

COACHE Priority Setting Committee Report

The COACHE Priority Setting Committee at the University of Central Florida has reviewed the feedback from the recent COACHE survey. This report aims to address the key areas identified by faculty members and provide actionable recommendations to the Provost. The survey results highlight critical aspects that require attention to enhance faculty satisfaction and overall institutional effectiveness. The committee identified and developed four core areas.

Part One: Support and Recognition

Part Two: Culture Building/Shifting

Part Three: Compensation

Part Four: Existing Programs

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Support and Recognition Subcommittee

Members: Devon Cadwell Bazata, Michelle Dusseau, Carolyn Massiah, Mel Stanfill

Proposal 1: Donation-based monetary recognition

The UCF Faculty Recognition Initiative proposes a tiered approach funded through a dedicated Foundation partnership during the university's annual Day of Giving. This three-tiered structure will include prestigious Constellation Awards (\$5,000 each) for exceptional achievement, Rising Star Awards (\$750 each) recognizing early and mid-career excellence, and Department Recognition Programs (\$3,000 per department) empowering academic units to create customized recognition tailored to their unique cultures and priorities.

The Foundation partnership would establish a unified "Faculty Excellence Pool" during Day of Giving, allowing donors of all capacities to contribute to the recognition ecosystem. This model invites participation from alumni, corporate partners, and friends of the university, with the UCF Foundation providing challenge matches to amplify donor impact. The pooled approach increases total giving while creating a sustainable funding mechanism that can recognize approximately 200 faculty annually across all colleges, transforming recognition from sporadic events into an ongoing celebration of excellence at all levels, at an approximate cost of \$200,000 annually.

The goal of 200 faculty was selected based on scaling calculations for the size of UCF. With approximately 2,000 full-time faculty members (1,948 Full-Time Equivalent faculty in 24/25 AY), recognizing 200 would represent about 10% of the faculty population annually. This percentage allows for meaningful recognition across all colleges and departments while maintaining selectivity and prestige. The tiered structure (Constellation, Rising Star, and Department awards) would distribute these 200 recognitions in a way that celebrates different career stages and contributions.

Proposal 2: Support for faculty facing harassment

Problem 1: Student harassment of faculty

While there are disciplinary procedures in place for acts of aggression from one student to another (through the Student Conduct Board) and disciplinary procedures if a faculty member is mistreating a student (through reporting to chairs and other administrators), there is currently no process in place to protect faculty from misconduct from students,

such as stalking. Currently, the only course of action is to involve law enforcement, which may or may not be able to help (and may also increase danger for marginalized people). However, these kinds of student-to-faculty aggression, and the absence of recourse, leave faculty feeling vulnerable and unsupported by the university.

Proposal

We propose developing a set of policies and procedures for treating student-to-faculty harassment as a conduct violation and identifying appropriate responses like removing a student from a class, issuing a trespass order, or expulsion, as warranted by the situation, if the student is found to be in violation through the conduct process.

Problem 2: External harassment of faculty

Recent years have seen a well-documented rise of social media outrage directed at specific faculty members across the nation, often based on misinformation or organized harassment campaigns. Currently, UCF does not have a procedure to respond to such incidents, such as through public-facing messaging, clear and transparent processes to investigate the allegations to provide due process, and support for faculty who may face threats when targeted by such campaigns. This leaves faculty feeling unsupported by the university.

Proposal

We propose developing a set of policies and procedures for responding to outrage campaigns against faculty, drawing on best practices from other universities.

Proposal 3: More robust and consistent acknowledgement of service

Introduction

Faculty members at the University of Central Florida have expressed dissatisfaction with the current practices surrounding the acknowledgement of their years of service and contributions to the mission of the university. This proposal aims to address these concerns by recommending more robust and consistent methods for recognizing faculty service, thereby fostering a culture of appreciation and motivation.

Background

Service contributions by faculty members are integral to the functioning and success of UCF. These contributions include committee work, mentorship, community engagement,

and administrative duties. Despite their importance, many faculty members feel that their efforts are not adequately acknowledged, leading to decreased morale and motivation.

While some amount of service is required in the faculty contract, most faculty members go above and beyond – yet there is little recognition for this outside of a competitive awards structure.

Additionally, there has been inconsistency in the recognition of years of service.

Years of Service Awards: Founders' Day

Each year at Founders' Day, we honor those that have achieved 20 years of service or more, in five-year increments. This is a wonderful event, which promotes school spirit and creates connection. In some years, certificates have been sent out for 5, 10, and 15 years of service, but this has been inconsistent.

