



The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shared the responses to the January 21, 2022, Faculty Senate Survey with Human Resource Services, regarding concerns with staff recruitment and retention. HRS is committed to WSU's operating principles including shared accountability, operational excellence and data-informed decision-making. HRS appreciates the opportunity to respond to these concerns and wants to emphasize our dedication to process improvement.

### **Broad Themes**

***1. HRS is not a team player. Rather than serving the role of facilitator and problem solver, many faculty view this unit as one that advances obstacles and works very slowly to resolve problems. Implementation of Workday has exacerbated an already time consuming and inefficient system.***

HRS appreciates the recognition that the Workday implementation has contributed to some delays in processes. HRS role is to service as a strategic partner to provide guidance, mitigate risk and ensure compliance with state/federal laws and university policy, in a timely manner.

HRS continues to work on improvements to Workday processes. Our Human Capital Management (HCM) team has participated in area and college listening sessions to identify areas of concern and are currently working to address.

It is difficult to implement process improvement when provided general concerns. By providing specific details of the issue, it allows HRS to investigate the root cause and focus on resolution. When there is a perceived obstacle or delay, please contact Lisa Gehring or Theresa Elliot-Cheslek at 509-335-4521 so we can address the specific concern.

***2. When trying to promote staff or increase salaries, HRS routinely undervalues positions and attempts to force lower pay than is requested. This can be addressed through negotiations with HRS, but this is a time-consuming process that frequently takes months (four or more months was cited more than once) and staff frequently left with better offers before hearing from WSU.***

The goal of a salary structure is to achieve an equitable and externally competitive compensation plan. Spring 2022, HRS will formally launch the Administrative Professional Enhanced Compensation Plan in Workday. This plan provides for an equitable and competitive compensation structure to provide equal pay for equal work. HRS uses objective measures when evaluating compensation including:

- Knowledge required to perform job
- Responsibility and scope of problem solving
- Independence in performing job duties
- Overall impact of position
- Geographic location
- External market data

The AP Compensation Plan will be published on the HRS website, so hiring departments will be aware of appropriate salary range in advance of an offer of employment. HRS is meeting with key groups (i.e. college/area finance officers, APAC) as part of the rollout and communication plan. Training sessions will be available to highlight changes in setting AP compensation. As noted above, please contact Lisa or



Theresa so we can address specific concerns. Often times, we find there is confusion regarding the salary the college “HR” has approved and is unrelated to central HRS.

***3. Related to #2, it is unclear why HRS interferes with salary levels for AP positions that are funded by grant funds (e.g., federal extramural grants). HRS typically does not understand the responsibilities involved with these positions and/or undervalues these activities relative to the market. Delays caused by this process or outright refusal to allow positions to be funded appropriately are negatively impacting the research enterprise and negatively impacting faculty and staff morale.***

As noted in response #2, the use of objective measures, including market data and geographic location determines the appropriate salary. Prior to submitting a grant proposal, HRS can assist in evaluating the appropriate compensation level for requested positions. The AP Compensation Plan will be published on the HRS website so hiring departments will be aware of salary ranges for specific AP benchmarks.

HRS uses information provided in the position description to determine the appropriate salary band. If there is the sense HRS does not understand the work being performed, we are available to discuss position duties and ensure position description accurately reflects position responsibilities.

***4. When HRS intervenes to prevent a suitable salary from being paid and an offer fails, faculty and staff have to invest additional time re-initiating searches, dealing with Workday, and negotiating with HRS. Multiple respondents indicated that they have had to go through this process multiple times to fill a single position, which costs considerable overhead and impacts morale. When staff leave WSU for lack of appropriate pay increases, not only do faculty and staff have to go through the recruitment process one or more times to replace this individual, but the newly hired person still has to be trained. These costs to the institution don't appear to be considered by HRS.***

If HRS makes a salary recommendation that the hiring department disagrees with, these situations are typically referred to the Appointing Authority for review. HRS provides the Appointing Authority with detailed salary information, including the reasons for HRS's salary recommendation, for their consideration.

**5. There are no clear professional development guidelines or promotion pathways for most staff positions. This contributes to the challenge for getting staff raises approved.**

HRS conducted a 1-year Staff Mentoring and Professional Development Pilot Program during the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 Semesters. Based on the success of the program, HRS is currently conducting the formal 2021-2022 staff mentoring and professional development program through May 2022 with a cohort of 20 participants. More information can be found on the HRS website: [WSU Staff Mentoring Program – Human Resource Services, Washington State University](#).

Our learning and organizational development team provides a variety of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff system-wide through instructor led learning programs as well on professional development pathways through our online learning management system Skillport. Instructor led programs targeted at developing staff include, but are not limited to the WSU Supervisory Training Program, Developing Leaders Program, and Leading in Cougar Country events.



Currently, there are AP career ladders for many positions including student services, development, research, IT, extension and others. As part of the AP Enhanced Comp Plan development, HRS continues to receive input from areas/colleges regarding opportunities for other career ladders.

***6. Faculty and staff salary levels were repeated quoted as being non-competitive and multiple individuals expressed alarm about salary compression, inversion and failure to keep up with inflation, increasing health care costs and increasing taxes. In this context, it is worth noting a newly published salary database (URL below) showing that the average 9-month equivalent salary for WSU faculty is \$91,859 compared to \$121,459 at UW. One could argue that this reflects a geographic difference in living expenses, but it is interesting that HRS does not consider such issues for staff salaries in Seattle (see below).***

As noted above, geographic location is one of the primary measures used in the AP Enhanced Comp Plan.