UCSB Faculty Association newsletter

A Membership Organization of Faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara
P.O. Box 13930, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

UC Santa Barbara Faculty Association March 2008

The Salary Scale Adjustment

Over the past 25 years, the UC Salary Scale has often been cited as a model of equity in the academic world. When it was first conceived, the goal was for all faculty at all ranks at all of the campuses of the University of California to be treated alike. Research and scholarly excellence were rewarded with the same salary level whether in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, or Business & Engineering: the same level of achievement, the same reward. The Salary Scale had a clear internal timetable for review that allowed faculty to move up the ladder in a systematic and timely manner. This system seemed much fairer than the more typical one-on-one annual "compensation meeting" between the chair or dean and the faculty member to work out next year's salary based on performance over the past year.

UC followed a salary methodology to ensure that its Salary Scale at rank was competitive with institutions from which it recruited faculty and by which its own faculty were recruited. Because of the historic academic achievements of the UC system, the Comparison Institutions included 4 prestigious private universities (Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and MIT) and 4 large public universities that are part of systems like the multi-campus UC system. These include U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; U of Illinois, Urbana; SUNY, Buffalo; and U. of Virginia. UC defined a specific population of faculty—FTE appointments in the professorial series, including Business & Engineering—to comprise the comparison group. UC then collected salary data each year and compared faculty salaries in these specially defined populations at UC campuses and the Comparison 8 universities to determine the percentage increase UC faculty needed to maintain its Average Salary position in the middle between the 4 privates at the top whose faculty had the highest Average Salaries and the 4 public institutions at the bottom with the lowest Average Salaries.

Theoretically, the UC Salary Scale was then increased by that percentage—called a range adjustment or COLA. If this happened consistently, then the actual Average Salaries would be close to the Scale Salaries. The salary information from the UC campuses was lumped together by rank and step to determine a weighted Average Salary at all ranks. With a single Salary Scale for all UC campuses, this averaging of salary by rank across UC campuses was considered fair as it ensured that all UC faculty received the same salary increase at rank and step. This information was published annually in Sacramento by CPEC (California Postsecondary Education Commission) so that legislators and the public could see the Average Salaries and the salary methodology followed by UC and CSU.

This system worked more or less until about 1991, and then began a 3 year period of no range increases at all, followed by several years of minimal increases that did not make up for the earlier years of loss. The Salary Scale no longer reflected the Salary Averages. In the last ten years, the UC Salary Scale rose 22.9% through a series of range adjustments, but the Comp 8 institutions received salary increases almost double that amount—44.6% on average. Looking at a broader population, the AAUP average salaries of faculty at all the public and private universities in the country, faculty received salary increases over this decade of about 36%. Even the California CPI rose 32.8%, leaving UC's 22.9% as the lowest level increase among all the salary indicators. Faculty would have been better off over ten years if UC had just awarded them a COLA in the amount of the CA CPI every year, and the state would have saved the very high cost of following the CPEC methodology and then ignoring the COLA it generated.

Even though all faculty received a smaller COLA than the salary methodology called for, or in some years no COLA at all, the Average Salaries at UC still increased each year because campuses added Off-Scale increments to the COLA. Systemwide, the all-ranks lag in Average Salaries is 14% (www.cpec.ca.gov/completereports/2007reports/07-15.pdf), but the lag in UC Scale Salaries to the Comp 8 is closer to 42.3%. These figures would vary by campus, with UCLA and Berkeley having lower lag percentages to the Comp 8 salaries and the other campuses higher because they do not have the Off-Scale resources that UCLA and Berkeley have used to keep their Average Salaries competitive.

Use of Off-Scale increments to achieve market Salary Averages helped some faculty, but not others. Many were unhappy with the shift away from a more uniform Salary Scale that historically had protected them from the favoritism of chairs or the shifting popularity of fields and disciplines. In some instances, On-Scale faculty who had moved up the Salary Ladder

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The Salary Adjustment continued

because of their academic, teaching and service accomplishments found that their salary was far lower than faculty below them in rank and step who had received outside offers and Off-Scale increments. Furthermore, On-Scale faculty had not received adequate annual range adjustments even to keep up with the cost of inflation in California. The only source of salary increase for them was to move up the Salary Scale or lag further and further behind.

