

Response to July 9 email
Kenneth Dean, July 14

General Statement

I want to affirm the basic values of our system of evaluation. Any “objective” weighting that may appear to protect individuals from biased personnel evaluations threatens the significant diversity of faculty productivity on our campus. Whenever we evaluate faculty—with raises or in promotion and tenure—we recognize the importance of disciplinary differences. That's why evaluation begins with those closest to the faculty members. This means that chairs and deans and external reviewers have to use their judgment. Yes, there's a risk of personal bias, but we recognize that those who understand a discipline are best able to offer initial evaluation of faculty. We don't evaluate faculty in Engineering and Music using the same tools. The form provided allows that latitude.

But there are also protections against inappropriate subjectivity. We insist that reviewers offer evidence. That's what we are doing here. The process outlined assumes that the deans/chairs will use evidence AND their best judgments to make difficult decisions. It assumes the campus will do the same. To do anything different would be to undercut some of our basic values about evaluating faculty.

The vast majority of our faculty and staff successfully complete their jobs every day. It is unfortunate that we do not have a pool of funds to provide all of those successful performers with raises in keeping with their performance level. For a very long time we have awarded raises based on merit. If one examined the distribution of raises on campus generally it would be in the nature of a bell curve. That means that a few individuals received little or no raise, a few significant raises, and the remainder, raises more similar to each other. We do not, as an institution, award across the board raises.

In the recent past campus leadership has decided to set aside some campus funds to reward those that have been deemed the top performers. It would appear that only they are receiving raises. That is inaccurate. Last year 1,626 (757 T T) faculty received raises, **prior to the award of the midyear raises**, and 3,531 staff also received merit raises. This equated to 59% of our faculty and staff receiving some level of merit increase. The administrative components of the university gave the fewest merit raises with about 33% of employees in the non-academic departments receiving a merit increase.

This occurred without any mandate from the campus as to an average percentage goal to be achieved, allowing each unit to decide how much it could afford to allocate. In fact our total dollar amount for raises exceeded what we had set out as our goal in the MUSOP. We are making every effort to provide raises, despite our funding situation.

When funds are scarce, the opportunity for discord is heightened. However we seek to minimize that discord by being as transparent as possible about our processes and procedures.

While there may be disagreement over policies, at the end of the day, the campus and system leadership determines compensation policies, informed by input from the campus community.

Your Questions:

1. In the mid-term raise process all recommendations from deans were approved and the only adjustments were of a general nature applied across the board (limits on the amounts and percentages). In this round, will you (or a group appointed by you) review the recommendations for intercollege comparisons, and will you carry out some overall campus rankings of all nominated faculty and adjust the raises accordingly?
There are meritorious high performing individuals in every college. Also there is no one scale that can be applied to every faculty member. One way to attempt to be fair across the wide variety of areas of our university is by looking at individual salaries compared to peer averages at other AAU institutions. If raise requests are significantly out of step with others in the discipline elsewhere that could be taken that into consideration in the amount awarded.
2. Listing items (metrics) on the form is good, but in itself does not clarify as to what weights are being assigned to them (funding, citations, awards, publications, teaching, service, etc.), and absent such information a Dean is free to be arbitrary.
Disagree. The form is intended to provide guidance. Each dean, and each chair or director is expected to make value judgments informed by a variety of considerations about raises. The form is intended to provide some parameters but not to mandate precise results. As much as absolute weights might make SOME people feel better, it limits the ability to take unique situations into account. High performance can take a variety of forms.

Would you specify these weights? *NO, for the reasons already stated'*

Would you charge or instruct the Deans with these specifications to charge their Policy or ARPT Committees while evaluating and ranking faculty and recommending/deciding raises? *The form provides guidance. We expect whoever is involved in the decision making to consider the guidance provided.*

We are requesting that you and all deans provide full information regarding criteria and weights to the respective faculty (in departments, colleges, campus) prior to evaluations and submission of forms. Can this request be accommodated? *The process to be followed is internal to each unit. We will not mandate a specific approach*

3. Salary & Wage principles (2014) require a minimum of 2% raise for eligibility towards up to 5K onetime "bonus." *It is not a bonus; it is a lump sum non base building merit award.*

This is also the case for excellence raises. Many units may not have funds to give any raise at all, and others will be scrambling to give 2% to a few at a cost to others. What is the rationale for this 2% minimum, given the budget situation in some units and considerable disheartening of many in the faculty with a second year of virtually no raises? Why should this 2% minimum not be done away with entirely in as much as the purpose of the excellence raises would seem to be award the top faculty across the campus? *All the above questions and commentary speak primarily to policy issues. For years we have said that a competitive salary for faculty has been our policy. We have received no funds from the state for a raise pool, so the funds have to be found internally by reallocation. The 2% minimum is intended to prevent those hard pressed to find funds to use non-base building increases as a substitute for a base building increase. If we fall into the pattern of replacing base building increases with non-base increases we prevent ourselves from making progress on our overall salary issue. The non-base building increases are intended to send the message to high performers that we understand that the base increase they are receiving is not sufficient to make their salary competitive with peers who are performing at their level they – but that we are doing our best to acknowledge their high level of performance. We have many tough choices ahead of us and individual departments, divisions and colleges are going to have to decide how to find the funds to allocate into raises. Focusing on priorities of the institution should underpin how those choices are made.*

