

REPORT

ACADEMIC CHAIRS COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON CHAIRS' COMPENSATION AND APPOINTMENTS

January 14, 2002

Mandate: The Committee was Charged by Provost Haeger in August, 2001 to study and make recommendations concerning compensation and terms of appointment for department chairs and comparable academic administrative positions at NAU.

Committee Membership: Lee Drickamer (Chair of Biological Sciences), Bruce Fox (Chair of Forestry), Ramona Mellott (Chair of Educational Psychology), Dolores Shapiro (Chair of Nursing), and Bryan Short (English, ACC Executive Director); staff contact Pat Haeuser (Planning and Institutional Research). The Committee was Chaired by Short with Drickamer as Vice Chair.

History: The Committee was created because of the perception, shared by then Provost Haeger, chairs, and other NAU administrators, that the determination of compensation and terms of appointment for chairs and comparable positions at NAU was unsystematic.

Procedure: The Committee met throughout the Fall Semester, 2001. It reviewed data on chairs' compensation at NAU redacted from individual contracts. It also polled chairs and other comparable administrators regarding terms of employment and workload issues that might influence compensation. The instrument used appears as an appendix at the back of this report. 35 department or area chairs or interim chairs, 7 Area Coordinators, and one Director responded—43 out of the 47 state-supported Mountain Campus employees currently serving on ACC. These two sources of data were compiled and subjected to statistical analysis, summarized under "Findings" below.

Individual survey responses were canvassed for patterns of anecdotal information regarding factors that bear on chairs' working conditions, terms of appointment and compensation, and follow up interviews or conversations were held with roughly half the respondents. In addition committee members chaired break-out sessions dealing with compensation issues at the fall, 2001 ACC workshop. It should also be noted that the committee members themselves represent considerable experience in the position of chair both at NAU and other institutions. The final report was presented, discussed, and accepted with minor revisions at the ACC meeting of Jan. 10, 2002.

Further, ASU, UA, and the new list of NAU peer institutions were polled to determine if relevant policies exist elsewhere, and a brief report on pay practices for department chairs from CUPA-HR's 2000-2001 National Faculty Salary Survey was examined.

Principles: The Committee operated on the understanding that its task was not to recommend specific compensation amounts for chairs or hinder the process of chair-dean negotiation but rather to identify those factors that a rationalized compensation and appointment policy should systematically take into consideration. We understood from the beginning that existing compensation agreements would be honored if acceptable to the parties involved, although some renegotiation or job redescription might be desirable if a new policy were phased in. We also understood that information provided by individuals would remain confidential. The Committee recognized the need for some flexibility in the determination of individual chair salaries, but it felt that the terms on the basis of which such differences might be negotiated should be determined by consistent policy. It also felt that minimum standards, in some areas, were appropriate.

Definitions: At NAU, an academic “department” is an independent unit led by a “chair” and having its own faculty and faculty status committee, budget, and staff. An “area” is harder to define. In colleges/centers where budgetary and administrative functions are assumed to be centralized, “areas” are headed by “area coordinators.” The anomalous title “area chair,” used in one large college/center, represents an interim stage, although the terms of employment and compensation and duties of these “area chairs” are closer to those of department chairs than area coordinators. The term “coordinator” is also used in a variety of ways that do not indicate the type of program administration covered by this report. The title “director” is equally variously used, although a few directors have chair-like responsibilities and serve on the Academic Chairs Council. The report will use the term “chair” as a general term for the administrative positions studied.

Findings, Statistical Data Analysis (Summary): Information was collected on 43 individuals with the title of chair, coordinator, or director from 8 colleges/centers. Interview, contract, and institutional data ranging from department characteristics to roles and responsibilities were examined, correlated and discussed. The analysis showed that 58 percent of the chairs had a rank of Professor and 37 percent were Associate Professors. Categories of compensation included summer salary of 1/9 or 2/9 and, in some instances, additional stipends. Eleven individuals had contracts that specified stipends in addition to whatever summer salary they received; these stipend amounts ranged from \$3,000 to \$4,455 with a mean of \$3861 and a median of \$4109. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the contracts specified a fiscal year length.

