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FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT  
Faculty Opinion Survey on Merit Pay

The following information is being distributed to unit code administrators, Faculty Senators, Alternates, and upon request. This information will be discussed at the October 19, Faculty Senate meeting.

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OVERVIEW

The term "merit pay" is persistently used in higher education to identify a system that determines, by assessing the quality of the individual's performance, annual salary increments for a faculty member. General agreement exists that the basis for determining such a reward comes from three areas--teaching, research, and service. More difficult to answer are the questions : What is merit pay? How is it allocated? What does it achieve? To answer these questions requires an assessment of each institution. There exists no commonly accepted means for implementing merit pay. In research institutions, the conventional wisdom holds that research and publication of the results of such research is the commanding factor in the reward of merit. In other institutions--as community colleges--teaching is the prime mover. Additionally, in service-oriented colleges, service may be a more significant factor. Ironically, in the instance of comprehensive universities, all three in varying degrees are part of the merit formula.

Several common problems do exist in all institutions. The most basic conundrum evolves from the great difficulty in identifying the unquantifiable. Although published research may be readily assessed by peer review and may be relatively uniform in assessment standards, teaching and service evaluations carry taxing challenges. In the administration of merit pay, how much of the annual salary increment should be given to merit? In using student opinion polls of teaching, what allowances are made for the conditions that may exist that show a professor may be an excellent teacher in small classes but less so in large classes? What standards can be used to mitigate time required by new faculty learning how to teach effectively large classes? Does the time of day that a course is taught influence student opinion of teaching? In using the summary of teaching scores, does the individual teacher compete against his/her colleagues in the award of merit for teaching? Does a 4.3 compared to a 4.5 on a five point scale indicate anything? Is a 3 an adequate evaluation by a student, but a disaster to the faculty member when the unit mean is 4.3? Is there an inherent cultural and/or gender bias on the part of students that influences their scores? What are the subtle differences in determining the quality of service? Thus, the list of questions grows when quantification predominates in assessing the unquantifiable.

Nationally, there exist two extremely different types of pay systems. Professor W. Lee Hansen<sup>1</sup> has labeled one a structured system. The other he chooses to identify as a flexible, unstructured salary system. In the first, faculty members are tied to a single fixed salary approach. Merit is not a factor. Each new class of faculty advance at the same rate until some cap occurs, usually in twenty or twenty-five years. In the second system, annual increases vary between faculty members as each year's increase is determined on merit. Most institutions lie within these two poles. Some combine longevity, rank, and inflation adjustments with a merit allocation.

In the University of North Carolina system, merit pay is the standard identifying characteristic of the salary system and has been for twenty years or more, save when the legislature, on rare occasions, mandated an across the board increment to faculty. This has been either by a specific figure or a percentage of total monies available for raises. The Board of Governors and the present and immediate past president of the system have preferred a merit system that allows for each constituent institution to determine the factors that compose the merit award system. Only recently has there been any discussion by the Board of Governors in considering any priorities in the award of merit pay at the system level. Thus, at this level, the practice has been to implement a flexible, unstructured salary system.

When the annual salary increment funds arrive at East Carolina University, the last several chancellors have generally allowed the individual units' administrators to recommend merit increases based upon local, approved unit interpretations of the triune of research, teaching, and service. These assessments are translated into a figure for the purpose of ranking a faculty member's performance and awarding merit salary increments. Funds have also been made available for salary adjustments owing to inequities or market conditions. This local system is more structured than the UNC system approach, being geared to individual academic units' concepts of merit, operating under a university-wide set of standards. The term "merit pay" tends to be a variable concept at East Carolina University.

Hansen concluded his commentary on merit pay with the following:

We know too little about merit pay in higher education. A comprehensive research program is needed to describe how merit pay systems operate, their effectiveness in rewarding meritorious faculty members, and the response of faculty members to their merit increases.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>W. Lee Hansen, "Merit Pay in Higher Education," in *Academic Labor Markets and Careers*, David Breneman and Ted Youn, editors, New York: Falmer Press, 1988, pp. 114-137. At the time of publication of this article, Professor Hansen was Professor of Economic and Industrial Relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a leading commentator on labor markets and higher education.

<sup>2</sup>IBID., 133.

The Faculty Affairs Committee has sought to determine what faculty members believe merit pay is, how faculty members think it is allocated, and what faculty members believe it accomplishes at the University. In doing so, the Committee believes it is aiding in determining the nature of merit pay in higher education.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Members of the Subcommittee on Merit Pay were Henry Ferrell (Chair), Artemis Kares, Karen Hancock, Bob Hursey, Susan McCammon, and Stephen Thomas. John Crammer with the Department of Mathematics served as the statistical consultant. The subcommittee met on October 7, 1992, to discuss its charge "to investigate merit pay." The subcommittee continued to meet during October and November to determine the parameters of its charge in developing a faculty survey to be distributed during Spring semester 1993.

In an effort to assist the members with the development of the survey, assorted merit-related publications were distributed, including articles from *Academe*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Higher Education*, *AAUP*, and questionnaires from several universities. As the subcommittee met it discussed these publications and their use in developing the ECU survey. In their efforts to ascertain a focus, the members discussed issues including the application and use of merit pay, a definition of merit pay, sources of merit pay, the impact of merit pay on faculty morale and performance.

The subcommittee agreed that the survey should be sent to all tenured and tenure-track faculty. Faculty in fixed-term appointments would not be surveyed.

Three members of the subcommittee were assigned the task of developing a merit survey. This group began the process by reviewing merit surveys/questionnaires constructed by several other universities. Based on the subcommittee's charge and a review of pertinent literature and available surveys, primary focus areas were identified and used as the outline for developing survey items. In general, these areas included:

1. How merit awards were determined.
2. The perceptions about merit.
3. The effect of merit on performance

Each question on the initial survey draft was reviewed by the survey development team and revised as needed. The resulting 54 item survey was then reviewed and edited, item-by-item, by the subcommittee. The subcommittee presented the proposed survey to the Faculty Affairs Committee where it was reviewed, amended, and approved. The final survey was distributed to all tenured and tenure-track faculty at the beginning of the 1993 Spring semester.

Survey responses were based on a Likert-type scale with answers to be recorded on a NCS answer sheet for computer analysis. This first section contained 45 questions that addressed the determination, perceptions, and effects of merit. The second section, with nine questions, covered biographical data of the respondent. The third and final section provided for comments regarding merit pay that the respondent felt were not adequately addressed in the questionnaire.

#### SYNOPSIS

The subcommittee forwarded to the more than 900 tenured and/or tenure-track faculty (including the School of Medicine faculty) a questionnaire designed to determine faculty perceptions of merit pay policies and practices at ECU. Nearly 360 surveys were completed and returned (a return of approximately 40% whose mix of respondents seems reasonably representative of the survey audience). Reduction of the data revealed the following attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions :

Respondents feel -- though weakly -- that they understand unit criteria and practices for determining merit pay awards (Q6); however, they are less certain of their unit criteria and practices for determining individual award amounts, manifesting roughly the same degree of uncertainty that merit magnitudes mirror quality of performance (Q8, 10, 11).

