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June 7, 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Chair of Riverside Division

From: Elizabeth Watkins
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Daniel Jeske
Vice Provost of Academic Personnel
Acting Vice Provost of Administrative Resolution

Via: Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of Riverside Division

RE: Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process

Dear Jason,

For AY20-21 we have integrated a COVID-IMPACTED outcome into normal time merit reviews. The COVID-IMPACTED outcome is used when a normal time merit file is judged as having been on-track for a positive outcome but was stalled by the impact of the pandemic during the March 2020 thru September 2020 time period. In those cases, half of the salary increase that would have accompanied a positive merit outcome is awarded to the faculty, with the rest of the increase being granted when the positive merit is achieved. This, and other COVID accommodations are described in the addendum to the AY20-21 CALL.

In December of 2020 the University Committee on Faculty Welfare and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity issued a joint report that encouraged the UC campuses to continue to consider ways to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on faculty members. One of the ideas suggested was around the notion of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO).

Our use of the COVID-IMPACTED outcome in AY20-21 demonstrates that empathy and excellence can coexist. We desire to go further by reflecting ARO more generally in our review process. We would greatly appreciate some Senate feedback on the following proposal so that we could incorporate it into an AY21-22 implementation.

Thank you.

Integrating Achievement Relative to Opportunity into the Merit Review Process

1. Introduction

The University Committees on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) issued a joint report on 12/21/2020 entitled “Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty.” In Part I of the joint report, 15 recommendations for immediate actions were offered that address the impacts of the pandemic. For AY20-21, UCR had already addressed several of those recommendations, and discussions are taking place on the campus to address additional recommendations from during AY21-22.

Part II of the joint report made 6 recommendations for future goals and actions. The joint report highlighted the fact that adjustments we made for the pandemic create an opportunity for us to review how we evaluate faculty contributions to the scholarship and success of the UC. The joint report points out that our current approach follows what was established in previous eras of culture that do not fit the present day culture. That approach was based on thinking that did not anticipate, for example, the increases we have seen in the number of women in faculty position, the number of two career couples, and the number of single-parent households. The joint report suggests that experience we have gained responding to the difficulties our faculty members are encountering due to the pandemic can prompt rethinking how excellence and empathy can coexist.

The proposal described below is a response to the call from the joint committee to seek ways to evaluate our fellow faculty members as “whole persons.” To that end, the proposal aims to recognize periods of disrupted productivity in scholarly work are traceable to life events that are frequently encountered in the human experience.

2. Proposal

The proposal is to modify the way in which normal time merits are reviewed. Normal time merits refer to merit files that are put forward after the normal time (APM-220) at the current step. Accelerated merits, decelerated merits, promotions, advancement to VI, and advancement to above scale are outside the scope of this proposal.

More specifically, the proposal modifies the merit and promotion review process to include a proportional accommodation for diminished scholarly productivity when the reduced achievement is attributable to extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are defined as those events that are applicable to APM-760-25 (childbearing leave), APM-760-27 (parental leave), or APM-133-17-h(2) (stopping the clock). The proposal does not require a faculty member to be on childbearing leave, or be on parental leave, or to have submitted a stop-the-clock request (which only Assistant Professors could do). Instead, the proposal draws

from the cited APMs to define what qualifies as an extenuating circumstance. It follows, for example, that extenuating circumstances include bearing a child, adopting a child, managing a serious illness, incurring disability, and going through a bereavement period. The pandemic is a present day example of an extenuating circumstance.

The proposal is most easily understood by referring to Figures 1-3. Figure 1 shows the traditional process that was used to decide the outcome of merits up through AY19-20. The permanent salary increase of X awarded on 7/1 is the difference between the scale salaries (Table 1 of the UCOP Current Academic Salaries) at the current step and at the step being advanced to.

