Faculty Compensation Task Force
Meeting #2
October 17, 2016 Brink Faculty Lounge, 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Attendance: Don Crowley, Brian Dennis, Brian Foisy, Kristin Henrich, Patrick Hrdlicka (co-chair), Anne Marshall, Wes Matthews (co-chair), Scott Metlen, Dale Pietrzak (ex officio), John Rumel, Jeanne Stevenson (ex officio), Mary Stout (ex officio), Katt Wolf

Absent: Eric Aston, Michael Murphy, Sharon Stoll

Notes by: Joana Espinoza (ex officio)

Call to order

Business

i. Minutes from 10.11.16 meeting approved.

ii. Co-chair Matthews presented a summary and process of staff compensation task force. (slides attached).

iii. Open discussion on markets and data to use.

John Rumel asked if we will be looking at total compensation (i.e., salary plus benefits or just salary? Co-chair Matthews stated that we are to focus on salary, which led some committee members to wonder who had made that decision. VP Foisy answered that President Staben has stated salaries are his primary goal. It doesn’t mean that we can’t have a discussion about benefits. Co-chair Hrdlicka felt that it is a more positive morale booster to see a higher salary. VP Foisy said that one of the ways to help salaries would be to change the amount of the employee contribution to benefits. Brian Dennis felt that we need to be conscious of the entire picture. A small increase in salary can easily be affected if health care costs increase annually.

John Rumel asked further if the 8 years mentioned in the staff compensation presentation is the amount of time that the institution is giving itself to accomplish market rate? That seems like a long time. Co-chair Matthews explained that we are not talking about taking 8 years to fix the problem and reaching our declared goal (i.e., ensuring that employee compensation – on average – is at market level). The 8 years refers to the maximum time it would take a new employee to reach 100% of market. This is an individualized system. VP Foisy said there isn’t a market rate for entry, mid...etc. There are only percentiles. We have to decide what the percentiles mean. We just know the market statistics and we have to determine how to apply them.

Referring to the staff compensation slides, Brian Dennis asked: how is the starting salary of 80% of market average tied to any data of measurability? Co-chair Matthews and VP Foisy both answered this question. If a position is routinely hired at minimum 90% of the market, that is what we should recruit for. We would look at the actual minimum salaries in the data. Let’s say that the supply of labor for a particular position is in short supply. Maybe the employee starts at 84% because the floor moves as the market goes up.
Co-chair Hrdlicka asked, what do we do with employees whose compa-ratio is way above 100? Do they still get a salary increase? Co-chair Matthews stated that the staff compensation task force hasn’t had that discussion yet.

The discussion then turned from staff to faculty compensation. What is our market and what databases are available? Addressing the latter, there was consensus that we need to utilize a database that is reliable, updated frequently, and breaks down salary data according to discipline, rank and Carnegie (or equivalent) classification. The Oklahoma State University Faculty Salary Survey and the CUPA-HR (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources) database provide such information. VP Foisy cautioned that the publically available dataset on CUPA-HR is incomplete – only subscribers have access to the complete dataset (UI has a subscription).

Co-chair Hrdlicka noted that many faculty belong to professional organizations who conduct salary surveys and that a gut reaction might be to use such data. In reality, however, this might not practically feasible due to i) differences in how the surveys are conducted (frequency; not broken down by discipline, rank, Carnegie classification), ii) lack of professional organizations in every faculty member’s area, and iii) logistic difficulties for HR to consult a large number of different databases/surveys. Scott Metlen suggested we look at accreditation data. Co-chair Hrdlicka asked Dale Pietrzak and Co-chair Matthews will provide a summary of the methodology of the Oklahoma Survey and CUPA at the next meeting.

The focus then shifted to a discussion of what constitutes our market. VP Foisy suggested that we should be looking at a national market. Many committee members agreed that when someone is looking for a faculty appointment it is usually a nationwide, if not international, so we need to be competitive on a national level. Anne Marshall suggested that we be comparing to PhD granting institutions. Co-Chair Hrdlicka asked VP Foisy whether we should distinguish between public and private institutions. VP Foisy responded that in his view we should not, as the faculty talent that we are competing for does not necessarily distinguish between the two. This led to a preliminary discussion whether to tie our market to a specific Carnegie classification, i.e., all R2 institutions (UI is R2), top-half of R2, or R1 which is our aspirational goal. To inform this discussion, Co-Chair Hrdlicka will invite Bob Smith from the Research Office to one of the next meetings to give that presentation.

Logistics – Joana Espinoza reviewed future meeting dates and informed that a distribution list for internal communication now is available. She is still working to get the website up and finalize the communication process. The committee felt that faculty should have an option on submitting their feedback either anonymously or via email to the committee directly. We will have both feedback methods available.