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UNIVERSITY  
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*Many Traditions One Alaska*

Date October 20, 2022

To Dawn Humenik, Chair, UA Staff Alliance  
Lauren Hartman, Vice Chair, UA Staff Alliance

From Pat Pitney, President 

CC Memry Dahl, Chief Human Resources Officer  
Michelle Rizk, VP University Relations  
Paul Layer, VP Academics, Students and Research  
Sean Parnell, UAA Chancellor  
Daniel White, UAF Chancellor  
Karen Carey, UAS Chancellor

Re Response to FY24 Compensation Recommendations

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Thank you to Staff Alliance for your August 31 memo with recommendations for FY24 compensation. I appreciate all that staff across the system do to support our academic, teaching and service missions, especially considering the recent challenges of budget cuts, reduced staffing and the pandemic. My responses to the specific recommendations are listed below.

#### **FY24 Compensation Recommendations**

##### **Implement an across-the-board 4% increase for all staff.**

As part of the FY24 budget process, we are submitting a request for a 2.75% across-the-board increase. This is the level we are most optimistic about securing legislative approval and appropriation.

##### **Increase the percent of health plan costs borne by the university**

The university cost share on premiums continues to be generous when compared to other higher education institutions – UA employees pay 18% of premium costs compared to 27% paid by employees at our peer institutions.

##### **Increase flexibility in performance bonuses, for example by adopting UAF recognition policy across the system as a baseline**

While the process for in-grade increases is clearly outlined in regulation, the process for performance bonuses is less defined. I will work with CHRO Dahl to propose a regulation update to provide broad guidance for one-time performance bonuses. Rather than adopting one university's process for performance bonuses as the standard for the entire system, however, I encourage the respective staff councils to work with their chancellors for a process local to each university, which may include adopting a policy similar to UAF's recognition policy. I also encourage supervisors to continue to use step increases to recognize sustained exceptional performance.

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**Additional Recommendations****Reinstitute annual step increases (automatic each year)****Provide yearly pay increases that offset inflation**

Wage increases, whether step increases or inflationary adjustments, are subject to Board of Regents approval as part of our larger budget process. We are committed to fair compensation within our fiscal capacity and are therefore reviewing compensation benchmarks and practices, including pay for performance and across-the-board increases.

**Review position descriptions, ensuring positions are in the correct job family**

A comprehensive review of all positions would be a labor-intensive project at a time when resources are limited. Instead, I encourage all supervisors to review the position and job family placement prior to recruitment. I also encourage employees to work with their supervisors and with HR if they feel that their position description or the job family placement do not reflect their work.

**Simplify the hiring process; modernize recruitment and hiring processes**

UAHR is continually evaluating processes for efficiencies and welcomes specific suggestions for changes that would improve the recruitment process for both supervisors and prospective employees. UAHR has made several changes recently to expedite the hiring process, including:

- Skipping intermediate screening if all applicants that pass minimum qualifications are forwarded to the interview stage,
- Updating the required verbiage in job postings to shorten the posts to improve applicant experience,
- Allowing the submission of screening forms after the job is posted, but before the review date,
- Implementing JobElephant to improve job advertising options,
- Integrating a new online background check system,
- Eliminating pre-posting requirements for requisitions, and
- Establishing criteria for when a search committee is required and when the hiring authority is enabled to complete all aspects of the search/selection process

**Provide a method of compensation for staff taking on the duties of an open position that doesn't qualify for out-of-class pay**

This is a discussion that should take place between the supervisor and the employee. This compensation may be addressed via one-time performance bonuses or, if the additional duties are incorporated into the employee's regular duties, via a step increase; the position description should be updated in these cases.

**Educate supervisors on all compensation methods and options available to them**

UAHR is exploring additional opportunities to enhance supervisor knowledge.

**Consider childcare support for those employees affected by those rising costs**

While we recognize the added strains of childcare costs in the current climate, this is not a cost the university will take on. Instead, we encourage employees to contribute to their dependent care flexible spending accounts (up to the IRS \$5,000 pre-tax limit) to cover some of their childcare costs.

**Provide full funding for the ANSI and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plans**

I am committed to providing the support needed to ensure we make progress in both of these areas. The ANSI strategic plan was designed with the intent that efforts to improve Alaska Native success were to be integrated into all functions across the system. Because of this, we specifically have not focused on a singular budget or office for ANSI. Similarly, diversity, equity and inclusion efforts must be integrated into our culture and operations.

**Additional Benefit Considerations**

**Add Roth IRA as an option for employee retirement plans.**

We are exploring this option for FY24 implementation.

**Re-evaluate breaks of service and how they factor into longevity in terms of recognition and retirement.**

UAHR is reviewing data and expects to make a recommendation to leadership later this fiscal year.

**Allow a la carte benefit options such as dental only or dental and vision only.**

**Include supplemental life for spouses and partners as an optional benefit**

These are both planned for FY24 implementation.