



DATE: March 9, 2017

TO: Kevin Niemi, Chair, Academic Staff Executive Committee

FROM: Laurent Heller, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

RE: Faculty Assistant Compensation Issues

Many thanks to you and the Academic Staff Executive Committee for bringing the issue of Faculty Assistant (FA) pay levels to my attention. This has afforded me an opportunity to learn more about this somewhat uncommon title and the important role the FAs play in delivering a first-rate education to our students in various disciplines, most notably ESL and Chemistry.

After careful and deliberate consideration, I have concluded that this compensation issue would be more appropriately addressed at the school, college and departmental levels.

After our discussion, the Office of Human Resources developed an analysis of comparable titles and pay ranges at other Big Ten institutions and with local employers. While we did identify that there could be a gap in current pay levels relative to our Big Ten peers, that gap is not unusual by comparison to that faced by other academic staff titles, many of which actually lag market rates by a greater amount (TA salaries for example). This analysis also supported the notion inherent in our job structure that these positions are different from a typical TA position.

This is not to say that there may not be pay or equity issues that merit consideration for our FA employees. Rather it is our position that the colleges and schools, and particularly the College of Letters and Science, are best positioned to address local compensation issues in most circumstances. The central campus will generally address compensation issues when these pertain to campus-wide policies and/or pay structures. Short of that, it is generally up to the department, in partnership with the school or college, to decide if they want to increase pay.

I have conveyed the FA concerns along with a copy of our compensation analysis to Dean Karl Scholz from L&S. Dean Scholz indicated his team would continue to discuss this matter with department chairs as they plan for next year's budget.

As you know, UW-Madison is embarking on a comprehensive title and total compensation study. The major outcomes of this effort will include creation of new title and compensation structures

specifically created for UW-Madison's unique needs. The structures for instructional staff, including the Faculty Assistant positions, are part of this review.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this matter in more detail.

CC: Dean Karl Scholz, College of Letters and Science
Wayne Guthrie, Office of Human Resources