

Memo

Date: April 30, 2015

To: Michele Companion, UCCS Faculty Assembly President

From: Personnel and Benefits (P&B) Committee of the UCCS Faculty Assembly
Tom Zwirlein, Chair

Members: Pam Carter, Gail Katz, Leann Morgan, Don Morley, Carla Myers

Subject: Inequality of Salaries Among Colleges at UCCS

The Faculty Executive Team was asked to examine “a blatant inequality between salaries among colleges at UCCS.” This request was sent to Faculty Executive Team by Valerie Brodar, Associate Professor, Visual and Performing Arts Visual Art. In the letter, Professor Brodar requested that an ad hoc committee of faculty be formed to look at inequities and complexities in salaries among colleges and gain a fresh perspective on the issue.

The P&B committee discussed the issue at two April meetings (April 15 and 29). P&B does acknowledge the existence of different salaries in departments and colleges across campus. The current salary structure at UCCS is the consequence of market forces for faculty across the country. The market largely dictates starting salaries in different disciplines. Universities offering below market salaries in any discipline can expect to see positions remain unfilled. Over time UCCS has had difficulty hiring new faculty in a number of departments because of low offers compared to salary offers from other schools. Conducting a search for new faculty is a time and resource consuming activity. A failed search often puts departments/ units in the position of having to fill classrooms with adjunct faculty which may affect quality. Students may suffer if qualified individuals are not identified to teach the course or courses. The department loses the time and effort of other faculty who are involved in the search. The research effort of existing faculty is reduced and the potential research effort of the new hire is lost.

For a number of years, Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences has had difficulty filling tenure-track positions caused in part by making below market offers to potential candidates. The College of Business and Administration has received five rejections from accounting candidates in the 2014-15 academic year because of low starting salary offers. The department of communications has had difficulty over time in hiring desirable candidates because salary offers are too low. Other departments across campus most likely can share similar stories. Even though some faculty believe salaries are too high in certain departments compared to others, they must remember the market dictates a salary sufficient to entice a new member to join the UCCS faculty.

Published, reliable and widely available information on faculty salaries clearly indicates a difference in starting salaries across disciplines. For example, the College and University Professional Association of

Human Resources (CUPA-HR)¹ reports the median salary for a new assistant professor in the health profession and related programs for 2015 is \$62,638 for master's category higher education institutions.² The median salary for a new assistant professor of engineering is \$76,045 and for a new assistant professor of business, management and marketing it is \$95,749. At the other end of the scale, median salaries for new assistant professors in biological and biomedical sciences is \$54,444, foreign languages, literature and linguistics is \$52,142 and history is \$53,220. In 2015 median salaries for new assistant professors range from a high of \$94,749 for business, management, marketing and related support services to a low of \$54,167 for new assistant professors in history or a difference of \$40,582. In other words, median starting salaries for new assistants in business are almost 75 percent higher than new assistants in history.

What would be the consequence of setting a specific starting salary at UCCS for all new assistant professors, regardless of the discipline? There a number of approaches the University could take if this became practice.

1. Make all new hire offers at the median (average) salary of the discipline with the lowest salary for new assistant professors. For 2015, this would be in history or \$53,220.
2. Make all new hire offers at the median (average) salary of the discipline with the highest salary for new assistant professors. For 2015, this would be in business, management, marketing and related support services or \$94,749.
3. Make all new hire offers somewhere in between.

In the first scenario, logic would indicate only history professors would be hired. Since this starting salary is below the starting salary of all other disciplines, candidates in these other disciplines would take offers from other universities at the higher discipline based market salary and reject the lower offers made by UCCS. In other words, UCCS would be priced out of the market in all disciplines except history.

In the second scenario, logic indicates UCCS would be preferred over all other universities for all disciplines since every new hire would earn a starting salary at or above the median (average) level of salaries in their respective discipline. Unfortunately, this would create a significant set of problems for UCCS officials with fiduciary responsibility. The chancellor, in particular, would be criticized for making hiring decisions above market salaries in all disciplines except business.³

Under the third scenario some disciplines would hire at above median (average) market salaries and some would make offers below median (average) market salaries. The disciplines making above market offers would be expected to successfully complete their searches while the disciplines making below market offers would see their positions go unfilled. This would lead to some fully staffed disciplines and

¹ <http://chronicle.com/article/Median-Salaries-of-Tenured-and/228435?cid=megamenu>

² UCCS is in the Master's degree granting category.

³ In an egalitarian society salaries for all faculty would be the same. As a check, the P&B committee requested Institutional Research to run an analysis of the cost of increasing all salaries for all current full-time faculty at UCCS to \$100,000. The results of this analysis indicate the cost increase to the University at just over \$6.5 million. P&B believes a reallocation of the total University budget would be required to accomplish this objective.

the remainder of the disciplines being understaffed. Students who wanted to earn a degree and major in these understaffed disciplines would be underserved. The chancellor and other fiduciary responsible administrators would be criticized for following this practice since over time half of the faculty would earn above market salaries.

The P&B committee acknowledges that salaries for faculty at institutions of higher education in the United States are determined in separate and distinct markets. The dynamics in these markets determine the relationship among supply, demand and the equilibrium market clearing salary. P&B contends that salary differences in colleges and disciplines at UCCS are a natural consequence of the different markets for faculty in distinct disciplines. Thus, P&B recognizes that there will be structural differences in salaries among departments and colleges at UCCS. Some faculty will earn more and some less as a natural consequence of market forces in these separate markets. P&B recognizes UCCS salaries are often low when compared to market peers but it does not believe there are significant “inequities between salaries among colleges at UCCS.” Thus, P&B does not recommend the establishment of an ad hoc committee to look into inequities among colleges at UCCS. P&B has requested Institutional Research compare UCCS faculty salaries to CUPA norms by college and discipline to determine whether there are any inequities among the colleges. This report will be distributed when completed.

P&B continues to support all efforts to increase the salaries for deserving UCCS faculty. To that end, P&B makes the following recommendations:

1. Recommendation on annual merit based salary increases for full-time faculty. P&B recommends that the chancellor work with the regents of the University of Colorado to increase UCCS faculty salaries to a level comparable to peer institutions by discipline and rank.
2. Recommendation on uncompensated merit. P&B will continue to collaborate with the chancellor, the deans and institutional research to deal with uncompensated merit for both tenure track and non-tenure track faculty. The uncompensated merit model will factor in merit, years of service, rank, years in rank and average salary by discipline using the CUPA-HR data as key factors.
3. Recommendation on CUPA data. P&B will continue to work with institutional research to clearly define acceptable peer comparisons in the CUPA data. For the next year, we will reexamine each peer in order to find the best set of comparative institutions by college.
4. Recommendation on part-time lecturers and adjunct faculty. Part-time lecturers and other adjunct faculty are invaluable in supporting the teaching mission of the University. This group has largely been ignored in all prior salary studies at UCCS because of funding shortfalls. P&B recommends a study of the salaries for this group of faculty in order to determine whether compensation level are adequate or if they should be increased in order to attract qualified part-time instructors.