Respondents strongly oppose determination of merit awards by administrators external to their unit (Q14), nor do they seem to care much for merit award determination by a unit committee (Q12): Unit administrator judgment was the preferred method of individual merit determination (Q13).

Respondents perceive that little weight -- perhaps too little -- is accorded teaching effectiveness in determination of merit awards (Q17, 18), that great emphasis -- perhaps too great -- is accorded research/creative activity (Q19, 20), and that little -- perhaps too little -- weight is accorded service (Q21, 22). Respondents also failed to confirm the consistency of ECU merit pay policies and the mission of ECU (Q25).

Pervasive dissatisfaction with perceived ECU merit pay policies and procedures is confirmed by Q26 (and Q27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36). Moreover, respondents disagree strongly that ECU merit pay policies have: increased faculty morale; increased institutional loyalty; increased teaching effectiveness; made ECU a better place to work; promoted collegiality; been consistent with professional goals and standards; or encouraged ethical behavior. Respondents do, however, believe that ECU merit pay policies have increased publication (Q30), even though they disagree that the quality of research/creative activity has been increased by said policies (Q31). Combining faculty responses to the 10 questions, Q27-36 whose characteristics are the subject of this paragraph, the respondents disagree rather strongly that ECU merit pay policies have positively influenced those characteristics. [See Attachments]

Furthermore, among those faculty who responded to questions 1 and 26 and who have "generally received more than average merit awards" (25.6% of respondents), less than half (49%) agreed (by having responded either "very greatly" or "completely" to Q26) that they were satisfied with ECU merit pay policies and procedures (Q26). Similar comparisons of this favored group's opinions revealed that: less than half (48%) felt that merit pay policies had increased quality of research/creative activity (Q31); only 17.4% felt that institutional loyalty had been increased; only 15.2% felt that faculty morale had been increased; only 27% felt that teaching effectiveness had been increased; only 47.94% felt collegiality had been increased; only 33% felt that ECU had been made a better place to work; and 54% agreed that merit pay policies had been consistent with their professional goals and standards.

Respondents agreed that raise monies should be used to rectify salary inequities (Q37, 38), that (in response to inflationary pressures) smaller merit and larger across-the-board increases should be provided (Q40), that the establishment of a competitive level of pay for all faculty is more important than assignment of individual merit awards (Q42), that raises should be influenced by unavailability of past merit monies (Q39), that merit evaluations should cover a period longer than one year (Q43), and that each unit should receive an equal percentage of its salary budget for merit increases.

#### SURVEY RESPONSE ANALYSIS

THE POPULATION: Of the total 358 tenured or tenure-track faculty who completed and returned the questionnaire for reduction, 10 (.03%) identified themselves as Instructors; 104 (29%) as Assistant Professors; 119 (33.2%) as Associate Professors; 115 (32.1%) as Professors; and 10 either gave meaningless or no information as to their ranks.

[According to data submitted on 652 ECU faculty (some of whom may not have been tenured or tenure-track faculty) to the AAUP for its 1992-93 annual salary survey and published in the March/April 1993 edition (vol. 79, No. 2) of Academe, .01% of the ECU faculty were classified as Instructors; 37.5% were Assistant Professors; 31.6% were Associate Professors; and 30% were Professors. The mix of respondents to the merit pay survey appears, therefore, to have been reasonably representative of the ECU faculty.]

114 (33%) of the respondents identified themselves as female, while 231 identified themselves as male (and 13 refused gender identification). [For the aforementioned AAUP survey, 30% were female.]

79 of the respondents had been at ECU for less than 5 years; 80 for 5 - 9 years; 50 for 10 - 14 years; and 147 for 15 or more years (12 gave meaningless or no information on years of service).

77 of the respondents had been in rank for less than 3 years; 103 for 3 - 5 years; 67 for 6 - 9 years; 43 for 10 - 14 years; and 59 had been in rank for at least 15 years (9 did not respond to this item).

30 of the respondents stated that they typically devoted less than 15% of their work week to teaching-related activities; 52 devoted 15 - 29%; 92 devoted 30 - 49%; 120 devoted 50 - 74%; and 57 devoted at least 75% (7 did not respond).

102 responded that they typically devoted less than 15% of their work week to research/creative activities; 103 devoted 15 - 29%; 85 devoted 30 - 49%; 52 devoted 50 - 74%; and 8 devoted at least 75% (8 did not respond).

135 responded that they typically devoted less than 15% of their work week to service; 136 devoted 15 - 29%; 60 devoted 30 - 49%; 16 devoted 50 - 74%; and 3 devoted at least 75% (8 did not respond).

218 responded that they typically devoted less than 15% of their work week to administrative tasks; 60 devoted 15 - 29%; 31 devoted 30 - 49%; 30 devoted 50 - 74%; and 9 devoted at least 75% (10 did not respond).

The highest degree held by 54 of the respondents was a Master's, while 279 held a Doctorate (25 responses were either meaningless or blanks).

118 (38.1%) of the respondents were in the College of Arts and Sciences; 125 (40.3%) in the Professional Schools, excluding Medicine; and 67 (21.6%) in Medicine. 48 did not identify their units.

#### QUESTION-BY-QUESTION ANALYSIS:

Q1 When asked about the magnitudes of past merit pay increments, 73 (20.6%) responded that they had received more than the unit average; 116 (32.8%) responded about average; 91 (25.7%) responded less than average; and 72 (20.3%) claimed ignorance.

Q2 How does your unit administrator express your performance? 120 (33.7%) responded as a sum of weighted points; 64 (18%) responded as a subjective judgment; 135 (37.9%) stated as a combination of the first two; 10 (2.8%) stated as a non-numerical objective assessment; and 27 (7.6%) claimed ignorance.

Q3 When merit awards are made, is your annual performance rating used as your merit rating? 181 responded yes (51%); 32 (9%) no; and 139 (39.2%) claimed ignorance.

Q4 Has the same system for determining merit in your unit been uniformly applied to all unit faculty? 117 (32.9%) yes; 75 (22.2%) no; and 153 (43%) claimed ignorance.

Q5 When asked how individual merit ratings are determined in their units, 5 (1.4%) responded by unit committee; 239 (67.5%) by unit administrator; 65 (18.4%) by combination of unit committee and unit administrator; 6 (1.7%) by external administrator; and 39 (11%) claimed ignorance.

In each of the following questions, numerical values were assigned to responses: 1 to "not at all"; 2 to "very little"; 3 to "somewhat"; 4 to "very greatly"; and 5 to "completely." A scale was then created where the a priori mean was 3. Thus, a mean score of above 3 indicates a positive response; a mean score of less than three, a negative. (Please refer to the appendices for more complete information on each question.) NOTE: "vg +" designates that percentage of the faculty responding to an item who DID NOT respond "somewhat" but DID respond "very greatly" or "completely" (i.e., the positive-response portion to an item).

