

Questions for HR from Staff Congress

August 6, 2014

1. Of the 33% of MSU staff employees that received a raise of 2% under the new compensation plan, what percentage of that 33% are exempt? Please give us a number (the 33%) and the total number of exempt that received 2% or less.

- 262 staff received 2% or less. Of these, 162 were exempt.

2. An employee would like to know the justification behind decisions made during the employee compensation study. Their concerns are as follows:

In the same department there were two assistant directors at the same level. HR reclassified one assistant director at a higher compensation level and demoted the other assistant director. How is this justified?

- Market data determines the salary grade and market data (what the market pays for a position) can vary between positions. Currently, we have 12 Assistant Directors in 5 salary grades.

In the same department as above, two individuals received significant raises—one individual was raised \$14,000/year and the other was raised \$19,000/year. How was this justified?

- All staff positions have a salary grade. Each grade has a minimum or entry salary and an experienced market salary. The experience market salary represents a staff member who has seven years in that position. The implementation plan is designed to take staff salaries towards the experienced market salary based on the number of years an employee has in that position up to seven. For example, an employee with 3.5 years of experience in a position is expected to be paid half way from the entry to the experienced market. An employee with seven years should be paid at the experienced market salary. The amount of the increase will depend on the person's pay grade, their time in position, and their salary. Some increases could be significant, particularly if their salary was at the grade minimum and they had a number of years in that position.

How was experience calculated for career-ladder system positions with level I and II classifications? A specific concern is as follows:

An employee's unit was on a career-ladder system and had moved from an entry level ('I' classification) to the next level ('II' classification). This individual had been employed in the same unit for a total of 7 years, in the 'I' classification 2 years, and in an 'II' classification for 3 years. This person only received 3 years credit for time in position based upon the 'II' classification. However, after the compensation plan was implemented the career ladder no longer existed in the unit and HR decided there would be only two levels for the employees in this office. The employee in question falls in the lower category title (you have a base title and a senior title). If their employee's time in the 'II' classification had been combined with their time in the 'I' classification, they would have 5 years

credit to time in position instead of the 3 years credit time in position that HR awarded them, thus making their raise a little more.

- In this example, I think the time in position should have been combined. If this was not the case, I will look into it if this person will contact me.

3. If an employee did not receive a raise July 2014 because their salary was deemed 'above experienced market,' when will they get a salary increase (if ever)?
 - If an employee's salary was at or above the experienced market and their performance does not exceed expectations, their salary will not increase until the experienced market salary passes their current salary. Salary ranges are expected to shift as the data indicates. For the past eight years, the market has shifted about 2% per year. The market information is obtained from CUPA (College and University Professional Association).
4. Please provide Staff Congress with the Federal Guidelines (statute number, etc.) used when moving exempt staff from exempt to non-exempt.
 - <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=65708f90640b7775b398123fb3b52382&node=pt29.3.541&rgn=div5>
5. Please provide Staff Congress with the KRS (statute numbers) used recently to move some MSU staff from KERS to KTRS.
 - KRS 161.220 (4)
6. When will we know if there will be forced downsizing?
 - Right now, none is planned. If conditions indicate a downsizing, employees will be notified as soon as possible. Our policy, PG-58 requires a 30 day notice but we suggest more notice if possible.
7. How many jobs (positions) will be eliminated to right-size the university? We understand that there will be additional positions eliminated because we have not yet realized the numbers from the voluntary employee buyout program.
 - Please see number 6 above.
8. When will the affected workers be told their positions will be eliminated? Is there a timeline of implementation?
 - Please see number 6 above.
9. Is there a plan in place to change employee titles as a result of the compensation plan and changed grading scales?

If titles will be changed, when will we know and which titles will be affected?

 - There is no plan to change titles unless a reclassification of a position is requested or the department asks for a title change. This process might suggest that a more appropriate title should be considered. When this occurs, a suggestion usually comes from the market data collected or in relation to other positions at MSU.

Information about a title change is usually communicated through the employee's supervisor.

10. Will MSU offer the Voluntary Buyout Program again this year?

- This is not likely.

11. If there will be merit pay in the future, how will merit pay be determined?

- Will merit pay be recurring or nonrecurring?
- Will those who received merit pay in the past still be eligible?
- Will employees be able to self-nominate for merit pay or will nominations fall under the discretion of supervisors?
 - We anticipate that there will be merit pay in the future. This is currently being addressed by a task force headed up by Beth Patrick.

12. Is there anywhere on the web where employees can find current job descriptions of not only our individual job but any job at the university? If not, is this something that can be implemented?

- Of course, any employee can see his or her job description and management can see any job descriptions in their area. In addition, any job that is posted has the job description available.

13. Staff Congress has fielded many concerns about HR's lack of communication. Are there things HR is doing to improve its communication with staff, particularly in light of the dynamic and concerning changes occurring related to people's jobs, job classifications, and compensation?

- OHR has opened many avenues for communication with our employees. Here are a few examples: OHR attends every staff congress meeting and has made presentations on benefits, the voluntary Buyout Program, staff performance management system, the new Cerner employee benefits wellness website, staff compensation, and upcoming benefit changes. OHR attends every Employee Benefits Committee meeting and has made presentations on the most of the subjects mentioned above. OHR has conducted sessions for the campus on the following: Performance management system - 9 sessions, Applicant tracking/hiring process – 2 sessions/semester, Colleague workflow process – 2 sessions/semester, FMLA 1 session/semester, Payroll timekeeping 1 session/semester, search committee training for search chair and hiring manager, 6 Campus sessions for Voluntary Buyout Program, OHR met with every VBP person interested in the program to discuss the program, and 9 employee benefit open enrollment meetings. In addition, OHR met individually and in departmental groups to discuss changes to exempt and non-exempt status and job titles when requested. OHR met with each Vice President to discuss each item in the staff compensation implementation program. We use mass email to communicate information and we also maintain a website that contains a newsletter and other useful information. Our new wellness website communicates through email to employees and we have sent mailers to employee spouses covered under our

health plans. Our campus wellness champions provide two way communication for matters concerning this subject and we are forming a wellness steering committee to provide input on ideas for implementing a comprehensive system for involving our employees and their spouses in becoming healthier and more active as well as dealing with health care costs. Finally, if employees have suggestions as to how we improve in this area, we are very eager to listen.