The Current Plan

How to address lagging Salary Averages and inequitable On-Scale salaries was the problem UC faced in structuring its faculty salary increase in Oct. 2007. President Dynes' letter to faculty dated Sept. 25, 2007 states that 2007-08 is the first year of a four-year plan designed "to raise faculty salaries to market competitiveness." This year 5.8 % of the UC budget is devoted to faculty salary increases, of which 2.5% will go to general range adjustments for all faculty; 1.8% for merits; and the remaining 1.5% for market adjustment to increase the Salary Scale by about 7.5%. According to Dynes, this market augmentation is designed to "raise salaries for faculty whose salary matches or is close to the rank and step level they have achieved through our merit system of advancements." If UC's Compact with the state holds, this same strategy will be followed next year, at which point the UC Salary Scale will supposedly be restored to market competitiveness, and then UC will follow 2 years of a COLA for all faculty to bring salaries to a competitive level for all.

UC's current plan to increase faculty salaries by 26% over 4 years stems from a larger plan adopted by the Regents in Nov. 2005 (RE 61). They voted to rebalance total remuneration at UC over a ten year period from 2006-07 to 2015-16 because the Regents recognized that health care costs would increase and retirement benefits decrease when UC employees began contributing to UCRP. Employees would need salary increases to make up the difference. RE 61 was more of a response to statewide criticism of UC executive compensation practices than it was to a carefully crafted plan to help all UC employees receive fairer annual salary increases in the face of rising costs of benefits.

The UC Regents' estimate of 26% increase for faculty salaries for 4 years would go some distance to restore UC Average Salaries to a competitive level if it were applied across the board, but it would not be nearly enough to bring both Scale Salaries and Average Salaries to competitive levels: Salary Averages and Scale Salaries are two distinctly different concepts. In addition, Salary Averages vary considerably by campus. It would take more funds to increase UCR's Salary Averages to the Comp 8 level than UCLA's because UCR's Average Salaries are much lower than those at UCLA. Also, UCLA already has allocated substantial funds for Off Scale to make faculty salaries more competitive, while UCR has allocated far less. For example, in 2006-07, it would take almost nothing to increase UCLA assist. profs to competitive salary levels because they are nearly all Off Scale by considerable amounts, but it would take about $1.34 M to do so at UCR, a campus that has about 40 fewer faculty at this rank than UCLA. President Dynes' catch-up plan confuses Scale Salary with Salary Averages. The UC Salary Scale is too far behind to catch up in 2 years, 4 years, or perhaps ever without almost unlimited funds. The UC Salary Averages could be brought to competitive levels with appropriate COLAs of 26 to 33%.

The Regents' plan to rebalance compensation at UC has led President Dynes to propose salary increases for UC chancellors that would range from 13 to 17% effective in the current year. These increases would bring up their Salary Averages to those offered at their Comparison Institutions. To put this increase in another perspective, Dynes does not propose first to adjust all UC chancellors to the same salary level and then to apply a uniform COLA for all. There would not be funds available for that kind of adjustment for UC executives or faculty.

Funding

In the first year (2007-08) of the plan to increase faculty salaries, the estimated cost is about $52.7 M in General Funds. Approximately $45.2 M is covered by UC's Compact with the state, which provides 4% per year, as well as student fee increases of approximately 7%, but UC would still need an extra 1 to 1.5% on top of the Compact funding (about $7.5 M) to fully fund the plan for faculty salaries. In the second and third years of the plan, the cost will rise to more than $60 million. Many UC Regents are not sure where these funds will come from, especially if the state budget falls on hard times, which is highly likely with the sub prime crisis statewide and nationwide. We are now facing a state budget shortfall of $10B and a 10%

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The Salary Scale Adjustment continued

cut in spending for many state agencies.

