October 2, 2009

To: Members of the Nine-Month Faculty Appointments Task Force

From: Joseph A. Alutto  
Executive Vice President and Provost

Ré: Charge to the Task Force

Federal granting agencies have in the last year become increasingly vigilant about time and effort claims in relation to summer or off-duty salaries being paid from external research funds. As a result, many of our peer institutions have adopted policies related to the charging of summer or off-duty work effort to grants and contracts. In addition, on-campus discussion about semester conversion has revealed considerable confusion about the meaning of “off duty” and “on duty” in relation to faculty work and compensation. OAA’s initial examination of these issues reveals that they will be most usefully and efficiently studied together. I am grateful to you for agreeing to undertake this study.

I charge the Task Force to recommend a university framework for faculty workload structure that will guide tracking, reporting, and managing of faculty time and extra compensation. This framework should be flexible enough both to address the immediate institutional risk with regard to summer salaries and to establish principles and implementation measures for tracking faculty work as we move forward to semesters. The specific workload of faculty must be set at the unit level with an eye to balancing individual flexibility within unit mission and responsibilities. At the same time, the university needs to establish a framework that will help chairs and deans establish these workload policies and practices. Specific elements of the framework should include the following:

- Examination of current university policy allowing PIs up to 3/9 salary during the summer or other quarter off duty (QOD). Are there ways for the University to maintain this salary option for PIs while also complying with federal regulations about time and effort? Are there ways of distributing these funds that will carry researchers through the shortened summer of 2012 and then the semester conversion without taking a cut in salary? How should letters of offer for new faculty be structured?
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- Consideration of particular issues regarding QOD salary for faculty who are appointed at less than 100 percent FTE and/or who have administrative appointments.
- Clarification of nine-month faculty appointments in terms of faculty workload. Nine month faculty do not accrue vacation, but what principles could be used to define faculty responsibilities during breaks within and between terms (including the May term) and how do such principles relate to the workload of faculty who accept summer funding from grants and/or from university funds?
- Clarification of basic principles about definitions of "on duty" and "off duty" in relation to nine-month appointments and tracking of time and effort, including principles about formal obligations and/or informal responsibilities to students during "off duty" months.
- Consideration of current university rules that stipulate that consulting during off-duty quarters is not subject to the 20 percent time limitation. Is there a framework that would provide clarity regarding consulting within and between terms (including the May term)? Should there be a cap on consulting time during off-duty quarters if summer salary is coming from external grants?

It would be helpful if the Task Force could study these issues during fall quarter and issue a written report of your recommendations by the end of January. That will give us time to implement necessary policy changes in advance of the summer of 2010. I have asked Susan Williams, Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Faculty Resources, and Caroline Whitacre, Vice President for Research, to take the lead in formulating an action plan once you have formulated your recommendations; please plan to meet with them as you finalize the report and call on them to provide any needed assistance from OAA.

Thank you again for your willingness to study and offer guidance on these important issues.

Members of the Task Force:

James Beatty, Professor and Chair of Physics, Task Force Chair
Tom Bond, Compensation Manager, Office of Human Resources
John Bruno, Professor, Psychology
Todd Guttman, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance
Clay Marsh, Vice Dean for Research, College of Medicine
Marie Mendenhall-Mead, Director of Finance and Business Operations, College of Engineering
Anne Moffat, Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Programs
Umat Ozkan, Professor, Chemical and Biomedical Engineering
Joseph Steinmetz, Executive Dean, Arts and Sciences
H. Lewis Ulman, Associate Professor, English
Dale Vandre, Associate Professor, Physiology and Cell Biology