Q6 To what extent do you understand your unit's criteria and practices of determining individual merit ratings? (1) 48; (2) 65; (3) 109; (4) 75; (5) 52 (and 9 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.025. 53% responded vg +. Median response was "somewhat."

Q7 To what extent do you understand your unit's criteria and practices of determining individual awards? (1) 67; (2) 78; (3) 99; (4) 57; (5) 45 (and 12 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.812. 41% responded vg +. Median response was "somewhat."

Q8 To what extent have the amounts of your merit pay awards accurately ... reflected the quality of your academic accomplishments?

(1) 55; (2) 63; (3) 112; (4) 64; (5) 22 (and 42 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.794. 42.157% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

The same numerical scale was used in the following questions, except that a blank meant "do not know."

Q9 To what extent have the amounts of your merit awards been directly proportional to your annual performance rating?

(1) 44; (2) 58; (3) 91; (4) 65; (5) 33 (and 67 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.948. 49% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q10 To what extent have the amounts of your merit pay awards accurately reflected quality of your performance?

(1) 60; (2) 85; (3) 92; (4) 58; (5) 18 (and 45 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.645. 34.389% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q11 To what extent have the amounts of your merit pay awards in your unit accurately reflected quality of performance of your unit colleagues?

(1) 37; (2) 65; (3) 89; (4) 36; (5) 16; (and 115 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.708. 33.766 responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q12 To what extent SHOULD the amounts of your merit pay awards be determined by an unit committee...?

(1) 130; (2) 54; (3) 76; (4) 62; (5) 13 (and 23 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.325. 28.958% responded vg+. Median response was "very little."

Q13 To what extent SHOULD the amounts of your merit pay awards be determined by your unit administrator?

(1) 51; (2) 47; (3) 84; (4) 90; (5) 68 (and 18 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.226. 61.719 responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q14 To what extent SHOULD the amounts of your merit pay awards be determined by administrators outside your unit?

(1) 234; (2) 47; (3) 46; (4) 10; (5) 7 (and 14 blanks), yielding an average response of 1.573. 5.705% responded vg+. Median response was "not at all."

Q15 To what extent do you take care in preparing your annual faculty report...that influence(s) merit pay awards?

(1) 4; (2) 6; (3) 42; (4) 154; (5) 143 (and 9 blanks), yielding an average response of 4.221. 96.743% responded vg+. Median response was "very greatly."

Q16 To what extent does the person charged to evaluate the merit take care in preparing your annual faculty report...that influence(s) merit pay awards?

(1) 19; (2) 36; (3) 71; (4) 96; (5) 51 (and 85 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.454. 72.772 responded vg+. Median response as "very greatly."

Q17 To what extent are merit pay awards based upon teaching effectiveness?

(1) 43; (2) 103; (3) 127; (4) 28; (5) 2 (and 55 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.482. 17.045% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q18 To what extent SHOULD merit pay awards be based upon teaching effectiveness?

(1) 7; (2) 7; (3) 131; (4) 184; (5) 19 (and 10 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.578. 93.548% responded vg+. Median response was "very greatly."

Q19 To what extent are merit pay awards based upon research/creative activities?

(1) 5; (2) 19; (3) 101; (4) 155; (5) 29 (and 49 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.595. 88.462% responded vg+. Median response was "very greatly."

Q20 To what extent SHOULD merit pay awards be based upon research/creative activities?

(1) 2; (2) 31; (3) 205; (4) 106; (5) 7 (and 7 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.242. 77.397% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q21 To what extent are merit pay awards based upon service?

(1) 63; (2) 121; (3) 105; (4) 19; (5) 0 (and 49 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.26. 9.36% responded vg+. Median response was "very little."

Q22 To what extent SHOULD merit pay awards be based upon service?

(1) 14; (2) 75; (3) 195; (4) 59; (5) 6 (and 9 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.908. 42.208% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q23 To what extent are you familiar with the mission of ECU as defined by the BOG of the UNC?

(1) 24; (2) 40; (3) 123; (4) 109; (5) 51 (and 11 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.354. 71.429% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q24 To what extent is the emphasis in your unit placed upon teaching, research/creative activity, and service consistent with the BOG's mission for ECU?

(1) 12; (2) 37; (3) 99; (4) 103; (5) 33 (and 74 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.380. 73.514 responded vg+. Median score was "somewhat."

Q25 To what extent are current merit pay policies in your unit consistent with the BOG's mission for ECU?

(1) 31; (2) 42; (3) 91; (4) 54; (5) 19 (and 121 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.949. 50% responded vg+. Median response was "somewhat."

Q26 To what extent have you been satisfied with merit pay policies and procedures at ECU?  
(1) 95; (2) 81; (3) 89; (4) 58; (5) 10 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.42. 27.869% responded pos + .  
Median response was "very little."

For the following questions, responses were assigned these numerical values: (1) means "strongly disagree"; (2) means "disagree"; (3) means "neutral"; (4) means "agree"; and (5) means "strongly agree." Each of questions 27-36 began with MERIT PAY POLICIES AT ECU HAVE ..

Q27 increased faculty morale.  
(1) 120; (2) 95; (3) 68; (4) 36; (5) 14 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.186. 18.868% responded pos + percentage of those who DID NOT respond "neutral" but DID respond either "agree" or "strongly agree." Median response was "disagree."

Q28 increased institutional loyalty.  
(1) 115; (2) 106; (3) 79; (4) 18; (5) 11 (and 29 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.1. 11.6% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q29 increased teaching effectiveness.  
(1) 129; (2) 103; (3) 58; (4) 33; (5) 9 (and 26 blanks), yielding an average response of 1.097. 15.328% responded pos + . Median response was "disagree."

Q30 increased publication.  
(1) 76; (2) 47; (3) 76; (4) 121; (5) 39 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.156. 62.257% responded pos + . Median response was "neutral."

Q31 increased quality of research/creative activity.  
(1) 76; (2) 81; (3) 86; (4) 75; (5) 15 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.616. 36.437% responded pos + . Median response was "neutral."

Q32 increased service to the university community.  
(1) 110; (2) 98; (3) 82; (4) 40; (5) 4 (and 24 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.192. 17.46% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q33 made ECU a better place to work.  
(1) 112; (2) 101; (3) 75; (4) 36; (5) 11 (and 23 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.203. 18% responded pos + .  
Median score was "disagree."

