Report from the Annual/Merit Review Task Force

Convened Jointly by the Provost's Office & The Academic Senate, 2021-2023

Co-Chairs: Jessica Cantiello (Dornsife) & Larry Picus (Rossier)

Charge

- "Perform a broad survey of faculty merit/annual review processes at each school to identify both common practices and heterogeneity of the merit processes; catalog effective practices; and make recommendations to improve merit review at USC."

Context

- Pandemic/Pause of Merit Raises (FY 2021)
- FEEC Survey of Junior Faculty (2021-2022)
  - Key Recommendation: "overhaul merit review"
- Academic Senate Resolution re: Annual COLA (2022)
- President Folt's commitment to "address compensation inequities and systemically raise salaries" (2022)
- Academic Senate Resolution re: Compensation Reporting (2023)

Methodology

- Qualitative Data Gathering

- Analysis of Relevant Results of FEEC Survey

- Review of Responses to Task Force Data Request in Joint Memo from the Provost/Academic Senate
  - Mean, median, and mode merit review scores for each department, program, or division
  - Any communications sent from the school administration pertaining to how salary adjustments are determined (i.e. merit vs. equity vs. promotion distinction)
  - Any communications that explain how merit review scores in particular relate to fixed salary percentage increases

Findings

- Lack of Clarity and Transparency about the Process, especially its Relationship to Raises

- Feedback and a Lack of Professional Development Application

- Concerns about Fairness and Subjectivity

Lack of Faculty Buy-In

Recommendations

1. **Improve Transparency and Communication about Individual Scores and the Overall Process/Outcomes**

2. **Directly and Universally Tie Merit Pay Increases to Merit Scores within a Given Unit**

3. **Ensure Fairness and Equity in the Process of Assigning Scores and Salary Adjustments**

4. **Involve Faculty in the Development of Merit Review Processes**