We recommend the following:

1. Create a way for CURRENT employees who did not receive a 5-, 10-, or 15-year certificate to receive one retroactively.
2. Starting at 10 years, create “years of service ducks” – these are now given to new hires, and they would be proudly displayed in offices.
3. After 25 years, put the employees' name in the Founder's Day program every year rather than only at milestones.

Acknowledgement of service to the university

1. Enhance Recognition Practices:

- **Objective:** Develop and implement systematic methods for acknowledging faculty service contributions.
- **Details:** This includes creating standardized procedures for recognizing service contributions across all departments and ensuring that these procedures are consistently applied. Recognition can take various forms, such as awards, certificates, and public acknowledgements.

2. Foster a Culture of Appreciation:

- **Objective:** Promote a university-wide culture that values and appreciates faculty service contributions.
- **Details:** Encourage a culture of appreciation by integrating service recognition into the daily operations of the university. This can include highlighting service contributions in university communications, celebrating

service milestones, and encouraging faculty to acknowledge each other's contributions.

3. Improve Faculty Morale and Motivation:

- **Objective:** Enhance faculty morale and motivation by ensuring their service contributions are valued and recognized.
- **Details:** Recognizing service contributions can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation among faculty members. This can be achieved through regular and meaningful acknowledgements, opportunities for professional development, and tangible rewards such as service credits.

4. Strengthening Community Engagement:

- **Objective:** Encourage faculty to engage more actively with the university and broader community by recognizing their service efforts.
- **Details:** Highlight and reward faculty members who contribute to community engagement initiatives, such as outreach programs, partnerships with local organizations, and volunteer work. This not only acknowledges their efforts but also strengthens the university's ties with the community.

Proposed Actions

1. **Annual Service Awards:** Establish annual awards to recognize outstanding service contributions in various categories (e.g., mentorship, committee work, community engagement). **The current award for excellence in professional service is limited to ONE person for the entire university per year.** We recommend that this be expanded.
2. **Public Recognition:** Create opportunities for public recognition of service contributions, such as announcements in university newsletters, websites, and events.
3. **Service Credits:** Develop a system of service credits that faculty members can accumulate and redeem for professional development opportunities, sabbaticals, or other benefits.

Culture Building/Shifting Subcommittee

Members: Linda Walters, Karen Haslett, John Venecek, Denise Kay

Focus on trust and collaboration

We ask that leadership consider the elements that have contributed to toxic culture, diminished willingness to collaborate and breach of trust in senior leadership:

- We aren't heard
- We aren't valued
- We don't think we fit in with UCF anymore
- We don't believe that leadership will respond to our recommendations.

Solution One: What would make us feel Heard

We will feel heard if (building social connections and sense of belonging)--- there was more consistent, meaningful and **authentic** (unscripted) interaction with senior leadership at the college and department levels.

Flatten the perception of the hierarchy:

- Senior Level sponsored socials at college, department or organization level
- Senior leadership used to show up to things unannounced and uninvited to just be a part of the groups.
- What if Senior Leadership sponsored a department lunch once a year.
- Help us understand who the "Senior Leadership" actually is.

Solution Two: What would make us feel Valued

Recognize the value of your work force – Current sense is that leadership is combative and cynical about raises.

Financial compensation:

- Why is faculty compensation not a direct cost that gets assigned a regularly budgeted salary increase? If there are funds available, faculty should get a salary increase
- Long-term faculty are devalued due to not fitting in anymore. Faculty built careers at UCF and felt a part of UCF. In the new vision of UCF they are left behind. Don't fit anymore. Respect and value seasoned faculties expertise and experience.

Solution Three: What would make us feel like we fit with the ‘new’ vision of UCF

- What programs, etc. could help faculty identify new directions they can take to fit within the new version. Or help faculty understand how they fit in the new UCF version? Positive example: How the use of AI has rolled out for teaching. How could that same process be incorporated to help faculty identify new possibilities, new roles, new collaborations, new potential funding opportunities that fit within the new UCF vision.
- Toxicity – how do you thrive in a toxic environment. Positive to negative ratio of interactions, etc.

