

11-2-2005

Analysis and Recommendation from the Task Force to Study Salary Increases Tied to Faculty Promotions

Linda Bleicken
Georgia Southern University

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Recommended Citation

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Faculty Senate Index. 592.
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Approved by the Faculty Senate: 11/14/2005

Not Approved by the Faculty Senate:

Approved by the President: 11/17/2005

Not Approved by the President:

Analysis and Recommendation from the Task Force to Study Salary Increases tied to Faculty Promotions

Submitted by: Linda Bleicken

11/02/2005

Motion:

Analysis and recommendations from the Task Force to Study Salary Increases tied to Faculty Promotions are submitted to the Faculty Senate for comment.

Rationale:

During spring 2005, 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 Shiffler, dean of the College of Business Administration. The task force was charged 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.

The task force has completed its analysis and has submitted recommendations for changes. These analyses and recommendations are now submitted to the Faculty Senate for comment.

Response:

Minutes: 11/14/2005: Agenda Request: There was one agenda request. Dr. Bleicken submitted an agenda request for discussion on the proposed changes to raises for promotion, and that appears as item #9 on today's agenda. One thing I should mention, very clearly, at this point, since this is a budgetary consideration. Faculty Senate does not have any role, per se, in budgetary considerations. We can merely advise the Provost on whether or not we are in favor of the proposed changes.

Discussion item "Analysis and Recommendations from the Task Force to Study Salary Increases tied to Faculty Promotions," Dr. Linda Bleicken, Provost: Well, good afternoon. Let me give you just a little brief history on this. In the spring of 2005, Robert Costomiris, a faculty member in CLASS, requested some information on the last time that raises attached to promotions had been had been increased, and he also, in his request for information, wanted to know if our raises were competitive. I appointed a task force and asked Robert if he would serve on the task force, and he graciously said, "yes." Then I also asked one of our deans, Ron Shiffler, to chair the task force. Ron agreed to chair the task force. And then a Senate member, Ming Fang He, very graciously agreed to serve on the task force. I need to recognize and thank Candace Griffith who provided a lot of background work on this issue. And I want to start out by saying thank you to Robert for raising this issue, because what the committee found as they looked at this was that it had been at least twelve years, if not longer, since we had last looked at this and actually made an increase in the promotion amounts. You see what the current block salary increases are: \$1,000, \$1,500, and \$2,000 respectively going from Assistant Professor to Full. As the task force began its research, they discovered that if we looked at schools throughout the University System, and certainly some of our peer and aspirant institutions, we really were not as competitive as we might be. Since Dean Shiffler is not here yet, Ming Fang would you like to talk about the recommendations the task force has made?

Ming Fang He (COE): I will try my best. I joined the task force in the summer, after I raised the issue about how to maintain good faculty. It was a very good experience working with Dr. Robert Costomiris. He is very productive, and he offered a lot of insight for the committee. It was also a pleasure, and a very good learning experience working with Dr. Ron Shiffler. If you read the report here, initially we started with 50 institutions, and then we narrowed the number down to 17, and then finally we choose seven institutions to analyze. You can see from the analysis that we found that the "bumping" system scale at Georgia Southern is at the bottom. We feel there is a need for change,

so we have made this recommendation. Dr. Bleicken had a meeting with us, and she commended all the work we had been doing. We raised some other issues. For example, one of the issues was that some people felt insulted because full professors were not included in this process. Also, faculty like me who have already been promoted from one rank to another are excluded from the process. What happens to those? And remember at the last Senate meeting, I raised the equity issue. Perhaps Dr. Bleicken can organize another task force to study these issues.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): I would like to second Ming's suggestion that we need another study or group, something charged specifically with looking at eliminating the difficulties that we have with salary compression, particularly for current full professors. While I like the proposal here, it does not address that issue. It might also even exacerbate the salary compression problems for people who are currently full professors. And, by the way, I am not. I recognize Clara Krug.

