

March 21, 2006

Office Professional's meeting minutes

Meeting with Nels Erickson, H-R Director regarding our performance evaluations, compensation and job concerns.

We started by updating Nels Erickson, the new H-R director on the following:

Background: On March 15<sup>th</sup> a year ago we met with David Wheaton and Chuck Standfuss to voice our concerns related to recognition, salary level, equity, supervision, and other issues in the wake of the denial of a proposal to create a new job level which included a pay increase and title change. We identified problems but no solutions were provided.

**We revisited the following issues today:**

1. The process for receiving a merit increase as part of the salary program is unclear for the AOPs and may not be clear to supervisors; in any event, many of us feel that we don't have a realistic chance to obtain an increase due to a poor process, a supervisor who doesn't advocate for them, or a political or murky method for making the decisions.
2. Duties and responsibilities are continually added without any change in job grade, compensation, or status.
3. Some positions outside the academic line appear to have higher-grade designations and/or pay for what seems like similar and very often, lower level work. Some positions in administrative departments have changed grades (and presumably salaries) more than once in the past few years. Some administrative departments receive better treatment for their employees because their place in the college's structure is nearer the decision makers, so a privileged place accrues to them (they are close to the 'power')
4. Overall compensation for Department Coordinators is thought to be inadequate, substandard, below market, or at least below the value that the college receives from the employees. The work of the AOPs is not recognized - pay raises and title changes don't seem to be available in any way that is meaningful and visible.

Nels stated that he has spoken with Lynn Hertz and Diane Michelfelder about our job position, but gave no specifics on any of the conversations.

He discussed "Market Pricing" a system used to match jobs against market data and stated that there is no specific market rate for most jobs, but that in evaluating compensation for various jobs, they look at the averages (median) for "benchmark" jobs.

Macalester has been scoring people on a point factor. Most for-profit companies are using a “Market Value” system. It is difficult to rate the value of jobs and rating performance always has the problem of being subjective. Nels felt that as we are now converting to the Banner system from CARS, it provides a better opportunity to convert to a new performance evaluation system. The Banner system should make it easier to track information. Nels stated that our culture (at an educational institution) is different than the culture at most for-profit organizations. The culture at Mac may not be accepting of a market-based approach due to having a more socialist mindset. Many may initially have reservations about the Merit system.

He illustrated a Merit Guide Chart as follows:

(high level of pay, low performance of work) 0% pay incr.	2 % increase	(high level of pay, high level performance of work) 3.75% incr.
0% pay incr.	3.75% incr.	6% pay incr.
(low level of pay, low performance of work) 2% pay incr.	6% pay increase	(low level of pay, high performance of work) 9% pay increase

↑  
Range  
Of pay within grade  
Rating

← Work Performance

This chart demonstrates that those who are receiving lower compensation within a grade, but who demonstrate superior performance would achieve a greater pay increase than those who are already at a higher level of pay within the grade.

This year staff will receive a 1.65% increase, plus \$590. Also approximately 25% of staff will receive merit increases of approximately 2%.

In terms of performance evaluations and salary for staff, Macalester has not yet specifically defined which other schools (or market) they should compare themselves to. Senior staff needs to decide on a compensation strategy. There is also an affordability factor involved, the college does not have the resources of a large corporation. It appears that the pay scale for Mac staff is comparable to businesses of a similar size (our operating budget is around \$70 million). Mac needs to have a consistently applied performance review process that managers are trained in which consists of clear expectations for employees and clear rewards. H-R would like to see better communication to managers and employees and would like to keep data to see if managers are recommending people, etc.

The department coordinators brought up the issue of needing a clear chain of command other than a faculty member. Nels said that in terms of culture and climate, they are our manager, but that the definition of roles needs to be clarified. Market data shows that the higher the person is that someone reports to, the higher the grade the support person is generally at (due to level of duties, level of discretion, etc.) We questioned how the level “academic department chair” equates to the various levels on the admin. side?

The general feeling at Macalester is that if you add a significant task/duty to a position, the job classification should be looked at.

We discussed the problems with the subjectivity of managers and questioned the lack of training that the chairs get. We are an institution of higher education and yet we provide little if any training to staff... cog is missing from the wheel. There is a need to train the managers. The Provost's side governs the faculty and H-R can't have the same jurisdiction over the faculty that they would with other managers.

It would be the Provost's responsibility to make the chairs get management training and do performance reviews, etc.

We ran out of time and no conclusions were reached and a further course of action was not determined. Nels suggested that he would talk with the Provost and with Lynn Hertz. It might be possible to sit down and have a forum with department chairs and coordinators. We need to get key people involved as it is tough to get things to happen as we all know.