



Channel Islands

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS-PROVOST

September 28, 2021

Dear CSUCI Faculty,

I am writing regarding a change in practice in the Provost's Office for granting raises above the minimum at promotion. I believe these changes are necessary to ensure equitable salaries and the fair treatment of all faculty, as well as to promote faculty retention. These changes are effective immediately, beginning with the most recent faculty newly promoted for AY 21-22.

Background

The Unit 3 CBA mandates a minimum salary increase of 9% for faculty promoted to Associate Professor or Professor. This provision is interpreted by some campuses to be a minimum. Practices vary among CSUs for granting raises above this minimum: some campuses have an informal practice of granting some faculty raises, others exceed the minimum for all faculty, while others do not grant any raises beyond 9%.

Past practice at CSUCI included granting raises above the minimum for a subset of faculty who were promoted. These faculty typically requested additional pay based on merit or equity in the form of a letter to the Dean or Provost. For example, during the previous three RTP cycles (AY 17-18 to AY 19-20), 34 faculty were promoted, of whom 15 asked for a raise beyond the minimum and for whom 12 requests were granted. These additional raises ranged from 1% to 5%.

Unfortunately, this practice was not uniform, and in speaking with stakeholders across campus, I was made aware that many faculty, including some in leadership positions, did not know either that raises greater than the minimum 9% were being granted or that they could request an additional raise. The potential inequities arising from past practice were reinforced by conversations with the Deans and with AVP Grant who expressed concerns about who was granted past additional increases, how these individuals became aware of this possibility, and the apparent lack of transparency in the process. I note further that while the practice of granting raises above the minimum at promotion was well-intended, the criteria by which these decisions were made were not known to the campus community.

One University Drive, Camarillo, California 93012-8599 Tel: (805) 437-2690 Fax: (805) 437-5717 www.csuci.edu

It was disconcerting to hear from both faculty who felt they were unfairly prevented from gaining additional income because of their lack of knowledge of this process, as well as from faculty who believed they were denied raises to which they believed they were entitled. Again, while past practice may have been well-intended, it has contributed to a perception of arbitrariness, negatively impacting faculty morale.

Updated Practice and Criteria

As Provost, I am exercising my authority to institute the following practice regarding raises at promotion for all future faculty promotions, beginning with those faculty most recently promoted in the AY 20-21 cycle. Our practice will be as follows:

- The salaries of all faculty who are promoted will be evaluated for potential additional raises in light of criteria based on equity. No faculty member will be asked to make a written request for an additional raise and any requests made will not influence the outcome of the salary review.
- The primary criterion for granting raises above the minimum is equity with faculty in the same rank with similar years of service, typically with faculty in the same academic discipline at CSUCI. In rare cases, systemwide data may be used for comparative purposes.
- Prior to finalizing any raises beyond 9%, the Provost will confer with the Deans and AVP for Faculty Affairs, Success, and Equity.
- Infrequently and only in exceptional cases, merit will be taken into consideration. A Dean may request a merit increase beyond equity considerations if they regard the faculty member's performance as notably exceptional. Broadly speaking, criteria for merit increases are based on disciplinary standards.
- These criteria are *principles* and not *rules*, and as such judgment is required for fair application.
- These salary decisions are final. Faculty may request a meeting with the Provost to review how a particular salary decision was made.

Additional Steps to Support Equitable Faculty Salaries

During the current academic year, the Office of the Provost will conduct a review of all tenured and tenure-track faculty salaries. The purpose of this review will be to correct any inequities that may have resulted due to past practice or other factors. The primary purpose will be to correct salaries that are lower than others without reasonable justification. Special attention will be paid to promoting equity by gender, ethnicity, and race. For some faculty, this equity study may result in additional pay beginning with the next fiscal year (AY 22-23). It is anticipated that this will be applicable only to a small number of faculty.

To further promote equity and fairness, the Provost's Office is working closely with the Deans to clarify the process by which starting salaries are offered to newly hired faculty. Our goal is to avoid the need for ongoing equity reviews by better ensuring fair salaries at the time of hiring. I anticipate that by the end of the academic year we will have achieved a common understanding of the best path forward and that this understanding will be codified as a policy or practice within the Division.

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To promote transparency and fairness, a copy of this letter will be placed on the DAA website.

I want to end by thanking you for your contributions to the mission of CSUCI. We are fortunate to have so many committed and talented faculty. By taking steps to ensure that all faculty are treated equitably and fairly, we are strengthening our campus and investing in our mission of educating students.

Take care,

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitch Avila". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mitch Avila, Ph.D.

Provost

California State University Channel Islands