Clara Krug (CLASS): I am insulted not as an individual, but I am professionally insulted, because to be used as a point of comparison, and then not be included in the outcome, I find that professionally insulting. And I agree there should be something done about equity. For full professor, there is no other thing that can be done, but equity.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): Let me address that, please, and I appreciate certainly the comment, Clara, and, also, Marc. Equity was something that we did talk about as the committee brought forward its recommendations, and I think as Ming Fang has already mentioned; this was discussed briefly at the last Senate meeting. This is certainly something that we recognize. We have information from at least one college that has already done an analysis, and so I have looked at the data as it relates to that one college and it is significant. We want to do a stepwise progression. Our initial step was to recognize people who are promoted, but it is not the last step. It is certainly very understandable that those of you who were promoted — whether you were promoted to associate or to full, and particularly those of you who might have been promoted last year, and are now looking at this — might have some consternation. What has been an approach in at least one college was to begin looking at people, and looking at the salary compression issue, and essentially looking at what are the worst cases, and to begin to address those. And I will tell you that in that particular college, the way that those are beginning to be addressed, is not by some new infusion of money, but it has been a managed process by a dean who essentially took part of the raise pool off the top to actually help those who are most affected by salary compression begin to move up. This has not been a fast process, because the raise pool in the last few years has not been too great. This compression issue is very much recognized, not only by the

President and me, but also by Joe Franklin. He has seen some of the preliminary data. So if you have fears that we are not aware of this issue, please, do not be afraid. We are looking at this not only for faculty, but also for staff members who are experiencing the same kinds of issues that we are talking about with faculty. We really are beginning down that pathway, and I will tell you that it is certainly a very real issue. And Dr. Krug I certainly do understand your consternation about this, as well as others. The report is essentially a way to begin addressing some of the issues.

Ming Fang He (COE): Dr. Ron Shiffler just walked in, so maybe he would be more competent in responding to questions, but I think just to look at this issue from a positive side, we have to start from somewhere, and we should be happy that those faculty who are going up in the future will get a “bumping.” And, our task force did not have any intention of excluding any group. We just worked on the task force, but I think I do understand that senior faculty are underpaid, and this may be one of issue of priority we should address.

Dr. Ron Shiffler (Dean, COBA): Sorry to be late. Marc Cyr (CLASS): The issue that we have been discussing is the fact that the report suggests that an elimination or an alleviation of salary compression for senior faculty is one of the aims of the increases. And we are suggesting that that is not the case, and that in fact it may exacerbate salary compression. Certainly that it does not do anything to alleviate the situation for current full professors, and will very likely exacerbate their situation, but I will let somebody else bring you up-to-speed on what happened after that.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Ron, would you like to address that?

Ron Shiffler (Dean, COBA): I will try. Our task force was simply asked to take a look at the amount of money that was given to faculty who were being promoted from one rank to another. As you can tell by the report, we got off to a rather ambitious start with lots of universities, and it took us a while to sort of get focused. But we really tried to stay true to the charge which was “are our promotion increases competitive?” The answer that we felt that we got was, no, they are not. So we then considered what would make them more competitive, and you saw what our recommendations were. Now, those who are full professors, especially, someone who got promoted last year to full professor, are probably screaming foul. And so to look back to try to figure out how do you rectify that situation, honestly, Marc, I do not know how to rectify that situation. In our college, we have a great finance department, so I could ask our finance faculty to try to go back several years and figure out how we can discount forward and compound the amount of merit pay that has been given, but that really was not our task. It was not a question that

we were trying to disenfranchise those full professors promoted or recently promoted, or even those assistant professors who just got promoted to associate, but it was simply to take a look at those break figures and try to come up with something that was a little bit better.

Candy Schille (CLASS): Dr. Shiffler, I really think, if I understand your language at all, that you already answered my question. But I was just wondering if the task force had kicked around the idea of making this all retroactive in keeping in mind things like interest, and how things would have worked up, over the years, etc. I do not even know if budgetarily the university could afford compensating us all who have been here since dinosaurs roamed the earth, but if you want to think about the idea of making this retroactive that might be a fairness issue. Thank you.