In the same context, why is there a 20% limit on a division? Since the faculty will be ranked also by each College, there would seem to be no real reason for this 20% limit other than convenience, and it needs to be justified or done away with. *A policy decision was made that there is insufficient rate funds to make meaningful progress on all faculty salaries. The highest of performers are at the greatest risk of recruitment from other institutions. This is an attempt to move their salaries to reasonably competitive levels. Without a limit there would be far more requests than funds available.*

4. Would it be possible for you to provide some clarity on what is deemed to be “Competitive Funding”. For example, are congressional earmarks considered competitive funding and will faculty be able to count such funding as competitive? *Generally, “competitive” refers to the funding amounts reported from “federal” sources under question 1a (and broken down in question (9) of the NSF higher education survey. See http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvyherd/surveys/srvyherd_2013.pdf. This usage is consistent with how AAU evaluates the campus. Some earmarks are reported but they have sharply declined in amounts during the last few years.*
5. How will Grants and Contracts Incentive (GCI) and other incentives plans (e.g. MURR, Graduate Fellow) be taken into account as the excellence raises are decided? *They were*

not considered at the campus level for midterm raises. I do not know if they were or will be considered at the unit level.

Would there be any effort to avoid duplication –for example, some of the same extramural funding being credited for GCI as well as the excellence raises? *See above. It is possible that the same research funding could result in incentive pay under GCI and in supporting a raise under this program. Deans and department chairs are expected to review the entire situation and make judgments.*

6. What role do faculty's work assignments (load distribution) play in these raises? How will these be considered in faculty rankings? *That will be determined at the unit/school/college level and reviewed at the campus level.*
7. In the mid-term raise process, faculty rankings by Academic Analytics (AA) had been used in at least some cases. Have you obtained current rankings from AA or are you planning to? *There are no new ranking to report at this time. Over the past several months IR has been verifying data with each college/department and working closely with AA to insure the most accurate data possible. This information is but one piece of information that might be considered. If so, how will these be used? And, will you make these rankings available to faculty?*
8. How will you use current salaries and/or history of pay raises (including mid-term raises) in determining the raises? *That will initially be determined at the college/department level and will be reviewed at the campus level when final allocations are being made. Any decision on whether the midyear raises are considered will be deferred until we have the opportunity to see the total picture.*
9. What information will you share with faculty (generally or upon request) regarding the submissions for excellence raises? *Data that can be aggregated will be shared. So amounts by: college, ranges of amounts, academic ranks, etc., will be shared.*

Would individual nomination forms be made available to the particular individual and/or others upon request? *NO* Are there any constraints on release of such information?
YES

10. What information will be released to the faculty after the raises are decided? *SEE ABOVE*

Can the information be statistically aggregated, and an analysis provided? *YES*

There are also some general concerns regarding faculty engagement in the process. For example, how is your office assuring that the deans and chairs in all colleges both engage and

involve faculty as the evaluations and recommendations are made? *We expect the deans and chairs to follow the processes customarily used in that unit in determining raises.*

The above questions are also related to some **observations** that we wish to bring to your attention:

Change of horses in the middle of the race. For many faculty members (not all), rewards have been based on number of publications, graduate education, and teaching/extension; this was the expectation and is verified by hiring letters as well as by annual review letters from administration. The shift toward rewarding faculty on the basis of number of citations and federal grants has come without warning. *Disagree. We have been an AAU institution for over 100 years. What may be new is putting a light on what is counted for AAU membership. And certainly citations do reflect in part the national recognition of a faculty member. And grants have long been considered by several disciplines in the P&T process.*

Recognition of appointment? Someone with 70% research should have many more citations than someone with 30% research.

Distinguishing between basic vs. applied sub-discipline? Grants in applied research often come from industry, commodity groups, or other sources. Grants from basic research often come from federal sources. *You overemphasize the grant factor in this process. It is but one of many considerations.*

Teaching/Extension. It is unclear how teaching/extension is rewarded. It is also unclear how much is rewarded. In a non-STEM area, it is a given perhaps. But in STEM, will researchers will be given preference over teachers, even if those with small research appointments do their jobs well? *Again, we look to the units to evaluate the faculty based upon performance.*

Vindictiveness. There are reports of middle management withholding raises/mid-year raises to punish faculty. *Those reports have not come to my attention. And we have a highly effective faculty approved grievance process to handle any such complaints.*