The data showed divergence in compensation, conditions, expectations, and support. An attempt was made statistically to “explain” the compensation associated with chair status. Subtracting a chair’s academic salary from his/her total salary created a derived variable “extra.” After reviewing correlations for all the data, eight variables that correlated the highest with “extra” were used in a series of multiple regression analyses. The final model explained 61% (adjusted R^2) of the variation in extra compensation. Variables that appear to have the best explanatory power in predicting the amount of “extra” earned for being a chair include the title of chair (as opposed to coordinator), the college (some colleges appear to provide more or less support to their chairs), number of advisees reported by the chair, number of support staff in terms of FTE, and number of full and half-time faculty statewide. These last three variables probably relate to the complexity

or size of department. Although the regression equation does a reasonable job of explaining “extra” compensation for chairs, the explanatory variables are not ones that the Committee believes are desirable for determining chair compensation.

Findings, Internal: Not only is there unsystematic divergence in the compensation and conditions of appointment of chairs at NAU, there is unsystematic divergence in the understanding of the factors that determine compensation, expectations, and levels of support. Chairs get compensated for and supported in their work on the basis of the factors listed below (not in any particular order), but not all of these necessarily obtain in any individual case.

1. Academic year salary. Chairs’ and coordinators’ compensation is generally thought to be in addition to an AY salary at appropriate rank. Divergence in academic year salaries is the largest factor determining divergence in chairs’ salaries. In some cases, appointment as chair or coordinator is accompanied by negotiation or renegotiation of AY salary, and in other cases it is not.
2. Compensation for summer duties. Most department and area chairs are thought to have summer duties that justify a “12-month contract” that is compensated at 11/9 of the AY salary—an historic formula taken for granted by neither our peer institutions nor for other categories of NAU administrators. A few chairs and most area coordinators have contracts that acknowledge lesser obligations during the summer.
3. Stipend. An additional “stipend” ideally reflecting either market considerations or the unusual demands of administrative responsibility. Not all chairs receive a stipend in addition to summer compensation. Some chairs are paid a “stipend” that lumps summer work expectations and extra pay together in a rounded-off figure. Area coordinators without summer expectations are generally paid a modest but variable stipend and given released time. A small number of cases carry highly anomalous stipends.
4. Transition leave. Administrative leave to aid a transition from extended administrative to faculty status. Although there are informal expectations regarding the possibility of administrative leave, such understandings are almost never spelled out as a condition of employment.
5. Workload percentage. The percentage of workload that a chair is thought to devote to administration. Workload percentage, and thus teaching load and other expectations, seems more a result of history, local procedures, or individual negotiation than University policy. Chairs almost universally complain that they are allotted a part-time administrative percentage and then expected to be “on call” full time.
6. Administrative support staff. A few chairs of larger and more complex departments receive the support of associate or assistant chairs (faculty with part-time administrative responsibilities and stipends). Again, such support is largely determined by historic, local, or individual factors. Within the various departmentalized colleges/centers, assignment of administrative support may be systematic, but thresholds differ from college to college.

7. Office support staff. Office support staff devoted to individual departments. Assignment of support staff reflects historic understandings, the most significant of which is the extent to which the functions of secretaries, budget officers, and administrative assistants are thought to be centrally performed in a college/center office. There has been a movement in the direction of the departmentalization or decentralization of office functions, often accompanied by a lag in the provision of support staff. A cause of great concern among chairs is the difficulty of keeping good staff from leaving for higher-paid and less stressful jobs in upper administration.
8. Raises. Salary increments received during tenure. No consistent policy exists regarding salary raises for chairs and coordinators. It is not clear whether mandated percentage raises are given on AY or FY salaries, how raises are prorated to AY base, and whether, in some cases, chairs are placed in a separate raise “pool” within which raises are determined by unusual means. No consistent system exists for giving chairs raises *as chairs*, to reward excellent administration, and no system exists for permitting chairs an increase in base salary when they return to faculty status. As outside searches for chairs have become less frequent, chairs’ salaries do not appear to have kept pace with those of deans and higher administrators, although statistical analysis of the relationship between chairs’ and other administrators’ salaries was beyond the scope of this study.
9. Professional advancement. Factors influencing consideration for promotion in academic rank. Procedures dictating the evaluation of faculty in the mandated areas of teaching, scholarship, and service do not acknowledge administrative performance as a factor in promotion and tenure decisions. Service as chair often works against a candidate for promotion whose efforts have been deflected from “faculty” functions, since P&T committees are not mandated to evaluate administrative work.