Ron Shiffler (Dean, COBA): I agree. Trying to figure out the university's liability to pay everyone who has recently been promoted is a doable problem. It is just a difficult problem with everyone at different salary levels and with varying lengths of times since being promoted, but it is a task that could be done. I hope that you had a chance to read the third recommendation, which was that we would like to make this immediate, because the budget hearings at the state level are occurring now, and the university has Faculty Senate Minutes November 14, 2005 Page 13 to get their budget together right now. So, had we continued to deliberate on issues such as that, I think we would have been at least another year getting it in to the budgeting cycle before anything could have happened. Now that is not to say that someone could not suggest a new task force. I would like to say that our task force feels that we have completed our job and would like to retire at this point from that responsibility. Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Mike

Mike Nielsen (CLASS): Maybe a compromise would be that we could all just take whatever the average CIT salary would be for our grade. Those of us in CLASS would see that as a bump up. I guess I have several thoughts on the issue. I appreciate that the task force did this work and came up with what seems to me to be a good plan. It seems like it is starting to solve the problem by beginning in the middle instead of in the beginning, as far as dealing with compression, I agree with those who assert that it is more likely to exacerbate it, rather than help it. At least, if you look at the issue as long as most of us are going to be here at the university maybe it helps someone later, but for those of us here now, it does not help the compression issue. It maybe deals better with other things. I think that I would like to see also a little bit more time for us to digest the information. I know all we do is advise, but just in the few hours since I received this in my email this morning, I have already had three full professors talk to me and express

their concerns, and it is not like I go out looking for people. I think that the issue is really an important one, and I would like to see whatever recommendation we make on their recommendation or whatever discussion we have happen after we have had time to give it more serious thought than just a few hours between classes.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): Yes, Michael, and I do apologize. Actually, I thought that this had been posted to the web, because we did post the agenda item last week, and I apologize. I did not realize until this morning that the document itself was not out there. So as soon as I realized that, we did post it, and so that is certainly my error. I do want to reiterate though Dean Shiffler's comment that we see this train moving as far as the opportunity to put this in this year's budget. And clearly there is not going to be another Senate meeting before the budget has to go forward. That was very much one of the concerns that we had. And, once again it is important to understand, I think, that this is a budget issue. It certainly is something that I think is meant to make this a better place, as Dr. He mentioned, a more competitive place than it perhaps might have been, and I certainly would like to say that we are not going to be able to do all of it in one year. That just is not going to be the case, but I think if you heard Dr. Grube last time, and you are hearing me now, we truly are looking at the issue of salary compression. As you can imagine, this took a while to get on the table. Looking at salary compression and then putting together a plan to move forward is going to be an even bigger project, and so it is not all going to happen at once, but truly this is something that is on our plate.

Virginia Richards (CHHS): Guys, do you know how salaries at the top get better? You cannot get salaries at the top better by keeping the people at the top higher always than the than the new faculty that are coming in. You will always have lower salaries in your colleges if you always make sure that the full professors are paid better than the new people that are coming in.

Mark Welford (COST): Given the nature that this is a budgetary constraint in the sense that we would like to run this through, if we do not run it through now, then you are liable to create a situation where the people who were grandfathered in for last year are not going to be grandfathered in after all, and they are going to lose out. I think it would be imperative that this go forward now, so that we do not lose a year. I think we should go ahead. I think it is an excellent recommendation.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): If we do put this forward, is this going to put added stress on our personnel budget that would hold us back from doing alleviation of salary compression or can we go forward with this, and also proceed forward with an attempt at salary compression?

Linda Bleicken (Provost): I am going to pass this question back to Ron Shiffler, and you can remember, I think, the numbers per year of full professors and associates who are promoted.

Ron Shiffler (Dean, COBA): I would have to look it up. I have it, but I am going to guess that in the last five years we have had about 100 promotions from assistant to associate, and we have had about 50 promotions from associate to full.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Is that total for five years?

Ron Shiffler: That is total for the five-year period.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): I have already talked with Joe Franklin about this. We have calculated what this would mean this year. In comparison, that amount when you compare it to what you might see in salary compression in only one college is pretty insignificant. We will begin the process this year, but I do not think you are going to see a huge difference this year. I think what we will see this year is the development of a plan that will then begin to move us forward. One of the things that I think that we all need to think about is that this is not anyone's fault. Remember that up until last year we were dismantling, slowly but surely, the number of personnel that we could hire in this university. Think about the positions that we gave up that we are now adding back, so we are really in a process quite frankly of rebuilding. We are putting back positions that we lost in budget cuts. Remember we lost 19% of our budget over those years. So we are putting that back, and we are beginning the process, but you will not see the ultimate outcome of everybody getting up to speed in a year. It is going to be a multi-year process.

David Robinson (CLASS): Is the Senate being asked to take an action on this discussion item?

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: It is a discussion item. We are giving our feedback to Linda.

David Robinson (CLASS): That is what I thought. From the way some people are talking there seemed to be some urgency about us taking action, not taking action, but there is not. Thank you for that clarification.

Mary Marwitz (CLASS): I do words much better than numbers. But my question is this: What I remember from the early discussion is that the funds that would make this bump increase possible will come from the total that is available for merit raises across the university, and if that is the case, then it will certainly exacerbate the problem. If we are taking away possible merit raises across the board for this bump, then it reduces the amount of the 2% that is possible for us.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): No. The salary raise pool is separate from this. This is a onetime item, if you will, that comes forward and that is why talking to Joe Franklin at this point was very important. The merit raise pool is not what we use for promotions, so the merit raise pool is not affected by promotions. These are separate expense items. So, please do not fear that somehow your merit raise or the total amount that you might have for a merit raise is going to be affected by this action.

Godfrey Gibbison (COBA): Just to say quickly that the bulk of discussion, so far, has not been in the affirmative and I wanted to say that I like it. I am an assistant professor and I like it, and I think a lot of my colleagues of similar rank would probably say the same.

David Robinson (CLASS): I am a full professor and I would like to endorse what Godfrey just said.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Is there any other discussion?

(Unidentified) Just endorsing the endorsements. I am one of those people who got my full professorship this year, so it is very near and dear to my heart, and I would just hope that we would have a kind of altruistic spirit about this, and we would think about our colleagues and not simply about our own raises in this, and try to do the right thing for faculty that are coming up.

Mary Marwitz (CLASS): I am all in favor of everybody getting as much money as they can, so if this will improve and increase our promotions then here, here.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Anyone else? Thank you, Dean Shiffler.

Richard Flynn (CLASS): I would like to make a motion that the Senate pass a resolution endorsing this plan that we have just been discussing. The motion was seconded and discussion began on the motion to endorse the raise plan for promotions.

Candy Schille (CLASS): I do not really have a big problem, but I would like to think about it before I do some kind of formal endorsement, since nothing is being asked of us in that way. So I am going to vote against your motion, Richard.

Michael Nielsen (CLASS): For similar reasons, I agree with Candy. We have had very little time, we have had some discussion, but we have not had time to really look at the numbers, and things. And if all we do is give advice, we should give good advice.

Ron Shiffler (Dean, COBA): As you are discussing this with your colleagues, I would like to point out two things to you. The first is the integrity of the data. There is an old saying that generals like to talk to generals. So what we did was work through the Provost's office who worked through the Provost's office of every one of those other universities. You may see a school down there (xyz university), and you say well, I know that they get \$4,000 in a salary raise, but this table says it is only \$3,000. Well, rather than have the task force members try to collect this data, we used the Provost's office and Candace Griffith was excellent at this. So all of the data came through her by her requesting similar information from those universities. If you have an argument with a data discrepancy, it was not that we fudged the numbers. And secondly, as I think we said in there, you may disagree with our comparison sets, and that is certainly your prerogative, and I think any group of two or three or five would find a different comparison set. That is the best comparison set that we felt that we could come up with. Thank you.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator asked for other discussion. Hearing none, she reminded everyone that the motion from Richard Flynn was an endorsement from the Faculty Senate of the Promotion Raise Task Force Report. A vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice vote.

