

## POLICY ON THE ALLOCATION OF MERIT PAY INCREMENTS

### DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY - UMBC

DRAFT -- Revised 4-06

Merit pay increments for faculty in the Department of Psychology will be based on a merit system in which each faculty member receives an annual rating based on performance in the areas of research, teaching, and service. Performance in each area will be evaluated separately. The revised rating system does not convert point totals to a rating scale as did the previous merit system. Rather, award determinations will be based on the total number of points that are claimed by each faculty member. Funds available for merit pay raises will be allocated as fixed-dollar salary increments proportional to the faculty member's total merit rating for each area separately, with Research and Teaching allocated 40% of available merit funds and Service allocated 20%. This is consistent with the 2-2-1 weighting system used previously. If a faculty member's points in an area are more than 3 standard deviations above the mean, dollar values may be capped in fairness to other colleagues.

### **Merit Rating System**

The Department's merit rating system is based on activities and accomplishments in the areas of research, teaching, and service. Within each area merit points are claimed and then summed. Responsibility for claiming the points will lie with the individual faculty member, subject to review and approval by the Department Chair. For the point system to be equitable, it is desirable to permit a certain degree of flexibility both in the assignment of activities to areas and in the assignment of points to activities. The following guidelines have therefore been adopted:

1. If an activity could be considered appropriate in more than one area, the faculty member may request that it be considered instead in an area other than the one in which it is designated.
2. If the point value assigned to an activity does not seem to reflect its importance in determining merit, the faculty member may request and justify an adjustment in point value.
3. If related activities are claimed in more than one area, the Chair may, in consultation with the faculty member, adjust the merit points earned so as to reflect more accurately the overall merit of the activities.
4. Because the time lags involved in the review, award, and publication processes are not directly under a faculty member's control, points earned in the Research area in a given year may be held over and claimed in the following year, but cannot be claimed twice for the same specific activity. For some activities, the submission and award/publication phases have been explicitly separated to facilitate separate reporting.
5. If a faculty member is ill or incapacitated in a given academic year, the merit evaluation will be based on the previous academic year.
6. If a faculty member is on sabbatical leave or leave without pay during a given academic year, he or she may request that the merit evaluation in a given area be based on the previous academic year.
7. Although the Merit Review Committee attempted to anticipate most of the activities and accomplishments that faculty members might engage in within each area, there are likely to be additional activities specific to one or a few individuals that warrant credit. Therefore, at the end of each section – Teaching, Research, and Service – is a space for Other, in which the faculty member can describe the activity and suggest a point allocation. The Chair, in consultation with the Associate Chair, will evaluate these additional items on an individual basis. Examples of "Other" activities include being nominated for a prestigious award but not receiving it and serving as a statistical consultant to graduate students. (In the pilot year – 2005 – the committee will determine whether some of these "other" items should be made into regular items.)

## Instructions for Using the Merit Rating Spreadsheets.

The worksheets for the merit system are in Excel. For the year 2005 (and perhaps in subsequent years as well), each faculty member is asked to use Excel for entering the ratings so that the Merit Committee can use the data to evaluate the system. The electronic file has tabs in the lower left for the three areas of Research, Teaching, and Service.

Space is provided on the spreadsheet next to each item to indicate the sources of your point calculations. For Research, you should indicate sources by title or co-author initials. Please attach a list of all publications, presentations, and grant submissions. For Teaching and Service, document as needed within the spaces provided.

Please complete your ratings electronically, save the file (you will be asked for it later), and print it out for the Chair. Be sure that you do not rearrange any of the items. The total points claimed in each area will be calculated automatically for you.

**Research.** The activities listed under Research involve communication of the results of scholarly endeavors. The point values assigned give more weight to activities that undergo more stringent peer review, that represent a greater contribution to the field, and that represent more effort.

**Teaching.** Any activity primarily concerned with teaching, whether it involves students or peers, is included in this category. Because teaching in the classroom is considered a faculty member's primary teaching role, students' evaluations of teaching in the form of SCEQ ratings and teaching awards are considered with other teaching activities.

Four SCEQ items, General #1 and #9 and Lecture #1 and #3 have been used in past systems to assign merit ratings for student evaluations of teaching. The same four items continue to be basis of the system, but the faculty member may substitute Discussion questions #1 and #3 for the Lecture items in the case of small seminars. Although these items are sufficiently general to apply to most courses, if an instructor believes that another item or items should be substituted for a particular course, a request, with explanation, may be made in writing to the Department Chair before the course is evaluated.

If a faculty member has a course reduction in one or both of the academic year semesters, SCEQ ratings from the most recent previous semesters should be used so that 4 courses are taken into account. The faculty member should indicate which additional semesters are included in the ratings.

If a faculty member is new to UMBC and thus has not yet taught four courses, SCEQ ratings should be based on the percentage of courses taught. For example, if a first-year faculty member has taught 1 course and has earned 4.0 in the key dimensions, that faculty member may claim 10 points for exceptional ratings. Similarly, a second-year faculty member who has taught 3 courses and has earned a 4.0 in the key dimensions for all three courses can claim the highest merit rating.

**Service.** Department faculty engage in a wide range of service activities, some of which require a minimal or nonrecurring time commitment. Other activities involve a heavy commitment of time either on a short-term or regular basis. It is difficult to calibrate the point values that should be assigned to various activities because there is considerable variability possible within a given category. The Service section enumerates services that faculty members often provide to peers, students, the University, and the community. The point values assigned are intended to represent the likely degree of effort or time involved and can be adjusted on an individual basis if this seems warranted.