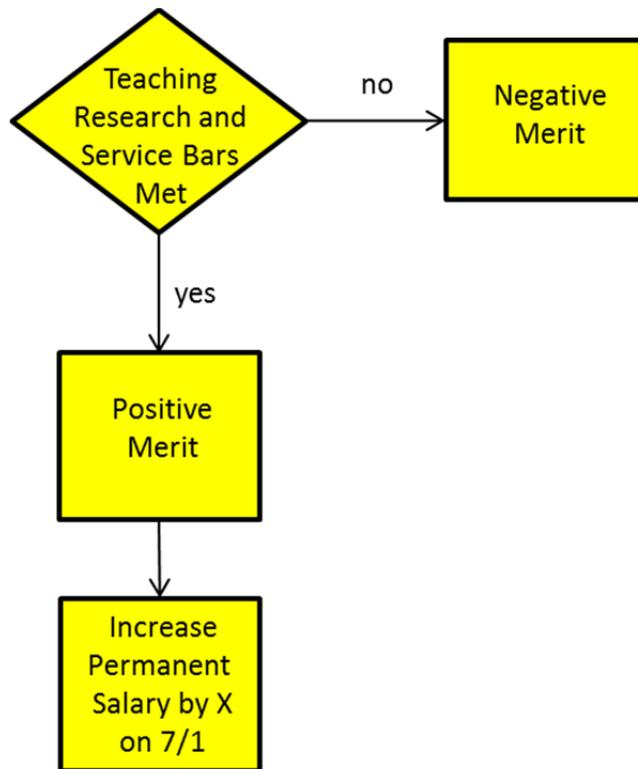


Figure 1. Traditional Review Outcomes for Merit Files (Pre AY19-20)

Figure 2 shows how the review procedures were modified for AY20-21 to make an accommodation for COVID. Candidates have the opportunity to provide a statement on how the pandemic has impacted their productivity. If it is necessary, that statement is considered during the review process in order to allow for a new outcome. Namely, the COVID-IMPACTED outcome which can be used when the file is judged to be short of meeting the normal requirements for a positive merit, but that the deficiencies in the file are traceable to the impact of the pandemic. In COVID-IMPACTED outcomes, the merit is not awarded, but half of

the base salary increase that would have gone along with a positive merit is awarded as temporary additional off-scale. At the next positive merit and promotion action, which might only be completion of the merit advance but could also be a higher placement, the temporary additional off-scale is replaced by the permanent salary increase of X.