We need to know that the University recognizes that we are training the leaders, teachers, and social healers of tomorrow. But right now, faculty **do not believe that leadership will respond to our recommendations – it is all lip service.**

Subcommittee Recommendation: We will believe senior leadership follows up on our recommendations when:

- There are increased informal social connections with senior leadership that provide opportunities for unscripted, authentic and meaningful interactions
- There is a plan presented for how faculty compensation (with considerations for inflation) will be protected in the annual budget and how faculty at ALL levels and ALL colleges will benefit from receiving preeminence
- A 3-year ongoing program initiative to assist faculty with identifying new possibilities, new roles, new collaborations, new potential funding opportunities that fit within the new UCF vision.

In summary, the elements that have contributed to toxic culture, we aren’t heard, we aren’t valued, we don’t believe that leadership will respond to our recommendations.

Compensation

Members: Reid Oetjen, Miguel Bandres, Samik Bhattacharya, A’Naja Newsome

Proposal: Address Compensation Issues

The recent COACHE survey at the University of Central Florida (UCF) has highlighted compensation as a significant issue among faculty members. While we cannot bargain salaries, it is crucial to present clear findings and recommendations based on data from the COACHE survey regarding faculty salaries.

Faculty compensation should accurately reflect their contributions to the university's mission and success. From 2020 to 2025, UCF faculty received approximately a 10% cumulative salary increase plus a one-time payment of \$5,000 to \$6,500, which falls short of the roughly 21.6% increase in Social Security cost of living adjustments and an estimated 24% rise in consumer prices, all while living in Orlando, where the cost of living is about 6% higher than the national average.

This document outlines how compensation is not merely a financial matter but also an issue of respect and recognition for the contributions of UCF faculty.

Recent disparities in pay increases and mixed messages regarding faculty contributions raise concerns about whether faculty members are receiving the respect and recognition they deserve.

For example:

- Undergraduate advisors received a \$10,000 raise to help UCF meet Board of Governors (BOG) metrics. While this is commendable, it creates a disparity as faculty members, who also contribute significantly to graduation rates and have not received similar raises. This disparity in compensation can be perceived as a lack of respect for the faculty's contributions.
- Faculty members are often praised for their outstanding performance yet are simultaneously told they need to overhaul their Annual Evaluation Standards and Procedures (AESP) as too many faculty are rated as outstanding. This sends mixed messages and undermines the respect and recognition faculty deserve for their hard work and achievements.
- During contract negotiations, it is a common practice for out-of-unit faculty and administrators to receive salary increases prior to in-unit faculty. This strategy, employed by the administration, exerts pressure on union negotiators by compelling

in-unit faculty to endure delays. Faculty view this as disrespectful, as their salary increases are postponed, leading to further salary inequity despite their crucial role in the university's success.

Additionally, the faculty workload and lack of clarity of our roles continue to expand:

- The expansion of online programs, including Master's programs, creates an additional workload that should come with additional compensation and support for faculty. Without this, the increased workload can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction.
- As UCF continues to seek preeminence with the Board of Governors, it is essential to clarify the expectations for faculty. Clear communication from the administration about the financial commitment to all programs will ensure that efforts do not appear performative but are genuinely aimed at supporting faculty and enhancing the university's reputation.

Investing in Faculty Support

Beyond the paycheck, the COACHE Committee would like to advocate for investments in travel stipends, Teaching Assistant (TA) resources, research support, and equitable course releases.

- Travel and Stipends: Adequate funding for travel and stipends is essential for faculty to engage in professional development, research activities, and knowledge dissemination. Attending academic conferences, workshops, and collaborative meetings allows faculty members to stay at the forefront of their fields, incorporate the latest research into their teaching, and contribute to the university's reputation. Without sufficient funding, faculty may miss valuable opportunities to network, present their work, and bring back innovative ideas that benefit students and the institution as a whole.
- TA Support: Providing sufficient TA support is critical for faculty to effectively manage their workload while maintaining a high standard of education. With the increasing demands of research, service, and administrative responsibilities, faculty members rely on well-trained TAs to assist with grading, instructional support, and student engagement. Adequate TA support not only alleviates the burden on faculty but also enhances the learning experience for students by enabling more personalized feedback, active discussions, and research opportunities.

- Research Funding and Grant Support: Faculty members require consistent funding for research initiatives, data collection, and collaborative projects. Support for proposal development, grant writing assistance, and access to research assistants can further empower faculty to produce high-impact research while balancing teaching and service responsibilities.
- Course Releases: Balancing teaching, research, and service obligations can be overwhelming without structured support. Providing course releases for faculty engaged in significant research projects, mentorship initiatives, service, or administrative leadership roles ensures they can meet their obligations effectively without sacrificing quality in any area.

