

April 7, 2023

TO: School of Plant Sciences faculty and staff

FROM: David Galbraith, Professor and Interim Director, School of Plant Sciences

RE: 2023 CALS Salary Increase Program, Merit Process

The CALS proposal for the salary increase program has been approved by UArizona upper administration and will comprise a 3.5% “across the board” increase and a 2.5% merit increase. The merit increase is limited to no more than 33% of faculty and staff. More details can be found here:

**<https://arizona.app.box.com/s/o570790vmbrm550b4iruo9s62s4ern18>**

I have been asked to explain how the merit component will be determined.

Please note, I am working on developing a detailed approach with specific metrics which will start with the School Advisory Committee (Drs. Schuch, Orbach, Arnold and Orchard). This will ultimately come to you for your input, and then for formal adoption by the School faculty. However, it cannot happen in time for this year’s program, since the approval from central administration for merit raises only arrived at the College level on March 27 and was finalized to the units on March 31. Since the merit decisions must be submitted no later than April 14<sup>th</sup>, I propose to employ the following guidelines to allocate merit. These are based on what guided past merit exercises in SPLS and comparable units, and will guide this year’s allocation, as summarized below. You will have an opportunity to make changes for the future, if you think changes are needed, following principles of transparency that are being developed by the administration, with input from the faculty and staff councils.

Here are the guidelines that I will follow for the current Salary Increase Program:

1. All faculty and staff who have an overall rating of “meets expectations” are eligible for merit. They also must qualify by being fulltime employees at the UA on August 15, 2022.
2. Per the Provost, no more than 33% of faculty and staff can receive an additional 2.5% merit increase. The enumeration of faculty and staff to calculate the numbers receiving merit will be done separately.
3. Merit is defined by consistent performance at the highest level relative to unit peers.
4. Depending on performance, an individual may receive a merit adjustment in consecutive years.
5. Given the limit imposed on the number of faculty and staff who can receive merit in a given year, it is possible that not all meritorious faculty and staff will receive merit. An individual who was meritorious in the prior year and in the current year, and who did not receive a merit increase in the prior year, will be prioritized (“all else being equal”) for merit in the current year.

6. Merit adjustments are based on a wholistic review of an employee's performance, which may include but is not limited to, information included in the UA Vitae, CV, and self-evaluation, e.g., number of units and SCH taught, teaching evaluations, scholarly activity, sponsored activity, research awards, research expenditures, research proposals, publications, outreach activities, service, awards and other data demonstrating productivity and accomplishments (please note this list is not exhaustive, nor is it prioritized).

In previous years, tables of metrics were developed to rank and identify the top 33% of SPLS faculty for merit raises, and this approach will be taken into consideration for this cycle.

**Included in previous metrics for consideration were:**

- Publications

Total publications

Total Publications normalized for research FTE

Total Publications as lead or corresponding author

Total Publications as lead or corresponding author normalized for research FTE

Total Impact Factor for journal articles

Total Impact Factor for journal articles normalized for research FTE

- Funding

Total MTDC

Total MTDC normalized for research FTE

- Other scholarly products

Patents filed or other business activities

Book chapters and other non-refereed publications

Notable awards and named professional positions

- Teaching

Total teaching SCH

Total teaching SCH normalized for instructional FTE

Number of courses taught

Number of courses taught normalized for instructional FTE

Student course and teacher scores

Special Academic Projects

- Cooperative Extension

Extension publications

Extension talks

Special Extension Projects

- Annual Evaluation Scores

Peer Review Committee Scores

Director Overall Rank in Research Score

Director Overall Rank in Teaching Score

Director Overall Rank in Extension Score

Director Overall Rank in Service Score

- Final Ranking

In some categories, scores of 1 (high) to 5 (low) were used to represent the Director's numerical estimate of quality and impact of the activity. In getting to the final rankings for research, teaching, extension, and service, the Director estimated actual quality and impact of the activities. Another consideration was long-term, multi-year, consistently high-performance impacts. Also, performance relative to the faculty member's position description was used to rank performance and impact relative to the actual duties assigned in those areas, and their performance relative to others in the same professional field.

