

Minutes, SFA meeting, December 4, 2013
8:30-10:00, PLC 125

Devotional by Darlene Rivas. Joys and sorrows during advent season.

Andy Yuengert opened the meeting. He noted that we will continue to discuss Growing Seaver, but the agenda for today is to discuss the Merit Pay Proposal. He has read the Wiki that was created for feedback from faculty and talked to Michael Feltner about distribution of rewards, finding data on RTP distribution of ratings historically.

He believes this will help us think about the proposal, and so he'll share what he's found and the Salary/Stipends/Benefits committee information will be provided from David Strong and Kendra Kilpatrick will share her thoughts. Then we will do breakouts so that people can go into smaller groups for discussion or choose to stay in the main room, whichever they are comfortable doing.

Andy then shared what he had found, apologizing for any confusion about his earlier mention of having a vote, as when he first talked about this, he was not clear about what our saying no would mean. He thought he would have more clarity with time, but still doesn't on how much the faculty have a say or not.

On the issue of Merit pay or not – stated positively: we are in a stronger position to argue for a larger salary pool if we institute merit pay; stated negatively: no merit pay, it appears we would have less money. So practically speaking, we don't quite have a say about whether we have merit pay or not, but we do have a say about how merit pay is structured. We can talk about whether we like this proposal, or a modified proposal, another proposal we think is better, or we can leave it to the dean.

On disciplinary differentials, we have advice, but not consent—the Dean is already doing this in business disciplines. We have a say, but can't affect whether it will happen.

Andy then presented a slide show and discussed it. It centered on questions about the proposal

- where is the money coming from?
- what is the distribution of rewards?
- how much of the salary pool is being redistributed?
- gender differentials?

Where is the money coming from?

Feltner/Semerau claim that the proposal does not require additional salary base to implement. The pool includes 2% bonus pay currently being given annually. Merit pay differentials do not expand this base, and

- disciplinary differentials are already built in to this base (Andy said we need to hear more on this, he is skeptical).

Distribution of differentials

Mike Feltner provided data on what a 5-year review style rating system would look like, in which RTP ratings were translated into a 6-category ranking (highest is category 1). Using data

from previous RTP files (146 observations from electronic files, 10 years), Feltner showed what categories faculty would have earned under this system. Using these files, Feltner's data showed that 3.4% would have gotten category 1, 55.5% category 2, 14.4% category 3, 19.2% category 4, .7% category 5, and 6.8 % Category 6 (this last category was mostly 3 year review or 5 year review). The salary projections are misleading, because this assumes you get same rating every time you are evaluated, but that's not necessarily going to happen, but this information gives a better idea of what distribution of salaries would be under this system. 59% would earn more salary in the proposed discrete merit model and 14 % 99 of what they receive now.

How much money are we redistributing in this proposal? Not much, it seems, since most faculty will get ratings near the top. Somewhere between .6% and 1.9% of the faculty salary pool is redistributed by the proposal.

Andy then looked at the proposed RTP ratings by rank. The only groups adversely affected are pretenure faculty (only 40% at category 2, none at category 1).

Andy noted that the concern expressed on the wiki about pretenure faculty appears justified: They struggle at first, and don't do as much service; we need to be careful with categories at pre-tenure, to reward them in this system).

He then showed RTP teaching, then scholarship, then service ratings breakdowns. This also shows need to be concerned about rank distribution; Pretenure get lower in teaching and service, so pretenured faculty may be disadvantaged on merit. A case for or against more generous scale at pre-tenure review might be made.

Andy then showed male-female comparisons; Good news, there was no statistically significant difference between males and females in RTP scores; RTP ratings differences by sex are only statistically significantly different in research rating at tenure review; overall not different by gender. At this point, someone asked for that data.

Panel discussion: thoughts on the merit pay proposal (David Strong, Kendra Killpatrick, Andy Yuengert): At 9:10 the panel began.

Kendra spoke next. She noted that she was very opposed when told that merit pay would go to base, but now she believes strongly in it. She noted the Dean put her as an opposing voice on the panel. Two parts initially concerned her are addressed: 1. Merit pay increases, would be done by RTP committee, not by chair/singular individual, so she had thought this was a danger for gender discrimination with single relationship, more difficult, and since across divisions people don't present same kind of material; RTP is more common format; you can make your best case in each category; it is looked at objectively, which is important to her. Also, under this, step proposals can be formative with chair.

2. Second piece is assessment, which is still being built in. She believes we need to make sure that as we grow forward that the merit pay does not discriminate by gender, or discipline or other factors. It can be built into the assessment process to look at data and fix things as they go/

Feltner had agreed that three year composite data and every year after that would be provided; this would offer a check in place.