(Unidentified): Motion for a roll call vote.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator asked Donna Saye for the roll, and a roll call vote was taken. The voting results were as follows:

Kathy Albertson (no)

David Alley (yes)

Barry Balleck (no)

Jean-Paul Carton (yes)

(doesn't matter)

Ken Clark (yes)

Nirmal Das (yes)

Don Fausett (yes)
Bob Fernekes (I guess he's left.)
Richard Flynn (aye)
Leslie Furr (yes)
Godfrey Gibbison (yes)
Bev Graham (oops, she's gone)
Alice Hall (yes)
Mary Hazeldine (yes)
Ming Fang He (yes)
Marc Cyr (for Clara Krug) (no)
Gautam Kundu (no)
Margaret LaMontagne (yes)
Mary Marwitz (yes)
Ron MacKinnon (yes)
Michele McGibony is gone.
Bruce McLean (yes)
Judi Robbins for Michael Moore (yes)
Kent Murray (yes)
Michael Nielsen (no)
Constantin Ogloblin (yes)
Broderick Oluyede (yes)
Norman Schmidt for Laura Regassa (yes)
Virginia Richards (yes)
David Robinson (you bet ya)
Donna Saye (yes)
Candy Schille (no)
Sonya Shepherd (yes)
Caren Town (yes)
Robert Vogel (yes)
Pat Walker (no)
Jianping Wang (yes)
Mark Welford (yes)
Linda Mullen for Jerry Wilson (yes)
Bill Yang (and I think Bill Yang has left)
Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator asked if there was any other Senator who had come in whose name she did not call. Someone asked about a vote from the SGA representative. It was noted that the SGA representative should vote.

Jonathan Buckner voting for Laurie Markle (no).

The vote results were announced: 29 yes, 8 nos. Therefore, the report was endorsed.

Barry Balleck (CLASS): Given the discussion, I think the sentiment around the table here is that a second task force is appropriate to address this question of salary compression. Dr. Bleicken noted that one college has done a study of salary compression. I am wondering why the others have not and wondering what that college is and so forth, and why this is not something that is being addressed perhaps university-wide. I agree with my colleague, Michael Nielsen, who said I think that we should have had more time to be able to discuss this with our colleagues. But I also think that the larger issue of salary compression has been noted in this report, which might exacerbate actually the problem that we already see and should be studied more in depth, and there should be ways to address this, in connection with the Provost's office, and so forth. So I move that we have a formation of a second task force to study salary compression.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: All right, the motion is having another task force to study salary compression. Is there any discussion on that motion?

Linda Bleicken (Provost): I do not think that is a bad idea. The thing that I would suggest to you once again is that the issue, as it was relating to raises for promotion, is a fairly complex one. This one is even more so. We are going to have to be very careful about who actually serves on the task force. It would certainly not just require someone from my office, but rather this has much broader budget implications, and it would have to also involve Joe Franklin's office, certainly. This is also a President's Cabinet's type of issue, and so certainly having a body that is interested in it and involved in it is very important. I just caution you that this has broad implications for the budget, and so the problem here can become one of raising expectations to a point that, if they are not within the realm of reality, could be problematic. As we went forward with this set of recommendations, I was very careful to be certain that this project was something that could be done. In my mind it would be horrible to put forward a recommendation that went out generally, and then find out that budgetarily we could not do it. I just put that caution before you.