Q34 promoted collegiality at ECU.  
(1) 132; (2) 103; (3) 82; (4) 13; (5) 4 (and 24 blanks), yielding an average response of 1.964. 6.8% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q35 been consistent with my professional goals and standards.  
(1) 94; (2) 87; (3) 80; (4) 52; (5) 20 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.45. 28.5% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q36 encouraged ethical behavior.  
(1) 103; (2) 82; (3) 117; (4) 14; (5) 7 (and 35 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.2. 10.2% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q37 Faculty salaries SHOULD always be determined SOLELY on the basis of one's merit rating.  
(1) 88; (2) 116; (3) 37; (4) 76; (5) 37 (and 4 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.6. 35.7% responded pos + .  
Median response was "disagree."

Q38 Faculty salary increases SHOULD be used to rectify genuine salary inequity considerations.  
(1) 25; (2) 23; (3) 36; (4) 146; (5) 125 (and 3 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.91. 85% responded pos + .  
Median response was "agree."

Q39 Faculty salary increases SHOULD be influenced by unavailability of past merit monies.  
(1) 22; (2) 25; (3) 39; (4) 128; (5) 138 (and 6 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.95. 85% responded pos + .  
Median response was "agree."

Q40 In response to inflationary pressures, smaller merit and large across-the-board salary increases SHOULD be provided.  
(1) 56; (2) 51; (3) 45; (4) 97; (5) 104 (and 5 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.4. 65.3% responded pos + .  
Median response was "agree."

Q41 Each unit SHOULD receive an equal percentage of its salary budget for merit increases.  
(1) 40; (2) 49; (3) 68; (4) 90; (5) 98 (and 13 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.5. 68% responded pos + .  
Median response was "agree."

Q42 More important than assignment of individual merit awards is establishment of a competitive level of pay for all faculty.  
(1) 82; (2) 44; (3) 72; (4) 100; (5) 104 (and 6 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.6. 72.9% responded pos + .  
Median response was "agree."

Q43 Merit pay evaluations SHOULD cover a longer period of time than one year....

(1) 30; (2) 37; (3) 83; (4) 129; (5) 70 (and 9 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.5. 74.8% responded pos + . Median response was "agree."

Q44 The sex of the person has an impact upon merit pay.

(1) 37; (2) 48; (3) 76; (4) 61; (5) 50 (and 26 blanks), yielding an average response of 2.8. 43.4% responded pos + . Median response was "neutral."

Q45 The rank of the person has an impact upon merit pay.

(1) 64; (2) 44; (3) 76; (4) 84; (5) 65 (and 25 blanks), yielding an average response of 3.13. 58% responded pos + . Median response was "neutral."

#### UNEDITED COMMENTS

Aside from small adjustments that the Chair can make, the merit increase is based on a formula by which 1/2 of the merit increase is directly proportional to salary. This is in addition to what we get based on across-the-board increases. As a result of this system, rich faculty get richer and the poor faculty, who may even perform better than the rich ones, have little or no chance to catch up. It is close to impossible to "reform" this system since the rich faculty - almost by definition - are in influential positions, in particular when supported by the Chair. I think that there should be a university-wide formula by which merit increases are calculated and that these increases should be in no way connected with salary of individual faculty members.

I am glad you took the time to construct this questionnaire, however there are some problems. Questions 1-20 imply that merit decisions in my unit are made in the same way year after year. In fact, we have had different chairs, so the fairness, criteria, etc. have varied according to unit head. Over the years our chair has typically stated the range in merit pay at the first departmental meeting in August. Much more useful would be the distribution of each professor's merit raise. I realize such information is available in the Faculty Senate office, but such hurdles and obstacles are unnecessary. I think you should encourage the formation of committees to review salary inequities. The unit head shouldn't make these decisions alone.

Long-term teaching effectiveness is increasingly being de-emphasized in my department. Too much emphasis is being placed on such easily fudged items as the number and attractiveness of written handouts, etc. in evaluating teaching. In my department, high Student Opinion Survey results are systematically discounted in proportion to the percentage of "A" and "B" grades given by the instructor. This unfair methodology of evaluation actually penalizes good teaching and high achievement by students!

I am not aware of the existence of or the specifics of unit or ECU policies regarding merit salary increases. I do not know the salaries or salary merit raises of the colleagues in my unit, therefore I could not answer all of the questions in the questionnaire. My knowledge of any merit pay system comes solely from personal experience (i.e. I worked hard, performed well, and was rewarded with a raise, which may have included a cost of living as well as merit increases). Merit increases are critical in maintaining high education/work standards, good morale, and loyalty to the university. Why work hard when someone sitting on their laurels makes as much as, or more than, you do? Why stay at an institution where mediocrity is rewarded and hard work not appreciated? Lack of merit pay will promote the flight of talented individuals from ECU to other universities (a reality experienced by many campuses).

I feel the merit system does not work. I left another system to come to ECU because I was led to believe that salary increases were based on merit. I took a drastic pay cut and it has taken me 5 years to get back to where I was when I was in \_\_\_\_\_. Even though my evaluations here have been superior, I consistently have gotten the lowest merit increase because others with lower salaries "needed" it more. And by the way, they didn't have nearly as good an evaluation as I did! I have been very disappointed in the system.

Many faculty, for various reasons, including ignorance of pay levels, start out low at ECU. This places them in a position where they receive relatively low salaries forever, regardless of their merit increases. One should not be penalized in subsequent years for failing to negotiate a decent salary upon hiring. Corrections for this past inequity should be made for all relevant faculty at ECU. Once starting salary problems have been corrected, subsequent increases should be primarily based on merit.

Given how poorly the university supports research (and how poorly the State pays, especially humanities people), why are you bothering with this?

Of the 14 faculty positions in this entire place, everyone got a raise except for 5 people; and these 5 people were all from the same department. One woman didn't even have her contract renewed, and she still got a merit raise. (This same woman didn't do that many of the requirements for merit pay. The 5 who didn't get merit raises did more than she did!!!) The only person from our department who got a raise was our supervisor, and she got our share of the money when we didn't get the money. The money for supervisors should probably be separate from the others because it's a conflict of interest. (The supervisor gave all of us mediocre evaluations so she could get our share of the money.) And another puzzling thing is that a completely vacant position got a \$420 merit money increase. I would like to know how a vacant position "earned" merit money when there was nobody in that position to do the things necessary for merit money. (This position has been vacant for years.) If the \$420 was a "cost of living" raise, then how come the 5 of us didn't get "cost of living" raises?

Some questions were worded poorly as they apply to my unit's situation. Merit money is so insignificant that its distribution is of little value. Focus should be on a reward system other than money; to make faculty feel good about their efforts.

The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina has indicated that we are primarily a teaching institution - too much emphasis is put on research and publishing. Now we have a lot of garbage being published. It is a fact that merit pay is awarded to those individuals who do research and publish. Good teaching is expected and not rewarded. The same

procedure is used to determine promotion. Some administrators have forgotten that without students and teachers who excel, none of us would have a job.

Raises? Merit Raises?? Morale???

There is no way to truly determine teaching effectiveness. Equity in salary and inflationary pressures are primary. Merit monies are needed; however, if utilized alone they quickly create unjustifiable extremes in unit salaries.

