

# Salary Review: New Provisions, Procedures and Reminders

The 2010-13 Collective Agreement contained significant changes to the salary review procedures in Article 17 and our new 2014-17 Agreement includes a few further refinements. In this issue we will summarize the recent changes and provide some guidance for this important collegial process. Because of timing – ratifying the tentative agreement after the salary review process began, coupled with the salary review process being retrospective in nature – changes to the procedures in our new Agreement will not be used until the fall of 2015.

The 2010-13 changes to Article 17 were made to make the salary review process more fair and more inclusive, and to improve transparency. Standards for the award of special increases became a requirement, Salary Review Committees were made mandatory and the committees became required to report their recommendations, rankings and reasons to affected faculty. The flexibility to award special increases across the entire range of faculty duties was added. Departments in departmentalized colleges were given the responsibility to award some

special increases to correct the unbalanced emphasis on research output that appears to occur when achievements across diverse departments are considered at the College level.

In addition, to support procedural changes and permit meaningful awards at each level (department committee, College Review Committee, and President’s Review Committee), the 2010-13 Collective Agreement doubled the funds available for special increases, with half of the CDI’s provided annually for salary review allocated at the department level. The Agreement also required two-thirds of the special increase money to be awarded as full special increases.

While the USFA views the 2010-13 changes to Article 17 as much needed improvement to the procedures for the merit-based portion of faculty salaries, it recognized that the process could be refined to better support fairness, inclusiveness, and transparency.

## **Merit and the Teacher-Scholar Model**

New language in Article 17 of the 2014-17 Collective Agreement states that “Standards of performance for the award of Special Increases shall take into

account variability in the assignment of duties across employees in the academic unit” (Articles 17.1.3 and 17.2).

This new language has been introduced to further improve fairness in the salary review process by ensuring that output in each category described in Article 17.2 is weighed against the balance of assigned duties. A heavy teaching load, a major administrative assignment, or the production of higher research outputs from a special chair entail lesser contributions in other areas. Many university practices recognize this variable work load explicitly in assignment of duties. The intent of the new language is to recognize it as well in the award of special increases.

Academic units will need to revise their Standards for the Award

## **Questions about the Collective Agreement or the Salary Review Process?**

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of Special Increases to incorporate consideration of the assignment of duties, since salary committees are now required to consider assigned duties in their awards and recommendations.

**Increased Flexibility**

There is now a formula for the

distribution of full and partial special increases in the Collective Agreement (Article 18.2.4.2). This formula has replaced the requirement that normally two-thirds of the funds allocated for special increases must be awarded as full special increases. The intent of this change is to allow more flexibility,

particularly in smaller units, to award more partial special increases.

The few but important changes to the salary review process that are part of the 2014-17 Collective Agreement reinforce a procedure that, when properly carried out, is fair, inclusive and transparent.

## The Salary Review Process

**Salary Review Standards**

Academic units must have standards for the award of special increases that include the various categories for which special increases may be awarded (Article 17.2). The eight categories academic units must address in standards are: (1) Teaching; (2) Research and Scholarly Work; (3) Practice of professional skills; (4) Extra university work and public service; (5) Administrative work; (6) Improvement in qualifications (7) Performance of the full range of assigned duties; (8) Improvement and development.

In departmentalized colleges only, College Review Committees formulate college standards based on department standards.

**Note:** while CRCs approve department standards, that approval is based on Article 17.2 of the Collective Agreement and not, as is the case for renewal, tenure and promotion, on college standards. There are no university standards for the award of special increases.

Some units include in their standards directions for awarding special increases. This is good practice to ensure that the full range of academic work is re-

warded and to correct the imbalance of rewarding primarily research.

**Salary Review Committees**

The Collective Agreement provides that each department and non-departmentalized college must form a Salary Review Committee. The Committee is composed of the Department Head or Dean as chair and a minimum of three eligible members of the unit. Nothing prevents composing a committee of more members or even all eligible members of an academic unit. In fact, a committee of all members may be very effective, particularly for small units.

Department Salary Committees are responsible for developing standards for the award of special increases and for communicating the approved standards to department members and the CRC. The Department Salary Committee is also responsible for making awards of up to one special increase, recommending faculty members to the CRC for the award of additional special increases, and recommending faculty members to the CRC for the award of special increases if the unit does not have sufficient funds to make such awards.

In non-departmentalized colleg-

es, the College Salary Committee is responsible for developing standards and communicating these standards to members in the college. The College Salary Committee may make awards of up to two special increases and make recommendations to the President's Review Committee for an additional special increase for those faculty members who have already been awarded more than one special increase. The CRC is not part of the salary review process in non-departmentalized colleges.

Departmentalized colleges must also have a salary review committee for Department Heads and Assistant Deans. This committee has the same responsibilities as other departmental salary committees.

The Department and College Salary Committees must report their rankings, decisions, and reasons to members of the unit.

In departmentalized colleges, CRCs are responsible for communicating college standards to faculty and Department Salary Committees, awarding special increases so the combined maximum number of special increases awarded to a faculty member is no

more than 2, and recommending faculty members to the President's Review Committee (PRC) for the award of additional special increases.

A faculty member does not have to be awarded a special increase at the department level in order to be awarded a special increase by a CRC.

CRCs cannot change special increase awards made by departments.

