

January 26, 2021

Shane White, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide Review: Faculty Salary Scales Task Force Report and Recommendations**

Dear Chair White,

At its meeting on December 15, 2020, the Faculty Welfare Committee discussed the Faculty Salary Scales Task Force Report and Recommendations. Committee members offered the following comments.

The committee agrees with the recommendation that the salary scale should be updated to be comparable to other comparator universities analyzed in the report.

The committee strongly disagrees with the recommendation to eliminate the use of off-scale salary based on the following considerations:

1) Cost of living:

The committee notices that there were no representatives on the Faculty Salary Scale Task Force from UCLA and UCSF, both of which are located in areas with higher cost of living compared to some other campuses. Differences in cost of living among campuses are briefly mentioned but are said not part of the report of the task force. However, it is important to note that salaries and cost of living adjustment are not separate; they are intertwined. It is a significant issue for campuses at high cost of living areas, such as LA and Bay Area. The faculty needs to be able to afford to living in the vicinity area of the campus. The report reflects a rejection of this consideration and an underlying desire of equalizing campuses.

The committee believes that cost of living, including housing cost and childcare cost, is an important factor affecting the salaries. There is disparity on living and housing cost among the campuses. Off-scale salaries have been used to equalize cost of living. A transition to a system that tries to minimize the off-scales has to find a way to accommodate the cost of living. If it is considered separately from salary, as the report reflects, additional housing support for the faculty is needed, especially for areas with high cost of housing, such as LA and Bay Area, in order to maintain standards of quality in our faculty.

2) Differences among UC campuses:

The members note that not all UC campuses are in the same situation. Market values are not the same for campuses. The report talks about market values of academics, but under-appreciates the heterogeneity of the faculty across the UC campuses. It is not realistic to think that the salary scales can capture all the differences. Since there is heterogeneity, the campuses will need flexibility of the off-scale system. The current recommendation would reduce the ability of each campus to offer off-scale salaries. The committee members think that the recommendation needs to acknowledge differences among campuses and include considerations for all ten campuses.

3) Faculty recruitment and retention:

The committee notes that UCLA faculty salaries are among the highest across the 10 UC campuses. This creates contention with some other campuses. On the other hand, cost of living in LA is among the highest across the nation, which makes faculty recruitment and retention challenging to UCLA.

The majority of the UCLA faculty is on off-scale salaries. In many cases, off-scale salaries are used to recruit and retain faculty that other institutes try to recruit away or get offers elsewhere. The committee is concerned that the implementation of the recommended salary scales could negatively affect the ability of UCLA to recruit and retain faculty, which is essential to maintain the high-quality teaching and research statue of the campus. Off-scale allows more flexibility with recruiting packages. If off-scales are eliminated, what other approach can be used to recruit and retain faculty? Accelerated promotions, hiring at higher steps, etc. may have to be used, which could create new sets of issues related to equity and fairness.

On the other hand, the members recognize that eliminating off-scales could promote transparency and equity and eliminate loyalty penalty. People who like to stay at UCLA and don't seek other offers usually don't get extra off-scale salaries. The committee recommends establishing a career equity review mechanism at each campus to ensure equity and transparency in compensation.

4) Funding resource:

Members raised several questions. 1) Would the new salary scale be campus-wide adjustment? 2) Where does the fund come from to adjust campus and discipline differences? 3) Is this self-funded or from 19900 funds? Adjusted scales are linked to the retirement system, which is not addressed in this report. Current off-scales are generally from 19900 funds. If these will be built into scales, then it could be neutral in terms of contributions to retirement system.

If you have any questions, please contact us via the Faculty Welfare Committee's interim analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at [efeller@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:efeller@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Huiying Li, Chair  
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Academic Senate

Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
Elizabeth Feller, Interim Analyst, Faculty Welfare Committee  
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee