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alaska.edu/governance/staff-alliance/

Date: July 21, 2023

To: Pat Pitney, President

From: Ronnie Houchin, FY24 Chair, Staff Alliance

DocuSigned by:
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Cc: Paul Layer, Vice President for Academics, Students, & Research

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Paul W. Layer
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Re: FY25 Compensation Recommendations

Staff at the University of Alaska are grateful for the stabilization of the organization after several years of unprecedented events including extreme budget and personnel reductions, and a global pandemic. However, it is widely felt that the condition of staff with regard to comprehensive compensation could be improved. Improvements to compensation, including benefits, will result in making the university more competitive in an environment where recruiting and retaining personnel is challenging.

To that end, the Staff Alliance would like to propose the following for consideration.

FY25 Compensation Acknowledgements

- In accordance with the UNAC agreement reached in early 2023 for faculty, implementation of an across-the-board 2.5% increase for all staff. Although grateful for the increase, we must acknowledge wage increases that do not keep up with rising inflation mean Staff are “working for less.”

FY25 Compensation Recommendations

- The Staff Alliance would like an update from HR on all special projects started as a result of the FY24 Compensation Memorandum. Such projects include the following:
 - Position Description Review.
 - Ensure positions are in the correct [job family](#) and that an employee’s position description is accurate to the work currently being performed.

- Hiring Process Improvements.
 - Simplify the process to make it more efficient to hire additional staff.
 - Modernize recruitment and hiring processes, thereby reducing barriers to applying for jobs within UA.
- Provide full funding for the ANSI and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plans.

Additionally, the Staff Alliance would appreciate investigation and potential implementation of improvements in the following areas:

- Training and Development.
 - Prioritize and fund professional development and career development plans.
 - Implement a professional development learning platform, such as LinkedIn Learning.
 - Increase the Staff Development Fund by a minimum of 20% annually.
- Compensation.
 - Annual Increase.
 - Reinstate automatic, annual step increases.
 - Minimally provide pay increases that offset inflation.
 - Implement an increase tied to performance evaluation ratings.
 - A “meets expectations” earns an automatic 1% increase.
 - An “exceeds expectations” review earns an automatic 3% increase, with an option for the supervisor to request an additional percentage increase.
 - Provide a method of compensation for staff taking on the duties of an open position that doesn’t qualify for out-of-class pay.
 - Request HR to improve training and/or communication surrounding bonuses and other ways to financially supplement employees, particularly around the same time as messaging goes out regarding performance evaluations. Request a formal communication plan around the availability of bonuses (both monetary and annual leave).
 - Educate supervisors on all compensation methods and options available to them.
 - Consider childcare support for those employees affected by the rising costs of that necessary burden.
- Work Environment.
 - Continue supporting remote work options.
 - Ensure support for flexible hours. Work flexibility can encompass any of the following:
 - Varied arrival and departure times (or if remote, “log-on” and “log-off” times).
 - Ability to work from home full- or part-time according to preference.
 - Opportunities for career breaks without losing seniority, in essence this is similar to faculty sabbatical.
- Leave.

- Additional accrual at the 15 year and 20-year anniversary dates; the maximum leave accrual currently caps when an employee reaches 10 years.
- Re-evaluate breaks of service and how they factor into longevity in terms of recognition and retirement.
- Improved parental leave (increase the leave from five days).
- Guaranteed caregiver leave.
 - FMLA protects the job, but the University needs to educate and provide for employees such that their pay is also protected.
- Sick-leave donation.
 - Adjust the policy/regulation so that leave may be donated in instances of pregnancy/childbirth.

Additional Benefit Considerations

- Add Roth IRA as an option for employee retirement plans.
- Improved mental health support.
 - Start a tradition of weekly "no-meeting days" where everyone can focus on their work without needing to log into a meeting on that particular day.

The proposed improvements to staff compensation and benefits outlined in this memorandum are essential for fostering a motivated and satisfied workforce. By addressing the current gaps in our compensation structure and introducing enhanced benefits, we can create a more attractive and competitive package that will help us attract and retain talent.

These suggestions not only demonstrate the Alliance's commitment to UA Staff's well-being, but also acknowledge their invaluable contributions to the organization's success. By providing fair and competitive compensation, we can improve employee morale, increase job satisfaction, and ultimately boost productivity and performance.

Furthermore, the proposed enhancements to benefits, such as additional healthcare options, flexible work arrangements, and professional development opportunities, will contribute to a better work-life balance and personal growth for our staff members. This, in turn, will foster a more positive and supportive work environment, leading to increased employee loyalty and reduced turnover.

The Staff Alliance appreciates the boundaries within which the university must operate from a financial perspective. Implementing these improvements will require careful planning, budget allocation, and stakeholder collaboration. Ideally the outcomes from the Compensation Philosophy Committee will eliminate the need for the Staff Alliance to prepare annual memorandums.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Compensation Philosophy Committee continue to meet on a regular basis, approach compensation broadly, analyze the feasibility of the recommendations in this memorandum, conduct further research, and develop a detailed implementation plan. It is also requested that a representative from the committee attend

Staff Alliance meetings on a minimum of a quarterly basis to provide updates.