

Webster Staff Alliance
Compensation Committee
2019 Report and Compensation Proposal

Executive Summary:

Webster staff are committed to the university and understand that a sustainable future for Webster includes both revenue growth and a balanced budget. The Compensation Committee and WSA believe that the items detailed in this proposal will support, recognize, and encourage staff during this time.

1. Salary Increase bases on merit system
 - a. Request: Merit-based salary increase to impact FY 19-20
 - b. Area of Concern: Staggering Review of Staff Positions
2. Staffing Hours and Budget Constraints at Extended Campuses
 - a. Request: Additional Hours (and Budget) for Extended Campus Staff
3. Flexibility in Work Time/Location
 - a. Request: Creation of Taskforce for Developing University Policy for Flexible Work Time/Location
4. Webster Staff Alliance Budget
 - a. Request: WSA's Budget remains at (\$55,000) for FY20.

Compensation Committee's Proposal for FY19

Topic One: Salary increase and salary equity concern

Request One: Merit Based Salary Increase

Research by committee members showed that, in 2019, employers in the United States expect to increase overall wages by 3.1% on average. In higher education, this number is expected to be a more conservative 2.5%. For 2019, the United States Social Security Administration has announced that it expects a 2.9% cost of living increase across the country.

The committee and Webster staff understand that the university's current financial situation constrains opportunities for salary increases across the board, yet providing no increases also bears a high cost on employee morale and retention. However, salaries – and salary equity - are a leading source of concern among colleagues, and that low wages are pushing even some of our most loyal employees to consider working elsewhere. Over the past 6 years, WSA has requested a salary pool to keep Webster staff's salary competitive with the cost of living increases.

| Fiscal Year | WSA Request | Merit | Across the Board |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|--|
| 18-19 | 3% across the board pool for raise | 0% | N/A |
| 17-18 | 2.5% salary pool for all staff | 1.5% | N/A |
| 16-17 | 1.7% salary pool for all staff | 1.5% | N/A |
| 15-16 | 1.7% salary pool for all staff | 0% | \$500 if salary <\$75K & good performance review |
| 14-15 | 3% salary pool for all staff | 3% | 0% |
| 13-14 | 2.5-3% salary merit pool | 1% Staff | 1 % Faculty |

To be more competitive in our field, the committee recommends that the administration budget a salary pool for 3% for all staff members who achieve a “meets” or “exceeds” expectations in the annual performance evaluations.

Area of Concern: Staggering Review of Staff Positions

Over the past few years, reductions in overall staff numbers, through voluntary departures, position restructuring, moves, or retirements [\[1\]](#), have changed the way that work is done at many of the university's departments and campuses. Many of these changes have required staff to take on additional responsibilities, to use their time more meritoriously or creatively than before, and to work harder, while university budgets have constrained salary increases below cost-of-living increases. Some staff members reported to members of the committee and in the staff survey that, as overall institutional resources have shrunk, their duties have expanded significantly beyond the scope of their original job description or official work title, and that these extra duties lack formal recognition or defined expectations for performance.

| Data reported to CUPA Nov 1 Each Year FT Staff Headcount | |
|--|-----------|
| Year | FTE Staff |
| 2018 | 610.7 |
| 2017 | 663 |
| 2016 | 676 |
| 2015 | 696.4 |

Steve Winter had started working on a new evaluation philosophy and practice for Webster University that was going to be included with a larger HR strategic vision. The Committee hopes that our new CHRO will continue where Steve left off. Some of the key points that Steve was working on included:

- Performance Evaluations: Merit-based increases require a robust performance evaluation method for data-driven decisions. The current evaluation, which was a request from a previous WSA compensation proposal, applies the same evaluation metric to all employees without the ability to cater to one's job description. In addition, there is an inconsistency in how staff are evaluated across the board as to what qualifies as "meets" "exceeds" or "does not exceed" expectations. These challenges make it difficult for the evaluation method to be utilized for an equitable merit-based increase throughout the network.
- Staff Position Categorization: A merit-based salary increase does not address the issue of an imbalanced workload compared to the job description and how it is categorized. The last time the university as a whole completed a holistic review of staff member positions was 2010 when the Mercer Study was completed. A few departments, such as IT and Advancement have restructured and had reviews of positions within their areas. Unfortunately, there has not been a university-wide review of positions in recent years.

The committee requests a review of all staff positions and salaries are adjusted to a competitive level.

Topic Two: Staffing Hours and Budget Constraints at Extended Campuses

Request Two: Additional Hours (and Budget) for Extended Campus Staff

The committee heard from staff members and supervisors regarding hourly/salaried employee category changes implemented in 2016. The lack of flexibility that has resulted from this implementation, along with diminished salary budgets, are causing issues in many departments and having a significant impact on extended campuses. Some testimonials from campus directors across the network highlight the nature of this concern:

- The change of my CRC (now RC) from an exempt to a non-exempt position left me as the only person who can work more than 37.5 hours per week without being paid overtime. So essentially all extra duties now fall on me, as we have no budget for overtime. I think the change really took away some of our flexibility to be out in the community and meet the needs of our campus.
- I was already doing the jobs of advisor, faculty coordinator, night monitor, department associate, and ½ of the representative's, in addition to my own duties and responsibilities. In addition to all of that, now my recruiter is hourly (with no option for overtime), so that means that I go to all the events that

are outside of his daily hours. There is no one to relieve me or share my load, as I am the only salaried person on my campus. It has cost me the morale of my recruiter, as he now thinks that Webster University believes he is expendable and his job is not of value to the university.