7. Ascertainment of merit will consider the employee's work plan, i.e., the activity distribution (FTE splits in various mission areas) and goals set forth in the previous year. Decisions will be influenced by majority assignments; research productivity/accomplishments will be emphasized for faculty who have a majority research assignment. Likewise, faculty with a majority teaching or cooperative extension assignment will be proportionally evaluated based on Teaching or Extension.

8. At the discretion of the Director, merit may be awarded for a particularly significant achievement in a given year. Consistent contributions over a sustained period are also meritorious.

Primary considerations for meritorious performance (other factors may be considered at the discretion of the School Director)

#### Tenure-Track (Research) Faculty

Research expenditures; extramural awards (number and funding) as PI or Co-PI; peer reviewed publications; Award from a national organization; research grant submissions; providing funding for graduate students (any source); other scholarly (sponsored) activity, student (undergraduate and graduate) instruction, and mentoring.

#### Career Track (Non-Tenure eligible) Research Faculty

Non-Tenure eligible research faculty (e.g., Research Professors) will be evaluated using similar metrics as other faculty with a primary research appointment (i.e., tenure-eligible research faculty) while also considering the roles they play within the laboratory they work, or their own laboratory (or program) and the expectations developed with the school Director and the Director of the laboratory within which they work. The school Director acknowledges the range of responsibilities and goals a Research Professor may have negotiated, and that their roles may be varied. Typically, Research Professors are full-time research faculty with little or no instruction and service responsibility. Nevertheless, contributions to all school mission areas will be noted and considered. Research Professors, for example,

may contribute in significant ways to instruction and student mentoring and if they do, those contributions deserve consideration in awarding Merit.

#### Career-Track (Non-Tenure eligible) Teaching Faculty

Intramural or extramural award supporting instruction or student success; teaching awards; major contribution to (e.g. led development of) new instruction initiative (e.g., degree, minor, certificate, etc.); history (~3 or more years) of excellent teaching evaluations; higher than expected Units or SCH delivery; scholarly publications; new course development.

#### Extension (Specialists)

Number of programmatic areas (programs) delivered to stakeholders; demonstration of significant program impact (beyond “contacts”); external (sponsored) funding to sustain programs; peer-reviewed scholarly publications; awards.

#### Service

Outstanding service contribution to the school, college, university, community and profession/discipline may also be awarded with merit.

### 9. Staff merit implementation

Please be reminded of my previous comment that the pools of individuals corresponding to faculty and staff will be enumerated separately, meaning that 33% of faculty and 33% of staff will be eligible for a merit increase. For staff, I am attempting to distribute the allowed merit increases equitably among their supervisors in SPLS, and I will be collecting information from these direct supervisors in order to make informed decisions as to who will be receiving merit. In general, the principles of merit decisions will mirror those employed for faculty, in order to identify those staff that are performing at a level higher than their peers, but recognizing that staff can be assigned to perform very different tasks in our unit.

.

### 10. Other Notes.

Faculty who Meet Expectations in their primary assignments (Research, Instruction, Outreach/Extension, Service) and who exceed or make exceptional contributions in other areas may be awarded merit. As noted above, merit is based on a wholistic view of an individual’s performance.

Merit is awarded by the School Director, in consultation with the School Associate Directors, and other school faculty as deemed necessary by the School Director. If an employee does not directly report to the School Director, the Director may seek performance feedback from the direct supervisor.

Merit decisions, as much as possible, are based on objective data, although it is important to acknowledge that no completely objective approach captures the nuances of evaluating productivity, accomplishments and interests and comparing and prioritizing across faculty and staff with diverse assignments and interests.

Comparison across individuals and prioritization is imposed on the process by virtue of limits placed by the administration on the amount of funds allocated for merit and the percentage of faculty and staff who can receive a merit adjustment. It is challenging to rate the value of an individual's scholarly work and its impact relative to their peers. Various metrics exist and all of them have limitations. Thus, a component of merit evaluation will necessarily involve the School Director's or supervisor's professional judgement and expertise.

Per UArizona and College guidelines, all individuals receiving a merit adjustment will be notified in writing by the week of May 16th.

Upon request, the School Director will provide a rationale to a faculty or staff member regarding their merit decision.

11. A process of revision to merit assessment will be implemented in the upcoming academic year to provide unit input in a spirit of transparency.