

## FPC FAQs on Salaries (Last update: 3/31/2017)

This is an informal guide designed to put some common questions in a more accessible format than the *Academic Handbook* (see especially Chapter 4, section III.B). In the case of a discrepancy, trust the handbook.

### **What kinds of salary increases can be awarded?**

There are three kinds of increases in salary: (i) *standard* increases (to address rising costs of living) that are calculated as a percentage of the total salary; (ii) somewhat larger *merit* increases, which include the standard increase as well as a fixed dollar amount that is faculty rank-specific; (iii) *promotion* increases awarded for tenure or promotion to full professor – these include the standard increase plus a fixed dollar amount that is larger than the merit increase (again rank-specific).

### **What is the typical pattern for salary increases?**

Junior faculty who have completed their terminal degree typically receive a merit increase each year. Senior faculty typically get a merit increase every other year. There are some technicalities that usually apply to ensure equity, as follows. Junior faculty usually receive a maximum of seven consecutive merit increases before switching to the pattern of merit increases every second year. A junior faculty member who is tenured before receiving seven consecutive merit increases would typically continue to receive consecutive merit increases until seven have been received. In each of these cases, one of the seven consecutive “merit” increases is in fact the promotion increase awarded for receiving tenure. Merit increases are typically suspended during a leave of absence, except when the leave is for a particularly meritorious reason such as a prestigious fellowship.

### **How are salary increases determined?**

When department chairs submit recommendations for salary increases in the spring semester, these recommendations usually cover the subsequent two-year period for each affected faculty member, specifying a standard or merit increase for each of the two following years. However, a department chair does not submit a salary recommendation for every department member every year. Instead, department chairs submit two years’ worth of salary recommendations only for those department members who are currently in an *evaluation year*. Here, an “evaluation year” is one in which the department evaluates the faculty member by submitting either a formal review memo, or a sabbatical proposal memo, or a post-sabbatical report memo. Occasionally, there may be a need for a department chair to make a salary recommendation in a non-evaluation year. (This can happen when a faculty member’s review cycle is not in sync with their sabbatical cycle.) In these cases, the chair should take a quick look at course evaluations and the faculty member’s CV and make a recommendation based on that information. Chairs should consult with senior members of the department and should invite the input of junior members of the department before making the recommendations. The chair gives these recommendations to the appropriate Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, who reports the recommendations to FPC. At the same time, chairs should report to each faculty member in their department their recommendations concerning that individual. FPC reviews each recommendation in the context of faculty performance across the college, and either accepts it as it stands or rejects it and makes

another one. If the committee makes a change, the Provost informs the department chair and the department chair should then inform the affected faculty member.

**What do the symbols on the salary recommendation form mean?**

“X” means merit increase; “O” means standard increase. A “-” may be used for a salary freeze.

**What might cause someone to deviate from the typical pattern of salary increases?**

A scheduled merit increase may be denied or delayed based on performance issues such as deficiencies in one or more of the three areas (teaching, scholarship and service). Similarly, two merit increases may occur in consecutive years if warranted by exceptionally good performance. A double merit increase may be awarded due to an outstanding accomplishment (e.g. major grant, book award, particularly outstanding service contribution, etc.). A salary may be frozen in cases of very serious concerns. Chairs should report particularly meritorious accomplishments or other issues that might affect salary determinations if they make a salary recommendation that deviates from the typical pattern. As a general guideline, chairs should be aware that the College typically only deviates from the typical pattern in less than 5% of the faculty in a given year.

**How is the amount of a merit increase determined? Why might merit increases vary by year?**

The percentage amount of standard increases and the dollar amount of merit and promotion increases are determined by the size of the faculty salary pool. This reflects the overall financial situation of the College and the recommendation of the Planning and Budget Committee. Other factors enter into the calculation as well: how many faculty members are on sabbatical, whether they take a full year or a half year, how many adjuncts are hired in a given year, how many faculty are recommended for merit increases, etc. As a consequence, standard, merit and promotion increases vary by year.

This means that the dollar amount of a merit increase changes every year, and has nothing to do with actual job performance in any given case. This also means that the amount of salary increase at tenure and promotion does vary depending on the year one is tenured or promoted. In short, the percentage raise and the dollar figure of a merit increase reflect the overall finances of the college, and not individual performance.

**What do I do if I have a concern about my salary?**

If there are concerns with your salary, you may ask FPC to look at your salary again in comparison with others. FPC has considered such cases and occasionally finds a need to adjust a salary. This may be accomplished by speeding up or slowing down merit and other increases.