Salary committees may award half or full special increases. An individual may receive up to a maximum of 3 special increases per year.

Any funds for the award of special increases not used by Department Salary Committees will be allocated to CRCs and any funds not used by College Salary Committees or CRCs will be allocated to PRC. Should PRC not make use of all of the funds available to it, the unused funds will be allocated to the salary review process for the next academic year.

### Information and Feedback

Providing information about decisions is an important part of the process for awarding special increases. It will help ensure transparency and at the same time help members understand what it is considered meritorious.

Salary review committees at the unit level must report their decisions and reasons to members of their unit. In departmentalized colleges, in addition to providing information about decisions to members of the department, the committee must provide this information to the CRC. The CRC cannot change decisions made by

departmental committees, but part of CRC responsibility is to review the departmental decisions for consistency and appropriateness, and to provide the results of the review to the department salary committee.

This feedback loop provides a measure of oversight that standards are being followed and helps departmental committees better understand how CRC views its decisions. It also helps department salary committees with future salary review processes.

### Awarding Special Increases for the Full Range of Academic Responsibilities

In the past, the two concerns raised most often by members about the merit system were that the system did not reward faculty for anything except research, and that many faculty perform good and valuable work that could not be recognized through the merit system.

The ability of academic units to award special increases allows those closest to the work performed by members to reward the excellent work of their colleagues. This, in conjunction with two categories added in the 2010-13 Collective Agreement – "Performance of the Full Range of Assigned Duties" and "Improvement and Development," provide a means for rewarding meritorious work of all kinds.

Remember, there is no requirement for excellence in all categories in order to be awarded or recommended for special increases; neither is the salary review process a punitive pro-

cess to be used if colleagues are perceived as not fulfilling their duties. The latter, if in fact it is an issue, is addressed through other means.

### The Formula

A formula has been added to the 2014-2017 Collective Agreement that increases the number of partial special increases that can be awarded (Article 18.2.4.2). This will particularly benefit small academic units that may, in the past, have been unable to award special increases to deserving colleagues.

Funds available for Special Increases are distributed proportionately based on the number of employees. In addition to funds not used in the previous year, the equivalent of 305 career development increases are distributed at the unit level, 244 at the College level, and 61 at the level of PRC. Each committee in the salary review process now must allocate a minimum number of full special increases and a maximum number of partial (half) special increases based on the number of employees and funds available to the committee.

### Standards

*Do what makes sense for your unit.* Using the categories described in Article 17.2, develop standards for the work performed by faculty in your unit. Consider what the work in these categories looks like for your unit and consider including suggestions of what information will help inform the salary committee deliberations. Keep in mind that because salary review is based on information provided by the employee, information additional to that

suggested in your standards may also be useful. *A CV update is required information.*

*A College Review Committee cannot impose standards on departments.* Article 17.4.4 is explicit. CRCs must “*approve departmental standards of performance if they are consistent with Article 17.2.*” It is also explicit that CRCs must “*receive and review departmental standards for the award of Special Increases and use them as the basis for formulating College standards.*” If a CRC is unwilling to approve your departmental standards, be sure to find out what about them the CRC views as inconsistent with Article 17.2 and contact the USFA. Likewise, if you believe that your college standards are not based on departmental standards, contact the USFA.

*Standards are not cast in stone.* Academic units can regularly review their standards for the award of special increases and make changes to them as they see fit – as long as the standards remain consistent with the provisions in the Collective Agreement.

### Distributing Awards

*Give serious consideration to including distribution parameters in your standards.* One of the most compelling reasons for making these changes to Article 17 in 2010-13 was to provide a way to ensure that the full range of faculty members’ work can be rewarded. We believe that one of the best ways to do that is to include directions in your standards about how to distribute available funds across the areas of your unit’s work. For example, include directions that

50% of funds will be used to first award for research, 30% will be used to first award for teaching, and 20% will be used for other areas. Such a distribution would mean that when looking at the rankings of department members, and the reasons for those rankings, the individuals with the highest rankings in each of the stated areas would receive an award. The salary committee would move down the rankings until the funds for an area are depleted. If the funds in any area are not completely used or not used at all, then these funds could be used to make awards in another area.

*Be sure to use all of the funds available to your unit.* Unused funds do not build for use by the Department or non-departmentalized College, or CRC. Unused funds get moved up to the next committee – CRC or PRC – and whatever is not used in one year will go forward for use in the next. Our past experience has been that in years when PRC has had more funds available for special increases, not all of the funds are used. These funds are part of the financial settlement negotiated and should not go unused.

### Share the results.

*Department and College Salary Committees are required to report awards, recommendations and reasons to faculty in their units.* This should be done by sharing the brief summary information that appears on salary review forms either by circulating the information to faculty in the unit, or by making it available for review by faculty in the

unit. Department Salary Committees are also required to report awards, recommendations and reasons to CRCs and CRCs are required to provide the same information back to Department Salary Committees. This will help with distributing special increases across the full range of faculty duties and help members determine whether or not to appeal to PRC.

### Appeals

*Do not hesitate to appeal decisions for the award of special increases.* Provisions exist for you to make an appeal to PRC for special increases if you were not awarded any by your Department and/or College or for additional special increases if you believe the award made by your Department and/or College was too low.

USFA representatives are happy to meet with departments, colleges, or salary committee members to discuss the salary review process and answer any questions about salary review procedures.

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