive within our comparison group. Ranking 7th of eight (as shown in Tables #1 and #2) is not our idea of being competitive. We should put an emphasis on retaining junior faculty. Once tenured and promoted, such faculty are less likely to leave the university. For this reason, we believe we should structure the promotion reward dollars to fall near the top of our comparison group. We recommend a salary increase of \$3,000 for achieving promotion from assistant to associate professor. This corresponds to an increase of 6.0 percent on the average assistant professor salary at Georgia Southern. Both the raw dollar figure and the percent figure would move our ranking up to third in the comparison group.

Recommendation #1b: We recommend a salary increase of \$5,000 for achieving promotion from associate professor to full professor. In absolute and relative terms, this would position us (tied for) 3rd in the comparison group, ahead of Valdosta, Kennesaw, and Appalachian (see Tables #3 and #4).

Recommendation #1c: We did not collect data on promotions from instructor to assistant professor from any schools. Because we have some, but not many, faculty for whom this promotion may still occur, we are obligated to examine this promotion as well. With no hard data to analyze, we tried to position this increase in line with our recommendation for promotion from assistant to associate (\$3,000) and the current figure of \$1,000 for promotion from instructor to assistant professor. Hence, we recommend an increase of \$2,000 for those promoted from instructor to assistant professor.

Recommendation #2: The current salary block increases for promotion have been in place so long that no one seems to remember when they were last revised. Therefore, we also recommend that a regular review cycle of four years be adopted for analyzing the competitiveness of the block increases.

Recommendation #3: We would like to see the new salary increase figures be implemented immediately. “Immediately” would mean that faculty undergoing promotion review this academic year, 2005-06, would be eligible to receive the new increases in their faculty salaries next academic year, 2006-07, which corresponds to fiscal year 07. To achieve this goal, our recommendations would need to be approved by the end of the fall 05 semester.

In considering these recommendations and adjusting the block salary increases, we hope you will recognize the important statement that will be made about Georgia Southern University to its faculty and to the academy. If we continue to compare ourselves to Valdosta State University and Kennesaw State University, then we are setting our sights too low and tying our policies to theirs. On the other hand, if we are truly trying to be aspirational, then we should be mirroring the practices of schools “ahead” of us and rewarding faculty promotions at a similar level.

Appendix A

Initial List of Institutions Included in Analysis

In-state Universities

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Albany State University | Kennesaw State University |
| Armstrong Atlantic State University | Medical College of Georgia |
| Augusta State University | North Georgia College & State Univ |
| Clayton State University | Savannah State University |
| Columbus State University | Southern Polytechnic State Univ |
| Georgia College and State University | University of Georgia |
| Georgia Institute of Technology | University of West Georgia |
| Georgia State University | Valdosta State University |

Peers and Aspirants

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Appalachian State University | University of Tenn – Chattanooga |
| College of Charleston | California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo |
| College of New Jersey | University of Northern Iowa |
| James Madison University | University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire |
| SUNY College at Geneseo | Western Washington University |
| Truman State University | |
| University of Mary Washington | |

Others

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Bowling Green State University | University of North Carolina at Greensboro |
| California State Univ at Northridge | University of North Carolina at Wilmington |
| California State Univ at Sacramento | University of South Alabama |
| Central Michigan University | University of Southern Mississippi |
| Florida Atlantic University | University of Texas at Arlington |
| Illinois State University | University of Texas at San Antonio |
| Indiana University of Pennsylvania | University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee |
| Purdue University at Calumet | Western Michigan University |
| Rutgers University | |
| University of Central Florida | |

Note: Of these 46 schools, we collected data from 34 of them; 12 never responded. In terms of the raw dollar salary increase of \$1,500 for being promoted from assistant to associate professor, Georgia Southern ranked (tied for) 29th among 35 schools (the 34 who responded plus Georgia Southern). The low amount was \$1,000 and the high amount was \$6,900. From associate to full professor, Georgia Southern's figure of \$2,000 again ranked (tied for) 29th. The low was \$1,000 and the high was \$8,180.

Second Stage Set of Institutions Included in Analysis

Appalachian State University
California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo
California State University at Northridge
California State University at Sacramento
Central Michigan University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
James Madison University
Kennesaw State University
Purdue University at Calumet
Truman State University
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Texas at Arlington
University of Texas at San Antonio
University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire
Valdosta State University

Note: Of these 17 schools, we collected data from 11 of them; 6 never responded. In terms of the raw dollar salary increase of \$1,500 for being promoted from assistant to associate professor, Georgia Southern ranked 11th among 12 schools (the 11 who responded plus Georgia Southern). The low amount was \$1,000 and the high amount was \$5,000. From associate to full professor, Georgia Southern's figure of \$2,000 again ranked 11th. The low was \$1,000 and the high was \$7,000.

Final List of Institutions Included in Analysis

Appalachian State University
California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo
Kennesaw State University
Truman State University
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
Valdosta State University