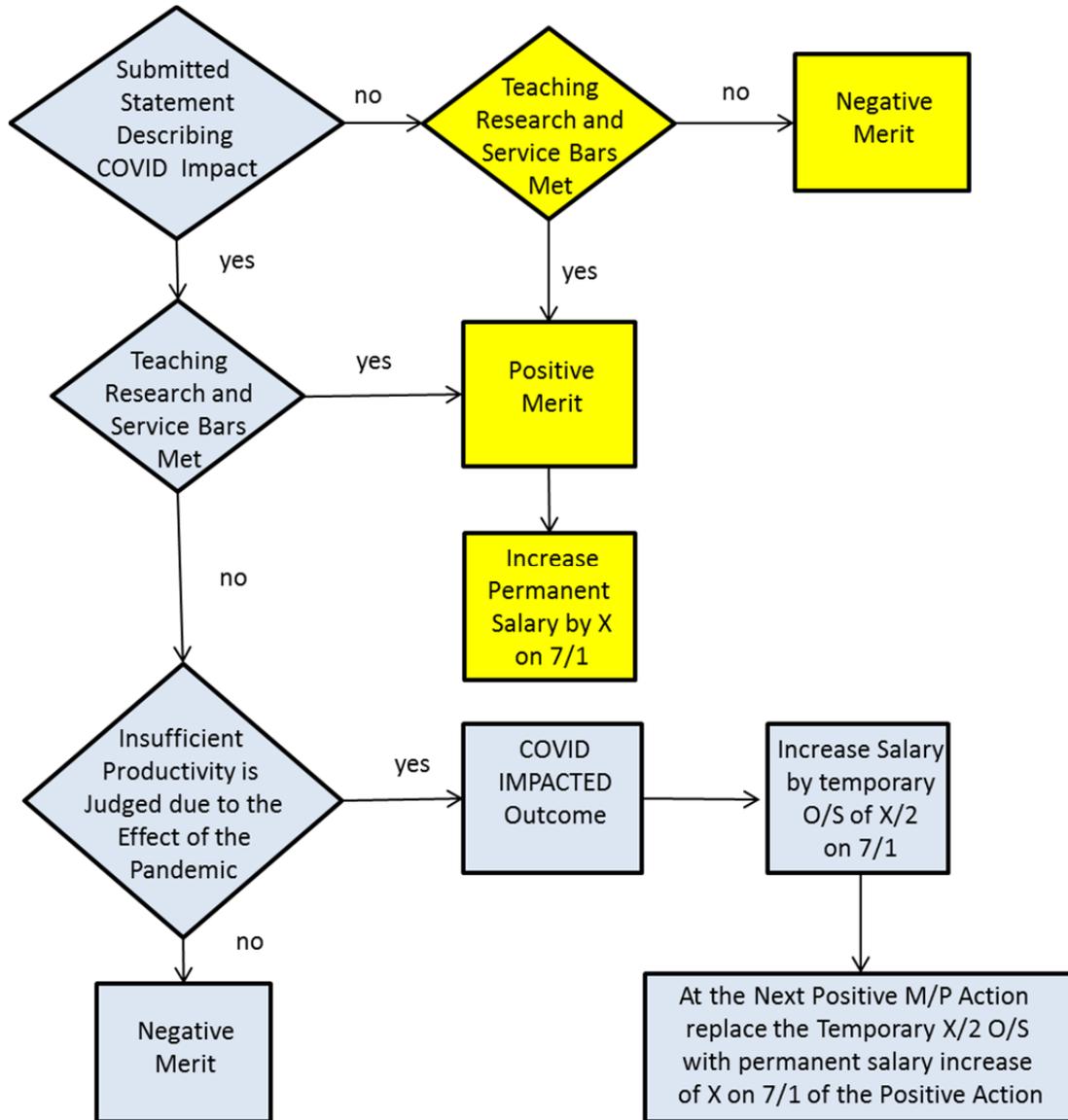


Figure 2. COVID-IMPACTED Review Outcome for Merit Files (AY19-20)

Figure 3 depicts a proposal for how merit and review procedures for normal time merits would proceed starting with AY21-22. The red borders indicate where text has changed relative to Figure 2. The submitted statement now describes extenuating circumstances.

If the normal research bar is not met for what is required for a positive merit but at least 50% of normal research productivity is in the file along with a valid request for consideration of extenuating circumstances, then the file is judged to have *achieved relative to opportunity*. In that case, the merit is not awarded, but half of the base salary increase that would have gone along with a positive merit is awarded as temporary additional off-scale.