Eliminate Merit Pay!!! ECU is the 4th university I've worked at and three of the other schools had a merit system. I have yet to see one work in a positive way. There is no equitable way to rank the various activities of faculty to fairly assess merit. On the other hand, I've consistently seen bad feelings and low morale result from faculty rankings and comparisons.

The present "merit" system in my department is totally arbitrary and based strictly on a longevity variable, ie. the longer one works at ECU, the higher the raise without reference to actual data-based productivity or even ratings by students regarding teaching effectiveness. It is totally discouraging and has been counter-productive to academic progress at even the minimal level. In fact, I have actually been told by a departmental chairperson during 3 consecutive evaluations that: 1. I work too hard; 2. I make everyone else look bad; 3. Why do I invest so much in my job!! This feedback is appalling and the highest level of unprofessional conduct I have ever experienced in my career.

Merit pay is an essential management tool in academic administration. Under no circumstances should across-the-board raises ever be awarded at the university. Academic units should have clear missions and faculty should be evaluated through criteria established by the faculty of the unit consistent with its mission. The actual evaluation should be the sole responsibility of the unit administrator.

Merit pool monies should be distributed without regard to current salary levels unless units establish specific (and increasingly stringent) expectations for faculty holding higher academic rank. Thus, in the absence of differential criteria, faculty receiving identical evaluation scores would receive raises of identical dollar amounts regardless of base pay. After all, shouldn't we expect senior faculty to be better at their jobs and thus earn higher scores and raises than their less experienced colleagues?

I suspect that some faculty will argue that, due to the lack of meaningful raises over the last two years, whatever monies are available this year should be distributed in large part across-the-board. Actually, the current circumstance argues for more emphasis on merit with a greater reward for those who have excelled as teachers and researchers than in 'normal' years. Failure to do so will send a clear message that there is no economic incentive to perform at any other than a marginal level. This would be a severe blow to the morale of faculty who have continued to strive for excellence in the absence of clear economic incentive. This is a particularly crucial consideration given the rather dire economic projections for the state over the next decade. If the small amounts of monies available are not used to reward those doing the best job, the decline of the quality of the university is assured.

Typically, faculty opposed to the merit pay system suggest that we don't have adequate systems of faculty evaluation to support it. I don't believe this is true, but if it is, the units in which this a problem need to rectify it. Deserved or not, the 90's are going to be a time of increased scrutiny of the university by the legislature and public at large. A merit system rewarding those who advance the mission of the university is critical in this new climate of accountability.

There is a HUGE discrepancy at this university in the salaries of females vs. males. Sex definitely makes a difference. Inequity increase make no sense---3 females in our school got \$400--last year one male got \$3000. Some of us got nothing, yet people being hired now make more than myself with less university experience! What a shame a group of women don't band together and file a class action suit on pay discrimination.

I have felt that past raises have been predicated on teaching only. This has been absolutely no reinforcement for creating new programs, ideas or anything creative. However, if you teach intro. courses, give good grades and have a 90% teaching load, you will receive the highest merit raise in the unit. So much for a research institution with new and creative programs.

It is difficult to answer many questions due to the lack of money the state has distributed for university use in the recent past. A 2% increase has minimal impact on salary but will have a major impact on morale. With no money available, there are no other choices.

Items #50-53 should ask for hours spent. I put in 100+ hours/week on ECU activities, so my 50% teaching = 50 hours which exceeds someone else's 75% of 40 hours = 30 hours. You will not learn much from items #50-53. You need overall hours spent on ECU activities.

Item #41 is not clear. Your own data (cumulative) will show this. One year I received the highest overall evaluation and got a less than average increase. Merit pay since then has been NO factor in my performance. I perform based on personal high-quality internal motivation needs. One year I was severely penalized (professional jealousy) because my research was outstanding.

The current merit pay system properly rewards excellence in research and, to a somewhat lesser extent, excellence in teaching--a much more difficult area to measure accurately.

If, as some of the questions indicate, this is an effort to place less emphasis on research as a measure of faculty achievement, I am strongly opposed. As a university we either move with increasing commitment, toward improving our status as a research institution, or we move toward mediocrity. The latter will be the end result of the apparently laudable "let's do more to reward good teaching" rhetoric.

Let's attend to some of the obvious gender discrepancies in pay and find more ways to reward achievement in research. Otherwise, let's leave well enough alone.

I believe merit pay award systems give too much discretionary power to the Chair. It seems to me that pay award is subjectively set for each faculty member, the Chair then provides the numerical grade and evaluation to fit the target. To determine teaching effectiveness, Chairs are not consistent with how much importance they attach to the results of student surveys; that depends on how they serve or support their subjectively determined numerical rating. Some Chairs are more inclined to grant high merit raises to female faculty, more out of fear of being seen as discriminating than the male faculty's contributions to research or rather scholarly activities.

I think merit raises are handled fairly in our department. This form was a pain the neck!

The perfect questionnaire has yet to be written!!!

There should be consideration of work assignment (ie. percentage of time allocated to teaching, research and service) for both annual evaluation and promotion/tenure decisions. Annual evaluations should be a part of promotion/tenure process.

Because of the way merit raises are implemented at ECU, I oppose merit raises. I am not opposed to an equitable and fair system of merit raises. I don't think we have that system in operation at ECU. It is too discretionary and up to the whim of the administration.

One of the most difficult areas to address is that of salary inequities (unless adequate funds are specifically and separately earmarked for this purpose). If no funds are available for salary inequities, the funds for salary increases will go to the younger faculty as they are in more need, are doing more of the cutting edge research and, most importantly, are more mobile and can be lost to other universities. Regarding merit as the major mode of determining salary increases, consider this. Due to across-the-board increases a faculty member who was considered to be more professionally advanced and from a most prestigious university was hired at a higher salary than a faculty member with 10 years service (both at the same rank). Due to across-the-board raises the newer faculty member's salary increased to a significantly higher dollar level than the faculty member with more service (something like \$20,000!). However, the new faculty member has not lived up to expectations in one area (publications) and is currently not promotable to full professor while the other faculty member has now exceeded the newer professor, was promoted 3 years ago to full professor, yet due to the unavailability of salary inequity funds the associate professor still makes \$6,000 more than the full professor. Most of the inequities were generated during the reign of a very bad chairman. However, these salaries are so out of equity that the new chairman has been unable to bring them into alignment after 5 years.

A. The percentages indicated in items 50-53 greatly exceed 100% for two reasons:

1. Like many faculty, I work a lot more than 40 hrs. per week
2. Teaching, research, and service related activities are NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE!

B. This survey is so obviously geared toward providing "bitching" opportunities for those who do not like merit pay that one must question whether the results will have any merit. Nowhere are there any questions on the basic theme of "should compensation be linked to performance?"

#9 & 26 The problem with these questions is that they are addressed in an ideal situation wherein merit money has been awarded in sufficient amounts to mean something. But under the situations of the past several years, the amount of merit money has been too low or non-existent. If the promise of adequate reward for superior work were to be realized, I would probably have answered "very greatly" to these questions. #27-34 As above, under the present situation of little or no merit pay, I wonder if morale, loyalty, etc. haven't actually suffered in view of the disappointments that have resulted after a year of hard work, only to be told that there is little or no merit monies.

Merit pay presumes the ability to make significant distinctions among the performances of members of the faculty. Yet, the annual evaluation instrument produces numerical differences that are lacking in statistically significant differences. Thus, while the concept of merit pay is attractive, the implementation appears to lack validity.

Not fairly done in this department.

I began my new position at ECU in December 1992. Being so new, I do not feel I have enough background to provide any useful opinions on the issue of merit pay here, which is why my answer form is blank.

I am unaware of "merit" pay being a policy, at least in my department.

The problem that I have with teaching effectiveness is in how this unit determines it. The student opinion poll is the only instrument used in determining teaching effectiveness. It has become a "get even" tool for students to use when they are required to attend classes by the instructor.

This survey (and my responses to it) are virtually meaningless for several reasons:

1. There has been little or no money for across the board, merit, or equalization for the past several years; philosophical evaluations of an extreme situation will be significantly different from philosophical evaluations of a more "normal" situation (i.e., more consistent with what we have experienced in the past).
2. I am in the Department which, when compared with many other departments, is grossly underpaid; equalization should be university wide, not just within departments. The people who teach in the sciences or in business are not inherently more valuable than I am, and yet the university treats them as if they were.
3. The Department has a new chairperson this year, who came here from another university, and we are as yet unaware of how his evaluations will differ from those of the three previous chairs, all of whom had come up through the ranks in this department.

During times such as the present, when the state is having trouble finding funds, "cost of living" raises seem better than "merit" ones. I feel some allowance should be made toward narrowing the gender gap.



Why are you (we) wasting time and money on this? Merit raises, when they come, are so small as to be inconsequential. So are regular raises for that matter. The system in our department is biased against junior faculty regardless of how much work is done. When I pointed this out at a meeting, I was called a Socialist by a senior faculty member (true) and told to wait, my opinion would change (I doubt it). In summary, the merit pay system is a joke! I'd do better if raises were awarded by lottery.

Response to the questionnaire was difficult since we have a new Department Chair who has not yet had the opportunity to assign merit pay. My responses to this were reflective of the situation prior to the recession.

I am strongly opposed to subjective measures of evaluation of research. Such standards are used as a cover for personal attacks as well as for attacks on unpopular ideas. Since the victim can never prove that's the motive...(.)

Teaching effectiveness should be stressed more---but teaching effectiveness means causing students to know more at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning. The subjective impressions of students or of department chairs are equally worthless as evidence of real teaching effectiveness.

I am not completing this because my experience at ECU is too short. I am struck by one point though. Annual evaluation is too frequent and in many ways meaningless. Certainly time consuming.

Many of the questions on merit pay were difficult to seriously consider, given the fact that raises have been so trivial recently. Results of this questionnaire need to be interpreted with caution relative to results following several good to average years of merit allowances.

Unit raises based on only last year's performance. I once wrote a Vice Chancellor asking if I could, "hold a publication in the bank until a year when the state legislature was up for election." I think I was taken seriously. Unit evaluation documents are not designed to discriminate re: teaching--however, excellent discrimination re: grants/publications--All faculty are always excellent teachers. Too much pressure to get grants on young faculty--discourages good teaching!

The major problem with the merit system at ECU is that those who have the responsibility of determining merit, or lack of merit, are not qualified to do so. A general rule goes something like this, "If you can't teach and do research, best you be an administrator at ECU." It would be nice if the best scholars within the department were given the responsibility of determining merit. But, all in all, merit is basically stupid and ineffective. Most of us are not motivated to do good science by the silly little reward called merit.

#### Concerns:

Our department is now using a formula to calculate ratings. Some activities are weighted more than others, but we are not privy to that information. There is little or no guidance given to assembling our documents or guiding our professional goals. We, as faculty, do not have equal access to resources or opportunities both within the department or among other university departments. Case in point: computers, computer linkage with other faculty.

Thank you for encouraging our voices in this survey.

The state of affairs in my school is very sad. The lack of pay raises has been a de-motivator for continuing to excel. Pay does matter.

It is my opinion that merit pay promotes achievement by rewarding faculty that participate vigorously in all aspects of academic life, including teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The system of merit pay serves to make individuals responsive to achievements as well as failures and thus promotes action. A system based on across-the-board pay increases rewards individuals regardless of achievement and I feel is contrary to the fundamental tenets upon which our society is based. Therefore, I am a strong advocate of pay increases based solely on merit.

One problem that exists is when merit raises are based on percentage of salary. That automatically disadvantages even very productive junior faculty. Furthermore, persistent lack of raises seem to be lowering morale, especially with costs (eg, health insurance) rising. There should be annual cost of living raises plus merit raises.

Past "alleged merit pay increases" during periods of rampant inflation have been a joke---a BAD joke! Since, during those periods of rampant inflation, our state-appropriated salary increase monies have not even equaled the inflationary increase, it has been totally impossible to have a true merit pay policy: Monies given to individuals for merit were not meritorious increases, but were other people's monies. In general, merit increases were simply back, overdue increases that should have been made to address losses due to inflation. The emphasis being currently placed by this administration upon PUBLICATION (NOT RESEARCH) is simply preposterous. ECU is a COMPREHENSIVE university, not a research university; and, I strongly suspect, there is little or no chance of becoming a research university anytime in the near future---I certainly hope NOT! The one thing this poor state does NOT need is the burden of supporting the horribly expensive enterprises known as "research universities," the most expensive, least cost-effective kinds of higher education we could possibly construct. Moreover, the pathetic level of student who ends up in my classes is incapable of profiting from any "research activities" which I would conduct---they can neither read, write, nor cipher. The amount of money and time WASTED in the past decade trying to pass ourselves off as a research institution is simply staggering! And we have learned nothing from this foolishness.

So much paperwork, so little raise---why bother?

One Dean from '84-'90 was extremely unfair with regards to merit pay. He told me on more than one occasion that he did not believe in merit pay. During those 6 years, the salary spread increased greatly between the underpaid and overworked and the overpaid, under-working faculty. The inequities in our unit are therefore extreme and a great source of poor morale.

I get the sense, in particular from administrators, that merit pay philosophy, practices, and procedures are not too awfully important. The most typical reason given is that so little is allocated to the units that it doesn't warrant attention and that those who are awarded merit will not care because so little is involved. As an example, if an average of \$1,000 per faculty member is allocated to a unit head for merit, what's the point? To a faculty member making \$30,000, that represents a 3.33% increase, which doesn't even cover inflation and losses as a result of past practices of not being able to fund raises. Merit pay, regardless of the amount, is a very important measure of where one stands in an organization with respect to one's peers. As a consequence, it merits (no pun intended) special attention. Very destructive messages are sent when merit is allocated in a capricious and arbitrary manner. Conversely, if a merit pay program is perceived to have been administered fairly, it can have a very dramatic and positive impact on morale regardless of the amount available to assign. Hope this effort with which you are involved produces useful insights. Just as importantly, I believe it will be beneficial to report your findings and conclusions to the faculty. Good luck!!!

Brilliant. After years of complaints about the worthlessness of the fill-in-the-dots student evaluation surveys, you use a fill-in-the-dots form for this important survey. You did not define your terms (units, merit pay) and you have no idea whether you are collecting uninformed/biased opinions or reasoned/informed answers. I am sure this is a lot easier to collect than written responses, but is ease the only measure to consider? What about quality? I'm not impressed.

Just out of curiosity, what do you mean by "SHOULD" in questions 12-14, 18, 20, 22, 37-41, 43?

Annotation on item #1: Depends on whether "average" is mean or median and whether comparison is made within or across ranks. The maximum percentage of an assistant professor's base is less than minimum percentage of full professor's base.

When merit pay is a percentage of base salary and there is an across-the-board percentage also, the assistant professor who has the highest possible merit rating and percentage may find that the amount of her salary increase in dollars is less than that of the full professor whose merit rating and percentage is the lowest possible value.

In the absence of any real merit pay, the hoops we go through annually are silly and counterproductive. Salary discrepancies between units destroy morale. I make half the salary of several new A.P.'s in business---I'll match my degree and my marketability any day, but it doesn't matter. The pay scale is so absurd that it destroys morale. Also, merit pay on a 2% basis overcompensates higher paid folks and under-compensates others. I attended a workshop on faculty evaluation this fall and learned a lot:

- a. in the absence of real monies for merit, elaborate evaluation systems aren't useful
- b. most experts in the field recommend longer evaluation periods (3 yrs. minimum)
- c. our student rating system (I took a copy) isn't good
- d. evaluation in the absence of effective goal setting/development opportunities, etc. is counterproductive

Thus, I may need to do more research, but without the funds to do it, or other assistance for professional development, it does no good to tell me that it needs to be done. Thanks for doing this---look forward to the results.

Questions ALL pertained to policies, practices and procedures. Biggest problems are not these issues but lack of any money for merit. Not sure questionnaire results will reflect this distinction.

State employees, including public school teachers who also enjoy tenure, receive longevity pay, while faculty members do not. This is particularly significant when there is little or no money for merit or cost of living awards.

Answers to 46-49 and 54 would identify me and would cause administrative repercussions.

If as much importance was placed on Research/Creative Activities as in the past for merit pay, a broader concept of Research/Activities needs to be initiated.

I have been employed for nearly 13 years. It really disturbs me that this is the "first" employee evaluation/assessment (dealing with morale, satisfaction, etc.) that I have seen. It's sadly reflective of the state of affairs for the entire university system.

Two problems have existed with merit pay salary considerations: 1) creation of valid unbiased criterion referenced evaluation instruments are lacking and are inconsistent across departments and units. A single validated criterion referenced merit evaluation instrument is needed which could be completed by all departments and would have thematically derived values which could then be translated to merit. A very equitable means of distributing merit would be to have validity/reliability checks on the merit evaluations at the unit/school level and allocation of merit funds by an unbiased office from a total pool for the university; 2) insufficient funds have been available for merit application to be meaningful; most of these funds have gone to resolving salary inequities from other sources.

The reason merit does not work as it should is the absurd inflation of evaluation numbers which, in the end, are often inflated to establish a basis for rewarding a Chair's favorites. Not put very diplomatically perhaps, but that's how I've seen it work.

The result is that the good intention behind the merit ethos is perverted into the familiar pattern of cronyism. A merit system will work only if those who manage it understand merit in a professional sense and are willing to act with professional integrity.

The likelihood that a committee could or would administer a merit system any better seems to this writer historically unlikely. Instances would be extremely rare for committee management that did not quickly lead to the kind of "fairness" handicapping system that have developed in the past at ECU.

Dropping merit pay raises would simply increase intellectual entropy. Those who are motivated to achieve beyond the expectations of the minimalists would soon lose heart or go elsewhere.

It seems more likely that mismanagement of the merit system has more chance of remediation if an individual manager can be held responsible, negotiated with or confronted. In any case, let us not expect perfection.

No credit is given for years in K-12 education teaching, yet it greatly influences higher ed. teaching. The scale of 0-5 with only .5 increments does not provide a wide enough point scale.

I'm not aware that there was "merit pay" for faculty. I have had salary increases that reflect cost of living or advance in rank, but have also seen my salary frozen for a year despite excellent evaluations. I have had to evaluate employees for merit pay in years when it was evenly divided vs. only given to top performers and found the whole system to generate more unhappiness than incentive in real effort. If merit pay is a reality there need to be clear, consistent guidelines and the availability of merit pay should reflect an overall greater and measurable effort of the larger unit.

I am increasingly concerned at the decreases in academic freedom resulting from the increase in demand for proof of teaching effectiveness. My philosophy is that the only measure of teaching effectiveness is how much the student learns, not whether the process was "fun." I am a professor and a teacher, not an entertainer, motivator, nurse-maid, actress, psychologist, sociologist, or accountant. I am increasingly resentful that what I have to teach is unimportant and only how I do it is important. I spent 6 years in graduate school to learn the what, and only a fraction of that on how, and suddenly the what doesn't have value according to the spate of directions on teaching effectiveness.

Why such disparity between units?

The university is way off base in practice vs. its mission. If the higher administration would quit empire building and learn how to read, we would all be better off.

My boss is the most fair-minded person I know---he deserves straight 5's on all points referencing equitable distribution of merit pay. However, given 3 years of having no money for merit---it is difficult to evaluate many of the questions posed in this survey. Also, the survey was confusing at times as to whether I was evaluating the unit (re. my department) or the University...I would like to respond to this survey 2 years from now, assuming equity and merit pay is resurrected soon.

Teaching effectiveness does not really apply. The faculty in this unit spend a minimum of 40 hours in their offices and so unlike the majority of faculty on campus.

All faculty here know from day one what is expected for tenure and for merit. It is extremely discouraging that the raises (cost of living and merit) for the last few years have put me far behind both inflation and the mean salary for others in similar positions who have been here in better years.

In over 15 years, no policy in this regard has ever been presented to me in the 4 units under which I served. There was a three year period in which I did not receive any kind of an annual review. For questions 16-25: Why not establish a system comparable to what we are supposed to be doing with our SPA staff?

Individual with chair or committee, for whatever time period (probably 2 or 3 years): 1) Establish what department and university will provide to accomplish a mutually agreed upon 1,2, or 3 year plan. 2) Establish what are mutually expected goals and performance criteria for the individual at the "adequate," "more than adequate," and "superior" levels. 3) At end of period see how each side of the "contract" was met.

- a. Probably would have to be altered periodically throughout the time period.
- b. Allows individual a chance to lower expectations if university doesn't meet its part of the bargain, e.g. increased teaching demand, decreased equipment or personnel monies, etc.
- c. clearly establishes goals for individual and department.
- d. reduces subjective and "political" consideration in review process.

1. The survey appears to be eliciting discontent with current merit pay procedures rather than fairly seeking attitudes about those procedures. 2. Notwithstanding #1, the survey does not ask a key question---whether merit decisions are awarded as a percentage of one's pay or in dollar amounts---the former would tend to favor senior, higher paid individuals; the latter, junior, lower paid ones.

This questionnaire brings out lots of animosity on my part. With the cost of living rising, we (the faculty) are not scaled even keep up with living expenses. I make less proportionally than I did when I came here in '84.

Many of us in this unit are being compelled to become hired flunkies (teaching load, service assignments) for the new, incoming tenure-track candidates. They receive now salaries equal and superior to those received by faculty who have worked here for years. They also receive computer/word processing equipment as part of their contract, while many of the rest of us must buy our own software to use on machines that have been "given" to us because they are obsolete. Many of us, even if publishing, are compelled to teach 4 courses (the "official" load) while new tenure-track people are now going to be promised an initial two year period of only 2 courses per semester. All of us can, of course, apply for a one-course reduction (from 4 to 3) if we demonstrate productivity in publishing, but this does not staff courses in times of scarce/absent resources or meet demands of specific programs. I for one was caught in the confused and under handed shift from the "old" to the "new" ECU promotion and tenure "criteria." I shall be hard pressed to work (4 courses, service and publication) to support new tenure-track people who are being given the support and respect I never had. I am not here to serve their careers. Or am I?

Take a close look at one particular department merit pay system. It's a quantitative (point) system that completely eliminates potential bias from Chairman or committees. It works well for research and service---but is lousy with respect to teaching evaluation (i.e. everybody gets about the same number of points, regardless of effort. We need better teaching evaluation). The "Renaissance Man" has no place in modern academia (at least not in the sciences)---no one can be an expert in all three areas--and realistically--very few of us are so inclined. Quit trying to force us all to be generalists. Reward good teachers and reward good researchers.

Our department claims to give faculty raises entirely based upon merit; however, the listing of faculty salaries in the Faculty Senate office shows that a vacant position received a substantial merit increase while several of our faculty did not receive any salary increase. It appears that something other than job performance is involved in the decision to award merit because it would be difficult to justify giving a merit increase to a vacant position while several employees were not given a salary increase. There seems to be a high emphasis upon subjectivity in determining how merit is awarded. Additionally, I believe the practice of putting supervisors and subordinates in the same merit pool fosters competition that is unfavorable for the subordinate. For example, a supervisor, who is in charge of a subordinate employee evaluation, is in a power position where he or she can positively or negatively influence the person who is ultimately responsible for awarding merit to the subordinate. If the supervisor and subordinate are in the same merit pool, the supervisor will want to get as much of the money as possible for him or herself and will not be concerned about trying to get merit for the subordinate because it would decrease the amount of merit available for the supervisor.

Unless the reasons for the award of merit pay are clear to the faculty, the merit pay does not serve a purpose. I don't think the purposes are currently clear. One of the weaknesses of awarding merit pay to a minority of faculty is that the majority will be depressed over not receiving merit pay. Since I don't actually know what size the body of faculty is that does not receive any merit pay, I don't know how large the problem is. Obviously any merit system will produce disgruntled people, often the most undeserving. However, if one consistently eliminates an "average" professor who does not stand out either in terms of teaching ability or research, but slogs along and does his job every year, the main backbone of the university can become dispirited. An even worse problem will erupt if all pay raises become merit pay. Then during a period of steady economic inflation, the average to below average faculty member will suffer an economic dis-incentive, and become less and less energetic. Since these are the very people least able to leave the university to seek more rewarding employment, a "ghetto" of dispirited, underpaid, underachievers is created. They and their students are doomed. Sort of like creating a "third-world" university, isn't it? Slowly the gap between the top and bottom of the academic heap widens. A further problem that seems to permeate the system is a lack of definition of what activities really fit our 3 categories. If a professor devotes a large amount of time to a departmental computer, is he engaging in research, teaching, or service? After all, the computer may be used for research by some, teaching materials or exercises by some, and may be viewed by the department as service to the department. So, is it all three? We are a university of committees, but no scientist has ever been promoted for being on a committee, or advising students. At times, there seems to be a severe mis-match between amount of effort and amount of reward. (Note that the amount of time that faculty are expected to spend on advising students is slowly increasing). The appeals and review process at ECU is weak and tends to be used in extreme cases. Inevitably, the biggest reward is a promotion, but consider the case of a professor who was denied promotion after having recently received the university teaching award, then was promoted after the only change had been receiving a \$35,000 research grant. What is this, a fourth category? Now, buy your promotions here? Talk about producing cynics! SUMMARY: Lack of clarity, rewarding the minority, lack of inflation protection, worthwhile activities that poorly fit the 3 categories, secrecy, and lack of adequate appeals process all degrade the value of a merit system. On the other hand, a merit system based on teaching quality and research production is necessary. Fairness and clarity are essential, however, for merit pay to serve its intended purpose.

It was difficult to answer some of the questions about merit pay criteria and practices and about salaries because in my unit this information is not readily available to faculty. For example, I do not know what criteria is used in determining merit pay, exactly who makes that determination, whether the same system for merit pay has been used uniformly for all unit faculty and so on. In fact, we are not notified as to the amount or percentage of merit pay we are receiving. We get a letter at the beginning of the school year which tells us what our salary is for that year and we must compute for ourselves the increases we have received. The ECU Faculty Manual states:

The unit administrator shall report annually to the unit, in dollar amounts and percentages, the total increment allotted, mean salary increment and range of salary increments for the unit. Each faculty shall be informed by the unit administrator of any salary increment recommendations made on behalf of the faculty member by the unit administrator. (p. C-6)

To the best of my knowledge, no one in my unit receives this information; I know I certainly haven't. Therefore, we are essentially in the dark when it comes to salary and merit increases.

Merit pay makes a lot of sense in theory, but in practice there are two complications that dilute its potential benefits. The first is that political considerations strongly influence who is favorably reviewed and who is not. The second is that variations in the amount of money provided by the legislature create a major flaw in the system. Our department has exerted a lot of time and energy trying to develop a fair and equitable approach. But the process of doing so has been a considerable source of tension and conflict in our department. The merit pay debate distracts attention from the real issue which is inadequate compensation for faculty and overall support of higher education in North Carolina.

As it works now, the merit pay process is dysfunctional. It is more aggravation than motivation.

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