Barry Balleck (CLASS): I understand that, and I think I am not talking about something that we can accomplish in a month or two months or even a semester. Perhaps this is something that takes place over the course of the next several months or even a couple of years. But I think the discussion needs to take place, and there needs to be a broad

range of representation from every college, from the Provost's office, from the President's office, from the Student Government perhaps--allowing them some input on how they feel their quality of education is impacted, and so forth. But I believe that we should at least discuss this. We have been talking about this for years, since I have been on this campus, and yet, there has not been the collective voice of the Senate being heard at this point. So I would hope that we would all support this.

Pat Walker (CLASS): I would like to second some of what Barry Balleck is saying. I think that the recommendations made are very good, and my no vote had nothing to do with disagreeing with the recommendations that were being made. It is rather that I think that full professors need to have the feeling that something concrete is being done, and I understand that it is something that is going to be very involved and take a long time, and I understand that there is a great deal of concern at the top, and the desire to do something. But I do think that full faculty, full professors, need to know that there is something concrete--that people are looking at the problems that they have with their compressed salaries, and not just have it be sort of a wish list.

Don Fausett (COST): I understand the concern about funding for any such equity adjustments in terms of salary compression, and to that view I would recommend that the task force that be established communicate, and as much as possible, coordinate with the Georgia Southern Foundation to see if any supplementary support might be available for that purpose.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): A couple of issues here. I think a task force needs to be put together. I do not know if the Senate is the proper body to put that task force together for the reasons that Linda raised and that Ron Shiffler mentioned earlier--about how they gathered the data for the report on salary increases. And it is a very complex issue, and it is going to take a long time, but I do not think there will be sufficient pressure to move forward with it if faculty are not involved in a big way, whether it is via a Senate task force or some other way. As Barry said, I have been hearing about this for 20 years, and I think there has to be a faculty presence that can push to move this forward so that we are not talking about it still 20 years from now.

Norman Schmidt (COST): When I went to academia, I took a vow in poverty, and in our department, we have had faculty leave because of being able to go to higher paying jobs even outside academia, and as a full professor, I mean this is a concern for me. I would support having a task force, but I am also understanding that this is just a recommendation to the Provost, and anything we do we are at the mercy of the Provost, as far as any pay raises that we get to compensate for salary compression. And I wish

there was some solution to that because I do not see any. Because we can argue and have a task force, and it goes to the Provost in saying please give us more. Sort of like Oliver, more please, more.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): The woman who obviously has all the money! I would tell you, if I could waive a magic wand tomorrow, I would certainly want to eliminate salary compression on this campus. That would be a great thing to do. As we have already talked about, it is not going to happen overnight, but I assure you that the intention is there. Might I suggest that a task force certainly be put together that would include members of the senate? I do not think that is a bad idea. One of the things I think we need to be careful of, when you start talking about task forces, big is not always great. I think this would have to be a well-crafted task force that would include some expertise to get the job done. But I think that we also have to be aware that it cannot include just the world because otherwise the job will never, never get done.

Ming Fang He (COE): I would like to say since I got hired by Georgia Southern, this is my seventh year, and this is the first time we had a task force like this to make something happen positively, in money terms to faculty. I really should applaud this, but I would like to listen to senior faculty, and I do understand that some of the senior faculty are close to retirement. We need to consider the senior faculty; they need to be honored. That is my first point.

The second point (I do not know whether it is appropriate for me to say anything about this now), is maybe we need to order another task force. I am thinking about a money bank for our university. This task force will cost a lot of money for the university. Maybe, in the future, Dr. Bleicken can arrange another task force to consider how we might get more money for the university. For example, I know, I listen to a lot of even junior faculty and they have a lot of good ideas for collaboration with companies to get more money for our university. Otherwise, if the money is running out nobody will get money. That's my point.

Candy Schille (CLASS): I think if we are going to have another task force, may I suggest that Linda's office or somebody else run it? It ought not to be a Senate committee.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Any other discussion? We have a motion on the floor to form a Senate task force on salary compression. Our parliamentarian reminds me that because this would be our purview, it would be a Senate task force, and we do not have budget authority. A vote was taken, and the motion carried.