Many expect that the gap in funding will be closed in part by reconsidering total compensation at UC and by the bookkeeping device of factoring in the generous retirement benefit offered at UC. The state legislature is pushing for UC's salary methodology to include benefits, which they have written into the state 2007-08 Budget Bill for education. In addition, expected employee contributions to UCRP in 2008-9 will also be considered in weighing the overall compensation package. When contributions begin, faculty would need a much higher salary increase to account for the additional retirement expense. The system-wide Faculty Welfare Committee estimated that faculty would need an additional COLA of 3% of covered compensation up to the Social Security wage base ($97,500 in 2007), and 6% above the base will be needed to offset redirection of the DC plan contribution into UCRP. The proposal to include benefits in the calculation of faculty salary increases at UC highlights the importance to faculty of any changes to the UC salary methodology in Sacramento.

Campus Response to Inadequate COLAs

Campuses have reacted differently to inadequate COLAs over the past ten years. UCLA increased the use of Off Scale, and the structure of the Salary Ladder changed on this campus, revealing broken or disused rungs. For example, recruitment and retention activity was often concentrated at certain steps at rank. On the other hand, Berkeley used all of the steps at rank and even conceived of ½ and ¼ steps to push faculty Up the Scale rather than Off the Scale. Berkeley follows a true Off Scale program according to the APM, which allows a faculty member to move off the scale by increments that are more than the current salary at step but less than $100 below the next step up. In this strict sense, Off Scale reflects academic achievement; it is a way to recognize exceptional performance at step and rank. At Berkeley, when salaries are greater than this Off-Scale increment, the amount over the Scale is called "decoupled," which constitutes a market adjustment, not a true academic Off Scale. In July 2006 Berkeley began implementing a $6,000 promotion increase to the "decoupled salary" at that campus for assistant professors promoted to tenure. Others at the rank of associate or even full professor would receive all or some part of this promotion bonus if their salary fell below full professor, Step 6. This initiative did not actually bolster the Salary Scale itself, which remains the same on all campuses, but it marked certain amounts of "decoupled" salary as part of the academic process and not the market or administrative one.

Berkeley's response to the current salary increase shows its independence from UC policy and its commitment to maintain the highest levels of faculty salaries that it can afford. In consultation with the "Budget Committee" on that campus (which is similar to the academic personnel committee on other campuses but has more responsibility to consult with the administration about salary funding issues and priorities), UCB will supplement UC's market adjustments to the Salary Scale in order not to disadvantage faculty who are Off Scale (http://apo.chance.berkeley.edu/2007%20Market%20Adjustment.pdf).

At every step, Berkeley Senate and administrators work together to try to maintain the integrity of the Salary Scale, while enhancing salaries of those faculty who move up the Scale and off the Scale with all the resources they can muster. In addition, they use decoupled market increments for recruitment and retention. Their combined efforts result in high morale among faculty and high academic rankings for the campus.

UC Irvine began to follow its own median-based Shadow Salary Scale so that On-Scale faculty on that campus who felt that their salary was inequitable given what others were making at the same rank and step could ask for a career review. If their salary falls below the median at rank and step and their academic achievements deserve higher recognition, their salary will be increased to the median. If their academic achievement does not warrant movement to the median, their salary remains the same. The fairness and simplicity of this approach for those who have moved up the Salary Scale and feel salary inequities has much to recommend it to the other campuses as a fair and objective process for addressing current salary inequities.

UC campuses also began to distribute salary increases differently. For example, between 2005-06 and 2006-7, at UCB assistant professor salaries increased by 2.8%, associates 6%, and full professors 4.1%, while UCLA salaries increased in these ranks by 7.5%, 2.8%, and 3.8% respectively (based on AAUP data which defines the faculty population broadly, including more lower paid faculty (headcount) than the generally higher paid CPEC population (FTE)). UC campus decisions on how to allocate resources affect the Average Salaries by rank offered at that campus. For example, Berkeley's campus decisions about resources increase the Salary Averages of full professors more than assistants because the full professor Average Salary is the indicator that matters the most on that campus.

