University of Idaho  
2016-2017 FACULTY COMPENSATION TASK FORCE AGENDA  
Meeting #10  
Wednesday April 5, 2017 – 10 am – IRIC Room 105

Attendance: Don Crowley, Brian Dennis, Brian Foisy, Kristin Henrich, Patrick Hrdlicka (co-chair), Anne Marshall, Wes Matthews (co-chair), Scott Metlen, John Rumel (via Zoom), Jeanne Stevenson (ex-officio), Mary Stout (ex-officio), Chantal Vella

Absent: Eric Aston, Michael Murphy, Dale Pietrzak, Katt Wolf

Minutes by: Patricia Tilden substituting for Joana Espinoza

Call to Order: A quorum being present, Chair Hrdlicka called the meeting to order at 10:01am

Business:

i. Approval of minutes from meeting #9, Mar 27, 2017. There was no discussion on the minutes. Chantal Vella moved to approve the minutes. Don Crowley seconded. Motion carried.

Brian Foisy joined the meeting at 10:05am.

ii. Co-chair Hrdlicka introduced the topic of this meeting – Development of a compensation philosophy, i.e., development of a model that describes a faculty member’s target salary as a function of market definition, discipline, rank, longevity, merit, and other factors. He directed the committee’s attention to a chart on the whiteboard showing an x-axis of time and y-axis of salary. We now know the market average for each faculty rank (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor), but need to develop a model that connects the points.

Anne Marshall joined the meeting at 10:09am.

Chair Hrdlicka continued. He suggested that longevity needs to be a factor in the equation, as well as merit. In his opinion, we have had a good scale for measuring merit but it has been poorly implemented in the past. Every department chair ought to be able to group their faculty into a group of hyper-performers, a large group of very solid performers, and the occasional individuals who do not meet expectations in their unit.

Brian Dennis commented the current system rewards hyper-performers. They find another job offer and threaten to leave the UI, then the UI finds a way to bump their compensation in order to make them stay. The good performers are not being served through the current system and pay lags behind inflation. A longevity component needs to be a part of the equation.

Wes Matthews noted that entry level salaries for new hires can be close to market rate. We may need four different discussions to address the 4 different ranks and the part of longevity for each.

Chair Hrdlicka stated we have built-in quality control via the promotion and tenure process. Regarding Brian Dennis’s comments that the current system favors the hyper performers - if a hyper-performer
starts applying for other positions, there is already the start of a breakdown in their relationship with the UI. We want to reduce the likelihood of hyper-performers looking elsewhere. Re: Wes Matthews’ entry level comment, we will want to recruit at market levels for Assistant Professors.

John Rumel commented salary compression at the top and middle ranks is a problem. This affects morale. When someone receives a higher salary as a result of looking outside the UI, leapfrogging can occur over those who are not inclined to look at moving to another university.

Don Crowley stated that in the past we have used various systems to measure performance but without satisfying the core problem, thus the move to a narrative based evaluation system. The longer you are here, the farther you fall behind market rate thus longevity needs to be a factor. We have mechanisms to address the underperformers. He noted it is a false step to jump directly into discussions of merit before speaking to longevity.

Scott Metlen stated that if you have consistently met expectations, you should be at market rate. We need to find a way to identify and differentiate between high and mid performers. It has not been as transparent and process-driven as it could be.

Brian Foisy commented while we are identifying problematic trends, we are not addressing a problem that is unique to the UI. These are broad employment trends. It is easy to pay market rate for an entry level professor but not so easy to pay market rates for advanced ranks due to the higher salaries involved. Assuming that we have confidence that chairs/supervisors are in touch with the value and contributions of their faculty, it is not immediately wrong to give discretion to chairs to determine pay raises within their units. There are “head” and there are “heart” performers. A mathematical matrix can be used or there can be general targets based on the supervisor’s assessment of the member’s value to the unit.

Chantal Vella brought up the subject of across the board increases. Some pay increases should be applied across the board to help prevent faculty from falling further behind market than they already are. She noted we have not addressed faculty who are currently at market rate and we do not want to neglect an increase for them.

Anne Marshall commented that if the UI values their employees then longevity should be a factor in pay increases. She noted that evaluations at the college level are highly political and do not necessarily reflect actual performance.

Wes Matthews brought up the question of whether a tenure track Assistant Professor should be treated differently that a non-tenure track Assistant Professor. Regarding across the board increases, he stated everyone ought to get something. However, if we are chasing market rates, the more money that goes to across the board increases, the less money is available for reaching the market rate goal. After we come closer to our market goal, across the board increases become more viable. The first rule of implementation of a market based system is that as the market fluxes, your salary adjusts. An across the board increase would apply to those whose market rate has not increased. We want to maintain the % level of market that we have achieved.