- In light of the fact that the FLSA regulations were never passed into law and that the changes have had a significant impact on staff communities, the compensation committee is requesting that a limited number of non-exempt personnel be converted back to salaried positions. This includes, but is not limited to the Recruiter Coordinator. We require a master's degree for this position and they should not be hourly positions, but instead reclassified as salary, exempt.

The key point to consider is the flexibility aspect that was lost by the conversion of CRC/RC personnel who were converted from salaried to non-exempt. Most extended campus students work or have other commitments during normal office hours. Primetime for student business to cover registration, tuition, and real-time advising is generally right before classes or during breaks in the evening hours. Having the ability to have coverage by CRC/RC's without the restrictions on overtime for those times greatly enhances access for face to face student advising opportunities and increases the efficiency of the extended sites impacted by the 2016 changes. If more data is needed, a site-by-site review could be a good decision-making tool.

The committee requests that Webster leadership consult with campus directors, university managers, and their staff, to conduct a workforce analysis to identify "pain points" caused by FLSA implementation to be completed by the end of summer 2019. At this conclusion of this analysis, a limited amount of funds will be added to the budget for conversion to salaried, if applicable. Additional key points to consider for all extended campuses:

- Provide each extended campuses an allotment of 50 overtime hours to be used for special events such as graduation, weekend recruiting, and after hour information sessions.
- Allow adjunct faculty the ability to serve as academic advisors and/or faculty coordinators.

Topic Three: Flexibility in Work Time/Location

Request Three: Creation of Taskforce for Developing University Policy for Flexible Work Time/Location

Workplace and time flexibility is an important factor for job satisfaction and performance for many employees in the United States. A 2017 Gallup Poll on the subject of a one-day-a-week work from home option found that *"Flexibility and remote work arrangements are particularly influential on how enthusiastic workers are in their jobs...In a work world plagued with open office plans, employees who can shut a door on their workspace are 1.3 times more likely to be engaged than other workers, while those who say they have privacy when they need it are 1.7 times more likely to be engaged."*

In an op-ed in the New York Times, software CEO Jason Fried reported that the 32-hour, four-day workweek his company follows from May through October has resulted in an increase in productivity. "Better work gets done in four days than in five," he wrote. It makes sense: When there's less time to work, there's less time to waste. In addition, when you have a compressed workweek, you tend to focus on what's important. (Like sleep, quality work happens best when uninterrupted.)

Introducing policies supporting workplace and time flexibility might allow for creative scheduling that suit both the employee and his/her department better. Some studies show that flexible work options benefit not only employees but also their organization. According to Salary.com:

Benefits include:

- *Less wasted time*
- *Fewer work/family conflicts*
- *Improved working relationships*
- *Greater productivity*
- *Increased job satisfaction*

Penn State researchers discovered a positive link between working from home and job satisfaction. Additionally, employees who work from home are statistically far less likely to quit. Happy employees are valuable employees. Telecommuting is a smart business strategy and a viable option for most organizations. Work from home employment offers businesses the opportunity to reduce costs and increase employee satisfaction. Telecommuting can offer a win-win situation for everyone involved.

A few departments on campus have implemented a flexible work policy. However, many departments have not. Creating an institutional policy will ensure the same benefit is eligible for everyone.

The committee requests that Webster appoint a task force team to create a standard policy for flexible work time/location for Webster staff. This task force will focus on developing new processes and tools that would provide consistency, empower supervisors in the Webster network and ensure that expectations are clear so that flexibility improves both performance and job satisfaction among employees.

Topic Four: WSA Budget

Request Four: WSA's Budget remains at (\$55000) for FY20.

WSA's FY18 budget was \$50,000. WSA was granted a \$5000 increase in FY19 to focus on professional development. There was a decrease in the number of applications for professional development due to the cuts within the departments' budgets across Webster University. WSA relies on the departments to assist in professional development cost that was in excess of \$1500. This has led to the WSA revising the Professional Development guidelines.

- WSA Professional Development funds maximum award limit has been increased to \$2000.
 - **Former policy was \$1500.**
- Staff within their first year of employment will be eligible to apply for funding with the written support of their supervisor.
 - **Former policy excluded staff in their first year of employment with the University.**
- Staff will be allowed to return to the same conference once every three (3) years.
 - **Former policy was every five (5) years.**

The proposed budget cut for FY20 of \$5000 would significantly diminish the WSA's ability to maintain the integrity of our mission to "to support staff professional development opportunities."

The committee requests that WSA's budget would remain at \$55,000 for FY20.

Past Committee Business

1. Performance Evaluations (2016-17)
2. Degree Bonuses – **Update Requested**
3. Reduced parking fees for part-time employees

Closing Thoughts

The Webster staff network expressed empathy, and consideration for Webster's current financial situation and the difficult choices that have resulted from decreased enrollments. The Compensation Committee believes the staff concerns and needs can start to be addressed with this proposal.

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Compensation Committee:

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