Campus autonomy in allocating salary resources took a further step when individual campuses began making different decisions concerning range adjustments. At some campuses, like UCB, traditionally only the On-Scale portion of the salary is increased by the COLA not the "decoupled salary" or market portion, so that the total salary moves only in proportion to the On-Scale salary. This practice frees up salary funds to make other kinds of salary decisions and adjustments. Other campuses including UCSB also restrict range adjustments to the On-Scale portion of the salary. This practice also returns more faculty to On-Scale status over time. At UCLA, the COLA is applied to both the On-Scale portion of the salary as well as the Off Scale, thus preserving the Off-Scale differential.

Consultation with the Faculty about the New Salary Increase

Not many faculty at the campus level expected the kind of selective salary increase that was announced in October 2007. Throughout 2006 and 2007, there was controversy among

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Senate committees about the most equitable way to increase faculty salaries. The system-wide Faculty Welfare Committee was the most sympathetic to increasing the Salary Scale to address the inequities of those faculty who had climbed up the ladder but had not been inadequately compensated for their level of achievement. This committee was also sympathetic to the loyal faculty who did not seek outside offers just to raise their salary levels when they had no intention of leaving UC.

The systemwide Committee on Academic Personnel (UCAP) favored a different approach. They sent out a report to all Systemwide Senate Committee & Division Chairs in Aug. 2006, " Synopsis of the Present State of the UC Merit and Promotion System," (www.universityofcalifornia.edu/ senate/underreview/ucap.merit.0806.pdf), which included a recommendation that UC partition the general faculty into a number of cohorts by disciplines in order to maintain market value. They were reacting to the increasing division in Average Salaries across disciplines and note in their report: "the average dollar increment of off-scale salary for the Arts & Humanities, Business Management, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Law, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences is, respectively, $8,756, $51,229, $9,564, $18,464, $11,164, $11,592, and $17,475." Management & Engineering as well as Law have their own salary scales, but the range of market adjustments across divisions in L&S also argues for separate treatment to avoid overuse of Off Scale supplements. The UCAP recommendation for salary scales by discipline was not implemented, although it is still under review at the administrative level.

In Nov. 2006, President Dynes appointed a special committee, "President's Work Group on Faculty Salary Scales," chaired by Rory Hume, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic and Health Affairs, in the Office of the President, to develop recommendations for increasing faculty salaries to competitive levels, to bring the majority of faculty back On Scale, and to improve the fairness and transparency of the published Salary Scales. In April 2007, Dynes added another charge: to develop a plan for substantial catch-up faculty pay increases to be deployed as soon as possible. To begin to carry out their charges, the committee tried unsuccessfully to change APM 620; they wanted to remove the language indicating that Off-Scale salaries are exceptions to policy. Instead, they wanted a new Salary Scale that included the range between the scales to be considered "On Scale" salaries. Considerable opposition and mixed support at the campus and systemwide level defeated the Work Group's attempt to change the APM and to introduce the concept of Scale as a range between steps. The President's Work Group plan raised too many questions among faculty without enough time to answer them. And then there was not enough time to consider the implications of increasing the Salary Scale on a selective basis, selective both in terms of salary increases by rank and step and by overall benefit by campus, instead of offering a higher, general COLA to all faculty. Why not, for example, a 4% COLA for all faculty after so many years of neglect?

The rushed plan to raise the Salary Scale about 10% has some serious unintended consequences. It has encouraged faculty near retirement whose salaries are on or near the Salary Scale to "game the system" and postpone retirement for another seven years to increase their pension; after a 4 year salary enhancement period, they would need to remain at UC for 3 years to benefit fully in their retirement income. This consequence raises the costs of UCRP and the likelihood of higher future contributions.

