

Office of the Provost, Towson University

3/14/2014

Revised 9/2016

MERIT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Merit should only be awarded for performance that is over and above that required and expected as appropriate to the faculty role.

The rewards for meritorious performance should be equitable and consistent across the university, regardless of a faculty member's department, college, or base salary.

Recognition and reward at the highest level (base merit +) should be limited to those whose performance is truly exceptional and exemplary.

Over the next 3-5 years, each college should move to a practice whereby no more than 30% of merit-eligible faculty should receive base merit + in merit evaluations. Accordingly, it is required that no more than 60% will receive base merit+ for work evaluated in AY 2015-16, no more than 50% in AY 2016-17, no more than 40% in AY 2017-18, and no more than 30% from AY 2018-19 onwards.

The goal of a merit system is to provide recognition of, and reward for, performance over and above the expectations attached to appropriate performance of the role of faculty. As a result of the differences in evaluation systems across departments and colleges, there is a need for a revision of the current system if that system is to ensure more equitable and standardized outcomes across colleges. Such a system should discriminate clearly between: what is expected performance (i.e., satisfactory but not meritorious); what is meritorious performance (merit); and, what is truly exceptional (base+) performance.

Recognition and reward at the highest level should be limited to those whose performance is indeed truly exceptional. While a figure of 30% is somewhat arbitrary, there is some evidence in the literature that such a figure is appropriate in large organizations and there is also precedent on campus in that the College of Liberal Arts has used this criterion for a number of years. Being rewarded for truly exceptional performance only has meaning and value if it is not readily attainable by everyone. So while there may be departments in which, in any one year, more than 30% of the faculty may perform at levels that are truly exceptional, limiting truly exceptional evaluations to 30% of the faculty across a college helps maintain the value and meaning of the merit system.

While the current three-tier system of Merit evaluation (Not Meritorious, Satisfactory, and Excellent) will continue to be used while the Towson University Policy on Appointment, Rank, and Tenure of

Faculty is being reviewed, it is proposed that a four-tier system will be used in the future. Those categories would be:

- Not Meritorious/Unsatisfactory: Doesn't meet performance expectations

Such evaluation would lead to:

- a) A required faculty development plan, with mentoring provided; or
- b) A recommended faculty development plan, with mentoring available.

- Satisfactory: Meets performance expectations
- Meritorious: Performance is noteworthy and exceeds expectations (Base Merit)
- Excellent: Performance is truly exceptional (Base Merit +)

In the interests of fairness and broad representation, it is desirable that, in future, departmental merit committees include representation from all TT ranks and clinical faculty members in the review of clinical faculty.

The principles of inclusive shared governance and the value of senior faculty working with and mentoring junior faculty support the importance of broad representation in the merit process.

At the conclusion of the 2015-2016 merit cycle, merit trend data will be collected and reviewed along with these principles by the University Promotion, Tenure/Reappointment & Merit Committee during AY 2016-2017.