




PLANNING & BUDGET

March 14, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Christian Shelton, Chair 
Committee on Planning and Budget

RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Campus Implementation Procedures for the Negotiated Salary Trial Program

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the proposed UCR guidelines for implementation of the Negotiated Salary Trial Program (NSTP) on March 13, 2018.

Beyond the specifics of the campus's implementation, CPB had concerns over the further erosion of the UC salary scales. These scales have not been competitive for decades, as witnessed by the off-scale components of many faculty salaries. The NSTP further exacerbates the problem, by providing another mechanism, outside the merit review process, for salary increases. Over time, this has two deleterious effects: First, it promotes unseen salary inequities. A great advantage of UC's merit and promotion system is its fair treatment of all faculty. The NSTP bypasses this system. Second, it gives the appearance of solving the total remuneration gap between UC and comparison institutions (which currently stands at 10%) by focusing on a few individuals with research programs amenable to this program. System-wide Senate Chair Shane White's letter of December 22, 2017 to the UC President details the extent of this gap well:

https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/SW-JN-faculty-salaries.pdf

This has long-term budgetary implications, as it will impact UC's ability to push for the necessary increases in state support to maintain competitive salaries. CPB is concerned that by focusing on our ability to retain a few faculty in select areas, we (UCR and UC as whole) may have lost ground in our ability to attract and retain high-quality faculty in all areas.

If the plan is to move forward at UCR (and CPB notes that at least one campus has chosen not to implement the plan), the committee has the following comments on the proposed local implementation guidelines.

1. CPB found minimal short-term budgetary concerns. While it may have long-term budget implications (see above), in the short-term the only risk is from the unexpected cancellation of NSTP-supporting funding.
2. The stipulation that summer salary support opportunities be "maximized" was concerning. This language exists in the UC-wide document, but is emphasized in the UCR policy by stating that nine-month faculty may earn up to three-ninths additional summer compensation. Such compensation is for work performed outside of the normal faculty duties. By contrast, the NSTP is compensation for existing faculty duties. These would appear to be distinct. Further, many faculty cannot spend a full three months on externally compensated duties, as this precludes them from on-campus duties, as demanded by audit regulations.
3. The stipulation that participating faculty must fulfill their research support responsibilities is reasonable. However, the included bolded statement (page 2) that "financial resources may not be diverted from these commitments to fund NSTP participation" is vague. How will this be judged, by whom, and at what stage? What will be the effect if it is not found to hold? It is not clear that it is possible to measure the effect of NSTP participation against the counterfactual of non-participation.
4. The requirement (page 9) that surplus contingency funds be used only to support graduate programs and that it cannot support TAs seems arbitrary. Perhaps this is to draw a line between research support and state support of classroom activities? Yet, there are non-graduate activities that are not state supported (including general research), and it would be difficult to draw a clear distinction between research and teaching at a Research University.

Finally, the committee noted that these guidelines are largely the same as the internal guidelines at UCSD. The last three points above all stem from changes in the UCR guidelines to be more restrictive than those at UCSD.