A piece that is missing that the women faculty committee is working on, is that if we do find an imbalance, how do we proceed? We are putting together a list of recommendations on how to proceed if discrimination is found.

These factors changed KK's mind about merit pay, and these two components are in place. She noted that the data Andy offered shows that the RTP committee can be gender balanced. She is convinced merit pay can be done in a fair way; she thinks this proposal is a good one.

David Strong spoke next. He noted that three years ago, the salary and benefits committee asked a question; where is money going (tuition going up)? He's still wondering. He showed some charts on revenue and expenses from last year, explaining that tuition is going up everywhere, but what's different is increase in academic support and student services. Faculty salaries are decreasing at a lower rate in comparison and to inflation. He showed average increases relative to other schools; Seaver did not go up as much.

This discussion is part of a different one than merit pay, but what's happening with salaries in general. He is not as concerned about how they're allocated, because merit pay already built into process; He noted that his numbers are not as bleak as they look, because they don't show where we started; but, ten years ago we were very competitive, and now we're not as competitive, and this general trend away from being competitive is his concern. The only way to increase salary is to have more money being paid, rather than change how it's going to be distributed.

He brought up issue of entry-level salaries not going up as a particular problem. "Our ladder is dropping." To him, doing away with the scale is not going to solve everything, the overall salary is what matters; the rest (redistribution) is details. If we were to increase entry salary, the bottom ladder will grow faster and those people will get lots more money than people who've been there longer than people who've been there for awhile. He suggested an example of two people at entry, with one getting 2% more, that person's salary was always going to be higher, even if the two people are doing the same work. 2% can be a lot of money and that's not fair.

On discipline related salaries, he has mixed feelings; he would like us all paid the same, but it shouldn't just apply to new faculty, but should also apply to old faculty if we change the rules; It isn't fair to not pay attention to people who have been loyal to fit Pepperdine's mission.

If we were to decide to implement to match performance, we need to understand how we're going to be judged, (student example, homework, exams, project,); how we're being judged needs clarification

So there are two issues for him in new proposal

1. Entry levels issue.
2. Doesn't affect average salary.

In conclusion: He has mixed feelings about what merit pay does to Pepperdine; will it hurt, cause people to emphasize more research, more competition, and to give up collegiality/doing

our part, etc.? Would it give incentive not to do more work overall, but to do so in areas that “count,” the “is it going to be on the test” attitude? People might focus on what is going to get them a raise, and might not do stuff with students that doesn’t get a reward.

Andy announced that we would have break out sessions; not many wanted to go, so Cyndia Clegg went as a leader for one or two and the rest of faculty attending stayed in PLC 125

ANDY: He opened the discussion; this proposal would be implemented with base, and any increases would go into base. But it doesn’t address increases in base.

Based on other data, stakes are small, issue, could interpret that as this is not worth getting all knotted up; RTP’s role in it is good, it’s a faculty committee, these are small amounts, so let’s not worry; or we could take opposite, not much money, so let’s just let the divisions and dean decide on merit pay. Problems with that, we’d be letting deans and division on this small amount of money, but impose on annual review something not intended. It becomes summative, not formative. But if we don’t want a faculty committee, we could do this though.

He sees the proposal as flexible. If we didn’t want to impose more work on rtp or create a 5 year, we could drop mid-associate review, and put money into step increases at assoc level. He emphasized the idea that details can be changed in proposal.

Questions and Discussion:

Q. When David shared inflation data, what’s the bristling point? Are folks upset at conflicting data or that you dared to show it? Striking, but we’re not going to alter our way of being because of salary, base salary is main issue.

David answered, saying glad you pointed this out, we’re starting to adjust; he feels like he shouldn’t have had to point it out, and also, that we’ve lagged inflation for 10 years and other schools improved salaries despite that; On salary v. tuition, he felt like when faculty ask for more salary, administrators put a burden on us, like “you’re greedy, it would make students have to pay.” He noted that he can’t push too far or they won’t listen, and he will be of no use.

Q. You mentioned you were skeptical at first that disciplinary differentials would not have impact on base, he also has skepticism, because base eroded when number of faculty increased, so base eroded. He also is concerned that decisions on initial salaries in dean’s office, and starting people at higher will have impact on eroding base more over time. Why are some people starting so much higher?

Andy explained they would look at salary data, that would determine starting salaries for dean.

Q. Follow up questions related to extremes in disciplines, e.g., economics v. fine arts. If we use salaries as a recruitment tool, paying economists more, would they have to lower salaries for fine arts? Also, is an Economist hired two years ago going to be paid less than new ones?