Findings, External: NAU is not alone in its lack of a systematic policy for the compensation of chairs. Neither ASU nor UA has such a policy, and many of the “peers” who responded lack one as well. However, in the policy statements of those that do, such as Kansas State and New Mexico State, department chairs appear to be better compensated, relative to their colleagues, than at NAU. This conclusion is also reflected in the experience of NAU chairs who have served elsewhere. To cite the most obvious example, at other universities a move from 9- to 12-month employment generally carries 12/9 not 11/9 of the candidate’s AY salary. Stipends appear higher (at Kansas State, “the standard package is to move from a 9 to 12 month basis and then add 10 percent.” Exit conditions are clearer and more generous, permitting some percentage of administrative base to be retained on return to faculty status (at New Mexico State, 5% after four years of service).

CUPA-HR’s report on “pay practices—department chairs” is too general to offer a helpful comparison. Chairs are generally given reduced teaching loads (averaging eight credit hours annually), summer contracts, and additional stipends (averaging \$3,089). The report did not stipulate terms of compensation for 11-12 month obligations.

Recommendations:

1. Term of office, evaluation, and renegotiation. The term of office for a chair should generally be four years, although local variation in this term is possible. Chairs should undergo an evaluation, conducted in accord with university policy for the evaluation of administrators, in their second year, once they have had experience in the position, and should have a chance to renegotiate terms of employment for the second half of the four-year term. Retention in office beyond four years should be contingent on an early fourth-year evaluation. All chairs should have statements of expectations that reflect both administrative and faculty duties.
2. Academic Year Salary. Appointment to the position of chair or coordinator, whether from the inside or outside, should trigger determination of a competitive AY salary.
3. Summer compensation. A “12-month contract” as currently understood should be compensated at 12/9 of a chair’s 9-month AY contract. On appointment, the extent of a chair’s summer responsibilities should determine whether a 12, 11, 10, or 9-month load is most appropriate; compensation and vacation time should follow a consistent formula in each case.
4. Stipend. A stipend in addition to summer compensation should reflect either market considerations beyond those that would impact an administrator’s AY salary (such as crucial non-academic experience) or the complexity of responsibilities attending the position. These latter include: A. unit size (number of faculty, students); and B. unit complexity (number and variety of programs, university service obligations, statewide obligations, number and size of grants, contracts, and institutes, development expectations, facilities management, numbers of part-time faculty and TAs, other unusual obligations).
5. Work load percentage. A chair’s work load percentage for administration should realistically reflect both the position’s responsibilities and the percentage of time a chair is to be available to Dean, faculty, students, etc. in an official capacity.
6. Transition leave. On returning to AY faculty status, a chair or coordinator whose administrative obligations represent more than a certain threshold load percentage should receive one semester paid leave after four years in office. That leave should not impact the “sabbatical time clock,” so that a full year at full AY pay should be possible if the conditions for a sabbatical are met.
7. Base salary add-on. On returning to AY faculty status, a chair or coordinator whose administrative obligations represent more than a certain threshold load percentage should retain as a base salary add-on one to two percent of the final year administrative salary for each year served. A cap might be appropriate for chairs who serve more than a certain number of years.
8. Transition start-up assistance. On returning to AY faculty status, a chair or coordinator whose administrative obligations represent more than a certain threshold load percentage should be eligible to negotiate “start-up” or

“retooling” assistance to ease return to teaching and research: examples might include summer research salary; laboratory support; travel funds; equipment; a TA.

9. Administrative and Office Support. No “department” or “area” judged independent enough to have a “chair” should be without a full-time secretary. Additional support should reflect the size and complexity of the unit, taking in such factors as those listed under point 4 above. Chairs should be permitted to negotiate the type of support needed.
10. Raises. Chairs should receive mandated percentage-based raises on FY salary with the appropriate percentage added to AY base. Chairs should under no circumstances receive smaller raises than received by faculty of comparable rank and base.
11. Professional Advancement. Uniform guidelines and procedures need to be promulgated for the evaluation and crediting of administrative performance as a factor in promotion and tenure decisions. These need to be institutionalized in the Conditions of Faculty Service.