By prioritizing these investments, the university demonstrates its commitment to faculty growth, well-being, and academic excellence.

Conclusion

Addressing compensation concerns is not just about financial remuneration, but also about respecting and valuing the contributions of UCF faculty. UCF can foster a more respectful and supportive environment for its faculty by ensuring equitable raises, providing adequate support, and clarifying expectations.

Existing Programs

Members: Vicki Lavendol, Leslee Damato-Kubiet, Phil Zheng

Introduction

Faculty members at the University of Central Florida (UCF) have expressed dissatisfaction with Compensation, Lack of research dollars, and teaching loads. The following proposals aim to explore the expressed concerns of the faculty through several existing programs at the university and their impact on faculty satisfaction. It is the expectation of the subcommittee the proposed actions related to existing programs at UCF will foster improved resources for faculty to attain rewards and promotions through a balanced platform of respect and collegiality.

While this topic is being further examined and discussed in another Faculty Excellence Working group, it was deemed necessary to include it in this report as well.

There is some confusion with faculty in understanding the difference between Faculty Excellence and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, which is a part of Faculty Excellence. Helping faculty understand this hierarchy is important.

Proposal: Highlight and Support Existing and Ongoing programs

Other than the current offers from FCTL, faculty seem unaware of how to find programs that are accessible to them. It is our recommendation that there is one place where ALL programs for faculty are gathered and highlighted.

This will require a financial commitment from leadership to not only continue but expand these offerings.

There is value in discrete tenure earning and non-tenure earning communities supported by Faculty Excellence and we request continuing financial support for these impactful communities.

There is a value in a blend of centralized and decentralized (within the colleges) ownership of faculty support and mentorship which we believe is appropriate given the expertise at each college.

Wellness is of increasing importance to faculty, staff, and students at UCF, so any menu of offerings along these lines would be welcomed.

Proposal: Research Matchmaking

In addition to training and development, there is a desire for better networking amongst peers. While we know that many departments are working on this independently, one department or college does not always know what another is doing. Bringing this into one organized system will help facilitate better interdisciplinary communication and collaboration.

Problem: Losing faculty to other schools and industry with better resources.

Proposed Actions

1. Keep improving, not quitting. Align the Teaching Incentive Program (TIP) and Research Incentive Award (RIA) awards with faculty abilities and goals. Prevent the 'bottle-neck' that comes with hard work by alleviating the pressure of the 5-year post-tenure review.
 - a. Allow more TIP and RIA awards for ongoing work that builds on established science.
 - b. Establish meetings for pathway to awards through the faculty center for teaching and learning (FCTL) for mentors and faculty. Plan it out with colleagues and include meetings as FTE time.
2. Like the location of UCF, scarce resources. Faculty feel like the only way they can improve salary is by moving around. They have to get a counteroffer from UCF which lessens the value of their work.
 - a. Personal appeal by college Dean's and university level administration to make discretionary adjustments. Leadership can match or exceed salary to promote faculty retention.
 - b. Establish new recognition for levels of service with financial incentives through engaged department programs using inter-departmental teams to promote scholarly work.

Problem: The promotion process, nowhere to go.

Proposed actions

1. What we have now: TIP and RIA with annual review and 5-year review.
 - a. Professor top out and runs out of goals, lecturer line tops out at senior lecturer. Establish a distinguished professorship or lecturer. After 5 years at rank after successful reviews become 'distinguished' and put pay and money with it.

- b. What we have could be improved. Establish a promotion ladder to go beyond the current level with salary increases. Make it attainable and balanced with a tailored feel for faculty at their limits.
- c. Begin a network of faculty who have reached their highest level of attainment, to engage in collegial discussion about how to improve the 'nowhere to go' conundrum. There is currently no process in place for faculty at their limit.

Closing Statement

In conclusion, the COACHE Priority Setting Committee's recommendations are designed to address the critical areas identified in the COACHE survey. By focusing on support and recognition of faculty, culture building and shifting, compensation, and existing programs, we aim to create a more supportive and dynamic environment at UCF.

These recommendations are not just responses to the survey feedback but are strategic actions that will enhance faculty satisfaction, promote a positive institutional culture, and ensure the long-term success of our university.

We urge the Provost to consider these recommendations seriously and to take the necessary steps to implement them. By doing so, we can collectively work towards a brighter future for UCF, where faculty members feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute to the university's mission and goals.