

ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: Analysis of Tenure-Track PhD Faculty Compensation at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine

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Topic Category: Administration

Background, Significance of project: In 1999 the School of Medicine (SOM) developed a rational faculty salary plan known as the Faculty Incentive Based Compensation Initiative (FIBCI) that provides mission-based incentives for professional performance and reward faculty for productivity in all areas of our mission - education, research/scholarship/creative works, and service, including patient care. The explicit link between performance and compensation is the most important goal of the compensation plan. The SOM plan also defined the principles and operational boundaries within which departments are able to develop and administer plans that are specific to their needs and cultures. Over time, widespread differences in compensation levels emerged across departments, which has led to the migration of productive PhD faculty from the basic sciences into clinical departments motivated by higher compensation in the latter.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this study is to evaluate PhD faculty compensation in the UNM SOM with two goals. The first goal is to inform stakeholders how the compensation formula is used (salary benchmarks, metrics/expectations for success and productivity, supplements, etc.) in SOM departments. The second and longer term goal is to revisit the departmental compensation plans to reward success by establishing and employing a uniform equity grid for all departments.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation strategy: This project analyzed the tenure track PhD faculty compensation by rank and department in FY17. The compensation data provided by the SOM Finances Director consisted of eighty PhD faculty including 25% Assistant Professors, 25% Associate Professors, and 50% who held the rank of Professor. These faculty members were distributed among eleven departments that included four basic science departments (35 faculty) and seven clinical departments (45 faculty).

Outcomes/Results: Annual salaries for faculty in the SOM consists of three components: Base, Supplements, and Incentive (BSI). The first two components (B+S) together are the 'contract salary' examined in this study. Although the department FIBCI plans varied significantly among clinical and non-clinical departments, the compensation for Assistant and Associate Professors in nine departments, ranged between the 25th and 50th percentile of the AAMC benchmark for basic science faculty in public medical schools. However, in two clinical departments, the average Assistant and Associate Professor salary exceeded the 75th percentile of the AAMC benchmarks. More significant disparities were identified at the Professor rank. Professors were compensated at the 25th percentile or below in basic science departments, whereas salaries reached and exceeded the 75th percentile in most clinical departments. Salary differences did not correlate with faculty research success, or whether the area of research was basic or translational.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: There is clear need to provide adequate performance-based remuneration for all PhD faculty in the SOM. Uniform agreement for compensation among stakeholders from all departments and across disciplines is highly desirable for the sustainability of faculty retention in basic science departments. After distributing this study among stakeholders that include Chairs and the Cancer Center Director, working group meetings will be held to realign department guidelines for performance-based compensation among PhD faculty in all SOM Departments.