Implementation: The submission of this report to the NAU Central Administration should trigger wider discussion of administrative compensation policy at NAU. After discussion and revision, a set of policies such as those recommended here should be adopted by the University. Discussion should then take place among chairs, deans, and Provost to determine the advisability of changes in unit or leader definitions and to enumerate the size, complexity, and market factors that set limits to administrative load percentages, stipends, ideal levels of administrative and office support, summer pay, unusual obligations, etc. The factors that bear on particular departmental positions or college/center or university standards should be stipulated, approved by the Provost, and set down as policy. As units change in size or are reorganized, these agreed-on policies should be revised. Candidates for chair should be made aware of university and college/center policies and local factors that bear on “negotiating room” in the case of a particular position. Chairs’ compensation and terms of employment should be brought in line with policy at point of hire or biennial evaluation. These efforts must, of course, take place within the larger and ongoing discussion of University priorities (e.g. the advisability of devoting resources to upgrading levels of academic staff support campus-wide). As with other matters of salary equity, it cannot be expected that adjustments to being chairs salaries into line with University policy can be taken from existing departmental budgets.

APPENDIX:

Chair’s Compensation Salary Survey

Name of Department/Unit: _____

Name of College/School: _____

Number of Employees Within Unit

WORK STATUS	FACULTY	STAFF	GRADUATE ASSISTANTS
Full-time – On Campus			
Full time – Statewide			
Part-time - On Campus			
Part-time - Statewide			

Explain Special Circumstances: _____

No. of Degree Programs:

Total Undergraduate _____ **Total Graduate:** _____

Bachelors (list names/emphases): _____

Master's (list names/emphases): _____

Doctorate (list names/emphases): _____

Chair/Director Duties and Responsibilities:

Teaching:

Are you expected to teach classes as a chair?

Yes No

If yes, how many credit hours during an academic year? _____

How many classes do you actually teach during an academic year? Indicate by credit hours? (Please exclude dissertation/independent studies, etc.) _____

How many classes do you teach in the summer? _____

Advising:

Do you serve as an advisor to current students in your program?

Yes No

How many advisees do you have? _____

Scholarship:

Are your scholarship expectations similar to full-time tenured FTE in your department?

Yes No

If yes, please explain _____

%age of time devoted to scholarship: _____

Administrative:

What percentage of your SOE/Effort is devoted to administration? _____

Check all those that apply

- Writing letters for tenure and promotion
 Conducting annual reviews
 Dealing with student complaints and appeals
 Managing department budgets
 Preparing reports (annual) for the department at request of Dean
 Preparing Schedules (Fall, Spring and Summer)
 Approving Statewide courses and part-time faculty
 Admissions of students
 General Advisement and Recruitment of Students
 Other reports such as accreditations updates, etc.
 Other (please describe) _____
 Other (please describe) _____
 Other (please describe) _____
 Other (please describe) _____

Support:

Do you have an assistant/associate chair?

Yes No

What percentage of the asst. chair's FTE is devoted to administration? _____

Additional salary or stipend for asst. chair: \$ _____

Duties of asst. chair: _____

Other release time given to faculty for admin. duties: _____

How much support staff does your department have?

_____ (please indicate your answer in terms of FTE; do not include workstudy help)

Other Professional categories of Support Staff(describe in terms of FTE) _____

Salary:

Basis for addition to chair's salary:

- Stipend
 2/9ths
 2/9ths + Stipend
 Other, please explain: _____

Do you have any understanding/agreement for stepping down

Yes No

If yes, please check all of the following reasons that apply:

Number of years in position; if yes is it- Official, written down Unofficial

Sabbatical leave ; if yes is it- Official, written down Unofficial

Administrative leave; if yes is it- Official, written down Unofficial

Salary after stepping down; if yes is it- Official, written down Unofficial

Other, please describe, also indicate whether official or unofficial
