

## Suggestions and Questions

Q - Thanks for the opportunity to send these inquiries. My suggestion would be for some sort of pay raise scale that would reward truly outstanding employees. Say anywhere from 2% to 7%. What incentive does an employee have to do superior work, take on extra responsibilities, etc., if you're just going to end up with the same raise as those who do the minimum possible?

A - The Commonwealth implemented Compensation Reform in 2000. At that time, the new policy had provisions that would allow a varying amount of increase based on the performance rating. However, since that time, the General Assembly has not approved variable performance increases as provided in Policy 1.40, Performance Planning and Evaluation. Rather, the increases have been a uniform percentage with a rating of "Contributor" or higher, with "Below Contribution" not eligible for the increase. Pursuant to Policy 1,40, agencies may not supplement the funding provided by the General Assembly and Governor for employees' performance increases. To do the best job possible is oftentimes the goal of the employee, and the personal satisfaction from the recognition for a job well done is the incentive to perform above average. However, when the variable increases are approved by the legislation, we will adopt the practice as soon as we can – it would be great to have this flexibility.

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Q - My question to you would be this: How are pay bands set? The reason I ask, we here in our postal services are all pay band 2, (except the manager.) It seems there are several jobs around campus that appear to be very similar that are band 3. Student accounts for example. Our department and theirs both seem to do very similar jobs, customer service to the student body, faculty, and staff. We both take payments and are responsible for safeguarding highly sensitive materials, yet I believe those positions are pay band 3.

A – That's a good question with a complicated answer. Many factors are considered when classifying a position. An accurate reflection of the work performed as written in the Employee Work Profile (EWP) as a whole is key. Accurate duties of the position are important to determine the complexity, results, and accountability of the position. To determine these characteristics, we must look to the EWP to determine, for example, if the complexity of duties are entry level, if the position requires the incumbent to apply knowledge of a program to which they are assigned, if the employee exercises decision making or judgment that is limited to a narrow scope of well-defined duties or if the position is expected to apply discretion and judgment in the application of policies and procedures. Accountability determines if the employee refers unusual situations to a higher level or if the individual makes independent decisions to apply policies and procedures in varying situations and subsequently are accountable for the results of the work or the decisions. If there is a question about whether a position is classified

appropriately, please speak with your supervisor to determine if there is a basis to send a PR23 and revised EWP to HR for review.

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Q - I have a question concerning a comment that the representative from Segal Consulting made during the presentation of the survey results. She was doing a comparison of the amount that Radford starts employees out at to the amounts that VT and another school did. She said that the other school (can't remember which one!) used a base of 10% over the minimum for the pay band; VT did not have a set percent; and Radford used 15% over the minimum. Was she correct concerning Radford's percent and practice? Is that always the case or just is it discretionary?

Q - Starting salaries may be negotiated up to 15% above candidate's current salary or the minimum of the pay band, whichever is greater. Starting salaries above 15% of current/most recent salary must be approved by the Human Resources Director with supporting documentation. Pay factors considered include: business needs, internal equity, duties and responsibilities, candidate's relevant employment history and academic qualifications, total compensation, etc. Why is it that supervisors aren't willing to do this and why were employees never made aware of this so we could ask for it and look out for ourselves?

Q - One comment reiterated several times by President Kyle and Joey Sword was new hires come in on the "minimum" end of the pay scale. I worked at RU before for almost seventeen years, and returned in early 2008 at a salary \$2,500 less than what I was making when I left RU in 2002. It was stated several times that salary is based on background, experience, skill level, years of service and performance. I feel I should have been rehired at least at the salary I was making when I left RU, and I feel that with the years of experience combined with college courses, I should be at least in the middle of the pay band. Making a lesser salary now than I did in 2002 here at RU will have an adverse affect on my retirement benefits and social security.

A – It sounds like these three questions are referring to the pay practice for new hires or rehires, and these have been common questions. There is a summary page in the survey information that indicates the varying practices for determining the beginning salary. The opportunity to negotiate the beginning salary is an option for any applicant, and this technique is often taught in business courses or in other self-improvement methods. The compensation policy that covers all state new hires is also available on the DHRM website. When determining a salary offer, the supervisor must consider internal equity as it compares to similarly situated employees within the department. To maintain a level of internal alignment, sometimes the supervisor has little room to negotiate and maintain equity for similar positions.

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Q - When can we expect results from the survey and from requests and concerns that are given to you?

A – The results of the survey were placed on HR’s website, and we hope to have the recommendations to the President’s Office soon. We are working as quickly as possible to process the suggestions and questions that are being submitted. We hope to be able to provide updated information in the near future.

