

DATE: September, 2018
TO: University Staff Council
FROM: University Staff Council Pay Plan Working Group
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RE: University Pay Plan Report 2017-2019

Introduction

On November 8, 2017 the Provost and the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administrative Affairs (FAA) issued pay plan guidelines based on the UW System Personnel System Policy TC 4. The guidelines were established after consultation with faculty, academic staff and university staff governance committees. Deans, supervisors and directors were expected to provide university staff within their respective units with policies and procedures to be used to conduct the evaluation of both solid performance and merit. Executive Committees in academic departments were expected to develop policies and procedures for the evaluation of both solid performance and merit and solicit input from university staff in developing and revising these policies.

The 4.04% pay plan for university staff was based on the allocation of a 3.03% base wage increase for solid performer and a 1.01% base wage maximum increase for merit. Pay plan recommendations were to be based on a systematic evaluation of both solid performance and merit. Solid performance for university staff was considered by an employee's satisfactory performance in total. Only university staff designated as solid performers could qualify for merit. Factors suggested to consider when assigning merit were based on a 6 letter scale detailed in Appendix 1, Merit Adjustment Guidelines, 4, page 10 of the November 8, 2017 pay plan guidelines memorandum. The 2017-2019 Pay Plan was the first time university staff were evaluated based on merit. The pay plan guidelines did not apply to those staff members represented by collective bargaining agreements.

The Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources reported to the Chair of the University Staff Council that the average percentage increase for university staff was 3.99%. Among the University Staff eligible for a merit adjustment as part of the pay plan, 80% received a merit adjustment, 20% did not. Those percentages were nearly the same for custodians with 81% receiving a merit adjustment, 19% not. The 81/19 percentages were nearly identical between custodians in FAA and Student Affairs, with Student Affairs custodians having a slightly higher percentage of individuals receiving a merit adjustment.

Throughout the implementation of the pay plan the University Staff Council, in consultation with university staff, found that there were the following areas that need to be addressed:

Transparency-Many departments did not share the evaluation process that was recommended by campus administration with university staff leaving staff in the dark. Many were unsure of where to direct questions or timelines after the initial communication from campus.

Consistency-Delivery of information both to staff and supervisors was inconsistent across all areas of the university. Reports from areas around the university have shown that both staff and supervisors did not review, nor did they apply, the guidelines consistently as outlined in the Provost's memo. The formula for the merit portion seemed random in some departments and seemed to follow administrative recommendations in other departments.

Communication-The memo from the Provost outlines in fairly clear detail how departments were recommended to review staff. Different dates were used for deadlines by supervisors. After the pay plan was approved by supervisors, campus and then Regents, implementation and communication about next steps were not communicated to staff. Some departments notified staff verbally, some via letter, some at home and some at work. There was no consistent notification process which caused confusion.

Timeliness-Working with staff to communicate a clear and concise timeline would alleviate these issues as well as provide transparent communication. Future direction from administration on a timeline for implementation could work to alleviate confusion in many of these areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Encourage supervisors to follow directives in a timely manner with clear objectives.
2. Share the review process with staff to ensure clear and consistent communication between review and final outcomes.
3. Consistently apply processes so staff have a better understanding of expectations and can participate in the process as much as possible.
4. For any future pay plans, communicate as clearly as possible the timeline for review and implementation.
5. Notification shall be handled as uniformly as possible to avoid inconsistencies across campus.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide constructive feedback on this important campus initiative.