Brian Dennis commented regarding ranking within a unit, that performance is multi-dimensional. When you create a list of desirable qualities it means the evaluation is political. We need to keep in mind what happens to teaching as we move toward our R1 goal. At many institutions undergrad teaching is passed
to TA’s and Adjuncts. Research faculty do research and work with small units of grad students. The UI is fairly unique for their rate of faculty interaction with undergrads. We need to retain the quality of our teaching as we move toward the R1 goal.

Anne Marshall commented as we look toward getting to market rate, it is important to raise everyone to a particular level at the same time – say 85% or whatever the decided goal may be. Up until now we have not been able to come up with a system that works for everyone. She questioned whether the unit administrator is capable of evaluating the faculty member. Her observation has been that evaluations have been extremely variable and that what the unit administrator observes can be one thing while what they write on the evaluation can be another. She believes the evaluations are highly political. Women and people of color are not on the same playing field with the other faculty. She cautioned against perpetuating the problem.

Scott Metlen remarked that many things move the market- merit, inflation, demand etc. As long as we follow a market based goal, we will avoid flattening. Regarding ranking, we rank people every day in the classroom. It should be possible to come up with a rubric that does a better job of assessment with the goal of improvement. Assessment and evaluation are two different things. Sex and color must be pulled out of the equation. One person should make the assessment and then there should be a second impartial audit. Assessment helps people grow; evaluation determines merit pay.

Chair Hrdlicka noted that it is not the job of this committee to create an assessment tool and that we must rely on existing processes. Along these lines, however, he encouraged all present to complete the online Faculty Annual Evaluation survey and express their concerns with the new or old evaluation process.

Brian Foisy remarked our new evaluation tool is a yes/no tool - the opposite direction of the numerical tool used in the past. If, for example, our initial goal is to reach 80% of market rate, this could be a 1st tier level increase that would be blind to gender, discipline etc. Once that is achieved, a 2nd tier goal could set up a system that would be formula driven.

John Rumel commented that in light of his previous work in the K-12 realm, all UI level faculty are already rock stars by virtue of teaching at the university level rather than K-12. We need an objective, rubric type standard to justify why dollars are being distributed in a particular way. Supervisor/administrator discretion can sometimes be abused.

Anne Marshall agreed with John’s comments and asked whether other things are on the table in addition to merit and longevity. Chair Hrdlicka responded that these were the only factors discussed so far.

Chair Hrdlicka noted there should not be a single “meets expectations” faculty member who is at 65-75% of their target salary. Our first goal should be to bring everyone up to a set minimum of their target salary, e.g., 75-80% of market. Moreover, most departments likely have a similar spread of hyper, good and poor performers, and we need to give department administrators the trust to identify and reward hyper-performers. The UI also needs to hear that historically there is the perception of inequality.

Kristin Henrich noted that generally, men and women are rewarded for different behaviors. She then recommended a salary dollars pool of 95% to address the longevity based factor and a smaller pool to address merit based. We do need a rubric to show cause for differentiation.
Scott Metlen reiterated the evaluation should begin with the immediate supervisor, then be audited by upper levels. Underperformers (not meeting expectations faculty) should not be moved to market level until they meet expectations.

Chair Hrdlicka referred the task force back to the feedback comments that were received at the start of the process, which clearly called for merit be taken into strong consideration.

Wes Matthews observed that if the goal of the task force is to build a robust base-pay system (as the staff compensation task force did) there are many things faculty do that could be part of the equation. Brian Foisy added that the goal of a robust base-pay system could be implemented fairly quickly with adjustments for longevity. If this is the goal, it is realizable.

Chantal Vella cautioned against overreliance on research dollars as a factor since some faculty are primarily teaching rather than research. She likes longevity as a factor. She questioned if 85% is our goal, will those already at 85% get a pay raise and if not, what would that do to morale. No one should get zero just because they are closer to market.

Ann Marshall stated it is important to bring the low market people up to an equitable level. This is a longstanding problem. She also stated university service is not adequately recognized in the evaluation process.

Chair Hrdlicka responded to Brian Foisy that longevity should inform the base but merit has to play a role as well or we will lose our high performers and not accomplish what this task force set out to do, i.e., recruit and retain faculty members that will be critical in bringing the institution closer to the declared R1 goal. However, between someone who is at 95% of market vs one who is at 65%, the 65% person deserves to move towards their target salary faster rate than the person at 95%.

Co-Chair Matthews stated the struggle is what to give someone who is ahead of the curve. This person deserves dessert but first we need to help those who have not yet had supper. We will need to decide at what % of market a person should be; a newbie might be hired at 85%, and a long-standing faculty member might be at 105%. Everyone needs to move toward their individual target and we need to avoid pay compression issues.

Scott Metlen stated we need to look at why someone is at 95% while someone else is at 55%. Are they a new hire or an outstanding rock star.

Anne Marshall suggested in the first year our goal might be to get everyone to 85%, the in the 2nd and 3rd year, the goal could be to bring everyone to 90% of their target base. The emphasis should be on getting base established then return to a greater emphasis on merit.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am

Next meeting will be Friday, April 21 at 10:00am.