Also, an increase to the Salary Scale benefits the medical school faculty who are all largely On Scale due to a different methodology used to compute Actual versus On Scale salaries. In addition to On-Scale salaries, they receive practice income and bonuses for academic achievement to make up their full salary. They will get the full 2.5% COLA plus the 7.5% market supplement to the Scale for two years. There has been some attempt to limit this consequence according to whether faculty are on a fiscal or academic year Scale, but such a late response would also affect faculty not in the medical schools who are on fiscal year Scales. Another important unintended consequence of raising the Salary Scale over the Average Salaries is the larger burden it places on those UC campuses attempting to find scarce resources to maintain their competitive position. Most of the 1.5% salary increase will go to UC campuses with the lowest Average Salaries and the highest percentages of On-Scale faculty in an inadequate attempt to bring Scale Salaries to Average Salaries.

A different approach might have been a blend of strategies to benefit both Off-Scale faculty wishing to maintain competitive Average Salaries and the On-Scale faculty who have moved up the Salary Scale and feel undercompensated. A Median Salary Scale approach that would allow salary reviews for faculty On-Scale has much to recommend it. The median salary at rank and step would be calculated including Off-Scale supplements. A faculty member who feels that his or her salary is low compared to that of his or her peers at the same step and rank could ask for a Median Scale Salary Review. If academic merit and achievement level are the same, then the salary of the faculty member would be raised to the median.

Should UC campus rankings affect salary increases?

Legislators in Sacramento are urging change in the UC salary methodology in part because of an increasing awareness that the UC campuses have diverse academic rankings. The 2007-08 Governor's Budget includes language to require CPEC (California Postsecondary Education Committee) to recommend a new methodology for assessing the adequacy of UC's faculty compensation that would compare total faculty compensation at UC with a wider set of public and private Comparison Institutions. CPEC as well as the state legislature have become aware of the problems with UC's current salary methodology,

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particularly with the problem of UC's attempt to create a single set of Salary Averages for all UC campuses. CPEC notes that UCB ranks #21 and UCLA #25 in the 2007 US News & World Report, but other UC campuses do not rank as high, for example, UCR ranks #96 and UCSC #79 (http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2007/education/ed_19_6420_anl07.aspx).

The legislature increasingly believes that to lump all UC campuses together and compare UC averages to comparison figures that include elite private institutions is not the best use of state resources. Only a few UC campuses could compete with those private Comparison Universities, and to include all UC campuses elevates the salary increase calculated by the CPEC methodology and therefore provides more legislative incentive not to raise all UC salaries by that figure. In order to address this variation in UC campuses, CPEC proposes to widen the concept of compensation to include salary as well as other kinds of health and retirement benefits like housing and mortgage assistance and broaden the number of public comparison institutions. Instead of publishing the data provided to them by UC, CPEC will now go into the business of widespread data collection to formulate a new salary methodology for UC and CSU.

In recent years, Berkeley has formulated its own Comparison Institutions and calculated its own target salaries by rank. The Berkeley Peer Group includes all 4 of the Comparison 8 private universities, in addition to two more—Princeton and Caltech (ranked #1 and #5 in the US News & World Report Ranking). Berkeley falls at the bottom of its Peer Group, but a calculation of the median salaries of these six private universities provides target salaries at rank for faculty at Berkeley. This kind of campus calculation is easy to perform by consulting the annual AAUP faculty salary data and shows Berkeley's independence from the UC salary methodology and its unique CPEC salary data. Such a strategy that links Berkeley with a Peer Group of elite private universities has also helped this campus raise endowment income to use to further increase faculty salaries.

The Future of the UC Salary Methodology?

The differences in UC campus rankings and in Salary Averages by discipline encourage campuses to create their own salary strategies as Berkeley and Irvine have done or disregard the concept of methodology and rely more on market supplements to stay competitive as UCLA has done. It is increasingly clear that not all of the UC campuses are the same nor should they be. The same general salary methodology may work for all of them, but one can expect increasing pressure to differentiate Salary Scale and Peer Group.

Faculty should not allow CPEC alone or in consultation with some UC administrators and senate chairs to change UC's salary methodology without widespread campus feedback. The state legislature is aware of the differences among UC campuses and within UC campuses. Accounting for these differences in an equitable manner should be the major goal of any new salary methodology.