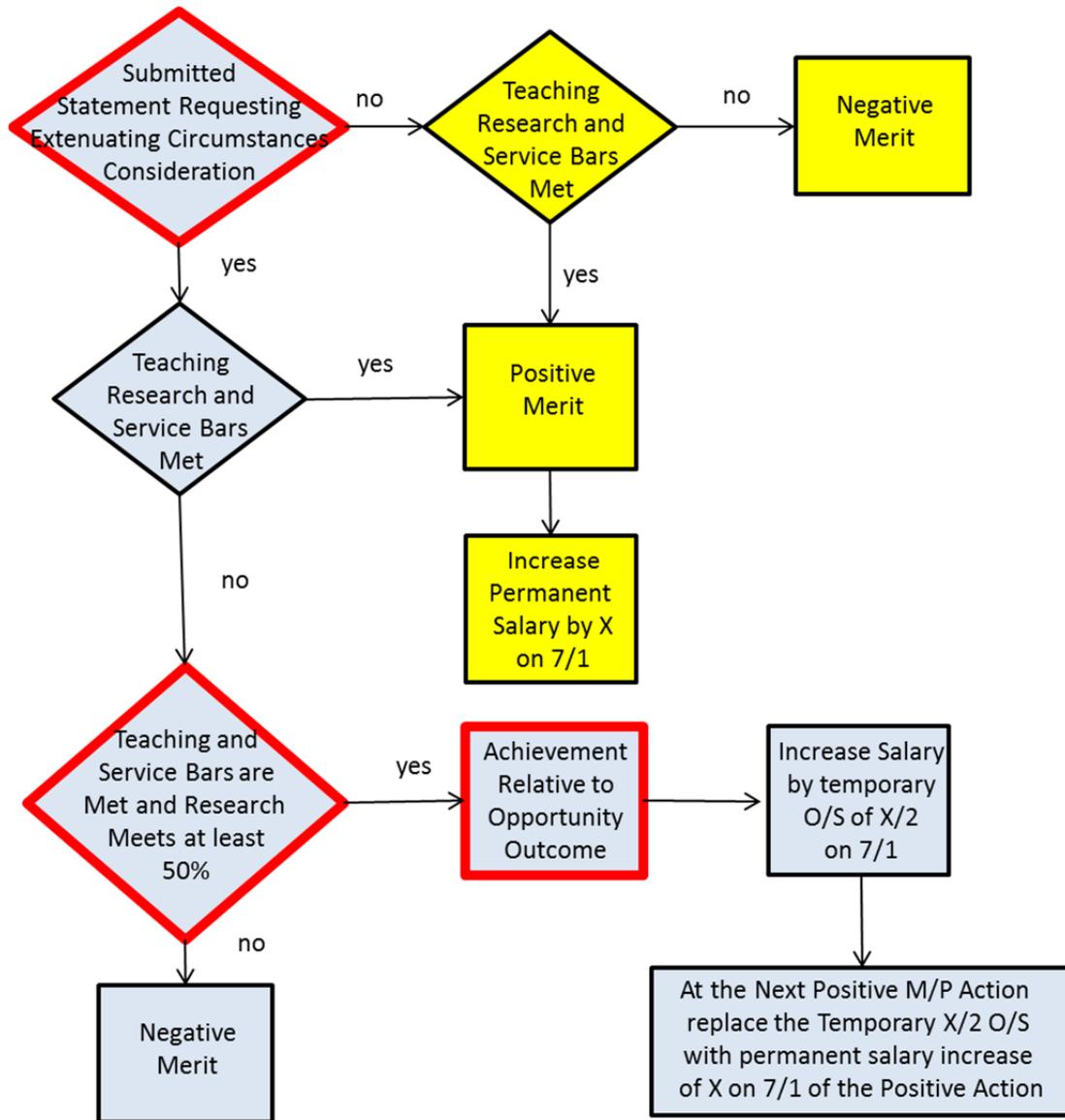


Figure 3. Achievement Relative to Opportunity Outcome for Merit Files (AY21-22 and beyond)

3. Summary

In one sense the proposal to modify the normal time merit reviews per Figure 3 is a small evolution of what is transpiring in Figure 2 for the current year. The change is simply to extend consideration beyond COVID to a larger set of extenuating circumstances. In another sense, the proposal is a paradigm shift that for the first time brings tangible compassion and understanding into the merit and review process.

It is important to see that the proposal is not advancing salary increases for anticipated merit advancements. Nor is the proposal reducing the standards for merit advancement. Figure 3 retains the practice of only increasing salary in response to achievements that have been realized, and only awarding merit advancements when the full complement of UC standards in teaching, research, and service have been realized. Implementation of Figure 3 at UCR starting in AY21-22 is a major response to the joint report from UCFW and UCAADE, and will position UCR as a leader in modernizing the UC merit and promotion review process.