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Q - I do have a suggestion for the University, and I’m fairly certain that I’m not alone in this. I commute to work here at Radford University from Roanoke every day. Currently there is a bus that travels from Roanoke to Christiansburg and no further. I think the University as a whole would benefit greatly if there was a bus service that traveled from Roanoke to Radford University. This would not only help out many of the folks who commute every day, but it would also put less of an impact on how many cars are on I-81 making this commute every day. I’ve written emails regarding this topic to the Valley Metro (who owns the Smart Way bus line) and they have told me that until there is a greater interest, this request is not taken seriously. Would it be possible for Radford University to spearhead a commuter initiative on behalf of those of us who make the hour commute to and from Roanoke on a daily basis? I think Smart Way bus would profit from the endeavor monetarily and Radford University (as well as the city of Roanoke) would benefit from the expanded workforce resources.

A – This suggestion is most timely considering the spike in fuel prices. Hopefully you are aware of the recent survey from the New River Valley Planning District Commission we forwarded to all employees. We hope to have a good response to the Commission so we can determine if there are commuter options that might be available to RU faculty and staff. Additional information about the outcome will be communicated as it becomes available.

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Q - Something that would really help my family would be daycare for children (My wife and I both work for RU). There has to be some way to tie daycare into some of the academic programs RU offers. We would also be willing to pay a fee, if necessary. With the influx of newer, younger faculty/staff – daycare seems like a logical progression.

A – This is an excellent idea, and a childcare committee has been active at RU for the past several months. This committee is reviewing the feasibility of providing childcare on or near campus. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

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Q - Why were the Lieutenant positions the only ones in the police department left out of the survey? Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains are all in Law Enforcement Officer II categories, but all three have very different job duties. Salary compression is present.

A – As we discussed in the meeting when the survey was discussed, all positions could not be specifically included in the survey since we were limited to a total of 60 position types. We carefully selected positions that would allow us to see the results of a particular position and also be able to compare similar positions in the role that are either more or less complex in order to determine appropriate salaries. The lieutenant position is a perfect example of this process as we compare sergeants at an entry level and captain in the higher rank within the role.

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Q – I was wondering if the staff was going to be given any progress reports on how the president is moving forward on correcting the salary deficiencies. When can staff expect to see a change in their salary? My position was one of the ones included in the study, so when can I expect an adjustment?

A – Human Resources is currently evaluating the positions that were identified as those which are below 80% of the salary average. This process takes time, and a proposal will be send to President Kyle in the near future. The current economic situation and reductions to RU's budget will obviously have an impact on what can be done at this time to address any recommended adjustments. After the proposal is finalized and approved, individual department heads will be notified of the findings. We will communicate updates through campus email or the employee newsletter as they are available.

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Q – Since the housekeepers do not get to take advantage of a lot of things that other classified employees do, such as the four 10-hr/days, etc., it would go a long way with us and help build morale if we would be allowed to listen to our own personal ipod/mp3 players as we go along our day and do our work. We will be awaiting your comments and since this request is anonymous, if it could be answered during the next staff senate meeting, the word will get to us if announced there.

A – This sounds like a fun idea, but from a safety perspective, we cannot recommend the use of headphones or ear buds. The use of headphones or ear buds can be a potential safety issue should they pose a distraction and prevent the wearer from hearing alarms, approaching people or vehicles, or from hearing warning shouts from co-workers.

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Q- Suggestion-one way to show employees that they are appreciated would be to reduce the huge increase in parking fees from \$50-\$72.

A – Some time ago, parking was free and the costs were absorbed by the University. The number of vehicles continued to increase, and with the demand for parking, the costs have steadily increased. The Commonwealth views parking as an auxiliary; therefore, there is no funding from Richmond and RU is required to be self-sufficient. The permit fees cover Parking Services operating budget, the Transit budget and the Parking Lot Maintenance budget, just to name a few. The last increase was when the fees went to \$50 in 1999. The \$72 fee is still less than many of our peers, for example:

VT – uses a flat fee of \$150.00 per year;

VCU – uses a flat fee of \$29.87 per pay period (approximately \$716.88 per year)

JMU – uses a sliding scale based on salary – less than \$19,999 pays \$108.00 per year;

ODU – uses a sliding scale based on salary – less than \$19,000 pays \$188.00 per year;

CNU – uses a sliding scale based on salary - \$15,001 - \$25,000 pays \$100.00 per year.

The costs of upkeep of the parking areas – snow removal, re-sealing, restriping, new signs, new gravel, etc. – continually increases. It is our goal to keep the fees as low as possible while maintaining our current facilities and services.