[Editor's Note: the UCSB FA thanks Susan Gallick, Ph.D., UCLA Faculty Association, for granting us permission to reprint an edited version of her article]

FA President's Letter: *The Shell Game*

It has been no secret that UC faculty have been underpaid for some time. Whether one uses UC's numbers, or those generated by AAUP, our salaries have fallen farther and farther behind our "comparison eight" institutions. In such a context, it is hardly surprising that institutions looking to lure away our strongest faculty would regularly make overtures. A number of us who find ourselves thus engaged may respond by seeking formal consideration for a position. Some ultimately leave UC, some stay, and the reasons behind the decisions are frequently complicated. For those who elect to stay, off-scale salary is often generated, as well as inequity, at least as the tale is told by those in the system-wide Academic Senate who supported our recent redistribution of income. These representatives noted that some on-scale faculty feel resentment for having lower salaries than peers who had presumably accomplished the same quantity and quality of work (at least judging by their official rank and step). This concern played an important role in justifying the cannibalizing of off-scale salary to fund the overall improvement of the salary scale.

But there are assumptions here that beg further analysis. Might the receipt of an outside offer constitute an important marker of the unusual impact of one's work? What of offers that come from better ranked departments or institutions? Isn't there an equally valid argument that faculty in such positions have earned their salary advantage? We rely heavily on extramural letters to evaluate promotion cases; doesn't it make sense that a job offer from a prestigious department should merit salary impact? After all, search committees may actually have to live with their positive assessments, as opposed to extramural letter writers who may never share the halls with their mistakes. Then again, can we be certain that the predominance of off-scale salary is due to outside offers? No doubt such offers play an important part; however, at least in my eighteen years of experience at UC, I have seen many other factors come into play as faculty are awarded off-scale salary. Sometimes, off-scale supplements have been an invaluable way of rewarding research progress that does not in itself make a compelling case for a regular step advancement. Truly exceptional teaching and outstanding university service (on which we all depend) have played important roles in recommending off-scale as well. When the Red Binder was amended several years ago in order to prompt greater recognition of service by personnel review committees and administrators, the use of off-scale received an noteworthy boost. Shouldn't these contributions be recognized and weighed? Might they have been if the faculty had been given a chance to consult more on the high stakes options being considered? Salary alternatives exist that could have been pursued, options more subtle than an across the board COLA replicating the current perceived disparities. But most of the alternatives that have actually been put into practice at various UC campuses would cost more. Finally, it is hard to come away from this

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President's Letter *continued*

latest salary debacle without feeling that the seemingly positive salary scale reform left a decidedly bitter taste in many people's mouths, especially since almost two-thirds of UC faculty are losing the off-scale that is essentially paying for the scale adjustment. For those who hoped that losing off-scale this year might be counter-balanced by the subsequent three years of proposed general increases, we now face the strong prospect that the state will not be able to fund the plan beyond this year (the year that most broadly impacts off-scale). Now we find ourselves saddled not only with the consequences of the seemingly dead-in-the-water salary adjustment, but also with the prospect that COLAs of any sort may be many yearsoff, or at least greatly reduced (thanks to the fallout of the sub-prime market disaster). Predictably, the shell game continues as the state is considering ways to reconfigure our salary numbers, bumping them up by folding in the dollar value of our benefits. I encourage you to get involved in these continuing processes, and to contact the appropriate administrators and Senate representatives to find out more about what is happening. I would also encourage any interested Senate members to join the Faculty Association and lend your support to our group's lobbying efforts.

--Carl Gutiérrez-Jones

Application for UCSB Faculty Association Membership

I wish to join the Faculty Association at UC Santa Barbara. I agree to pay the following dues (check one) by payroll deduction (in which case, please sign and submit the form below), or by personal check.

$5.00 per month for Assistant Professors

$7.50 per month for Associate Professors

$10.00 per month for Professors

Lecturers with security of employment, please designate the dues that most nearly approximate your salary range.

Faculty Association dues are tax deductible, either on Schedule A of your income tax (to the extent that they and other profession related and income-producing expenses exceed two percent of your adjusted gross income), or in some instances on Schedule C (without the two percent limitation). Please check with your tax consultant. Please forward the completed form to:

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