A: Some mention was made of the problem of compression, old regime and new regimes, experience with business division trying to pay new hires more, and had this problem; made adjustments for those who were already here.

Q To make these adjustments don't we have to adjust the base?

Andy, yes, it seems like we need a clearer picture on what this is going to cost.

Q. For Kendra, you like the RTP deciding on whether colleagues give merit; and how much, current system, but dean is also involved in those decisions; faculty merit is being decided by faculty and the dean, and from from serving on RTP, dean has say; and for Andy, why is this coming now? Merit pay seems to come from above. Why are they pushing?

A. Kendra, RTP would still evaluate and those will translate into categories; committee does work in consultation with the dean; dean has also set categories, and they do discuss why scores are a bit different; and dean does have final say. Across the board, he does have say. Andy noted that the Dean is involved in salaries anyway, either with chair or with RTP, whichever way we go, the Dean is always a player.

Q. Some of those schools have different teaching load, like LMU 2-2 in comparison of salaries, Some discussion on how those schools get paid with more or less teaching or research.

Q. Will extra money going into base? Andy: nothing says how much money will go in to base in proposal; it's not about that.

Comment: Someone commented on graphs on Pepperdine and Seaver and being competitive; Seaver is what pulls down Pepperdine, again, Seaver is not paid well; other schools get more. We're behind even within our own university.

Q More troubling, regarding Growing Seaver, we have already grown it by 13% FTE in ten years, 3% full time faculty, teaching more, a heavier load, more assessment and research expectations, and salaries aren't keeping track; we are slammed on all sides.

Comment: We need statements that link salary to inflation or comparable to other schools, or that kind of linking statements in the Growing Seaver proposal.

Q. For David, when you talk to administrators, present this graph, in context of making Pepperdine an elite institution is a goal while keeping Christian commitment, how does one reconcile that graph with that goal? A: David: there are different people in admin; priorities are structures over people or we don't believe the data, you are or comparing apples to oranges, or there is more than one way to interpret data. It does make one a bit cynical; he doesn't enjoy doing this, he someone wants to take his place; he's willing to do this but it's frustrating. He does it because he's familiar with it, and sees himself as a watchdog; he thinks they should be paying attention to this.

Q. Do other people go with you? A: It has been me and a small group, or with Feltner and Marrs and Semerau; it's nice to see other people see things say same way. Maybe I'm wrong.

Comment: I was on committee, if we don't allocate higher percentage to salaries nothing is going to change...just redistributing; the increase has to happen if we are going to make progress, otherwise, just moving a little money around, and it doesn't even make much difference. Looks like we are still trying to rearrange the decks instead of increasing the amount; we need to keep up with inflation, we need more \$\$\$. Again ancillary services are going up, not salaries, and this shouldn't be David by himself. We need to say this is what SFA believes, and that the pursuit of excellence is not going to happen without more money.

Comment: You had a slide that hinted at what's behind this; this proposal on merit pay isn't the one to vote against, strategically, the stakes are pretty low. This could be pushed by board, who want to say we have a merit system, as a result, might become more generous about ideas we all care about—it's just being strategic; if we vote this down, we won't give the Dean the political cover he needs to get admin /board to give us more money

Q. This person had a discussion with an administrator. Question about age of people when they make Professor 3, and expressed the idea that not only were they not keeping up with inflation, but that they will make at most 1000 a year from early 50s until they retire, plus general increase; effect on morale at that time isn't good, why hasn't 5000 been replaced by percentages?

Andy, he has asked about this, and was told this is just the way it has been; it could be recalculated/changed.

Comment and Q: Thanks for the teaching/scholarship/research numbers, never seen those numbers, already feel more informed about tenure process from those two slides, would love to hear more. Is it small peanuts if one year early on one gets category 2 but later get category 1s? What would be the difference in total pay; you'd lose 30,000 from one 2 if it was early on in the career? What you do early on will have a huge impact on how you do after time; that adds up, and no way to adjust for it. If goal is for that to happen, then fine, but another alternative, instead of merit pay, instead of % increase, for next three years, what about an adjustment if you go up on ratings later?

Comment: Someone brought up special considerations at pre-tenure, perhaps this should be addressed. Answer: No adjustments for those problems in the current proposal.

Andy: I will send out something, perhaps a straw poll in February. Will probably be sent out, SFA EXCom can't make a proposal, it has to be from faculty, but we do want some sense before then of what people think. We will also have straw polls on growing Seaver also. We should bring this to you in January; please talk to us.... to your division representatives.

At 10:00 a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Adjourned!

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Rivas
SFA Secretary Treasurer