

A Proposal For a Research and Scholarship Incentive Plan*

The document presents a proposal that could provide an opportunity for schools, colleges and departments to offer an incentive salary supplement to faculty members thus increasing their total compensation.

I. PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

The Research and Scholarship Incentive Salary (RSIS) plan pertains strictly to that part of a faculty member's time committed to research as a part of his/her university employment. It is essential to appreciate that the faculty member must still perform his/her normal teaching and service obligations during the academic year, be it 9 month or 12 month.

While the principles outlined in this document are intended to promote and reward research and scholarship, a case-by-case discussion with the appropriate Department Head/Chair and Dean is required to insure that the instruction and service obligations of each faculty member are not compromised. The Department Head/Chair is responsible for maintaining quality instruction and service within the department.

For the purpose of this plan the concept of "released time" will always take precedence over the concept of "Research and Scholarship Incentive Salary", or RSIS. Released time refers to that portion of the normal teaching and/or service obligation of a faculty member which he/she "buys" from the department with external funds so that he/she can engage in additional research/scholarship. The department uses the salary savings to hire temporary help to cover the released teaching and/or service commitments.

A faculty member may not use funds for both released time and for the RSIS plan. They must choose one. If they select the RSIS plan their instructional and service load is maintained unchanged but they will be eligible for the RSIS.. If they select the released time option they free up additional time for research and scholarship but will not be eligible for to receive additional compensation in the form of the RSIS.

II. SOURCE OF THE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP INCENTIVE POOL

Faculty members who apply for extramural grants or contracts are encouraged, if the sponsor permits, to request from the sponsor a reasonable percentage of their (and other participating faculty) total salary, including fringe benefits. "Reasonable" refers here to an estimate of the time commitment that is required to carry out the individual's role in the project. For those participating in the RSIS plan, University salary dollars that are freed up through such sponsored project activity will go into an account within the appropriate school or college designated for this incentive salary pool.

As a safeguard, all proposed sponsored projects will continue to require the approval of the department head, Dean and Vice President for Research before submission to insure that the projects are consistent with the objectives and mission of the department and college. It should not be possible to enrich the incentive pool by utilizing the contract and grant process to secure support for activities of marginal benefit or appropriateness.

III. RULES FOR DISTRIBUTING THE INCENTIVE POOL

It is emphasized that this plan rests on the premise that incentives are desirable. The RSIS supplement plan is permissive and not mandatory. Each college is free to participate or not to participate in the RSIS plan. Eligible faculty in a participating school/college are also free to decide whether to participate or not. All parties should appreciate that participation in the plan presumes the availability of funds from the sponsor(s).

A faculty member will have access to 75% of their university salary dollars that are freed up by active sponsored project(s) where a portion of their salary is budgeted. However, the total amount of RSIS any individual may receive may not exceed 20% of their base university salary. Examples provided later in this proposal will illustrate typical situations.

The Department Head/Chair will make recommendations concerning the incentive salary pool monies available in the department. Individual incentive salary recommendations must be approved by both the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The RSIS plan is not an entitlement. It is intended and expected that individual performance and productivity will warrant incentive recognition and therefore it is expected that this determination will be made by the Department Head/Chair and the Dean when making their recommendations. Neither the RSIS supplement nor the lack of it will affect the individual's base university salary.

When RSIS allocations are available they will be distributed twice a year as long as (a) the individual is on the university payroll and (b) sufficient funds are in the incentive pool. The RSIS will be based on funds generated from the current year's sponsored activities. Each year a new RSIS supplement agreement must be developed.

Allocations to departments will be adjusted during the year if a faculty member with sponsored project salary support leaves or is added to the faculty.

Since 75% of the incentive income each year is guaranteed to specific faculty, the remaining 25% may be used to otherwise foster research and scholarly activity. Recommendations for use of 15% will be initiated by the Department Head/Chair and approved by the dean. The remaining 10% will be used for similar purposes at the discretion of the dean. The success of a faculty member in generating revenue for the RSIS pool therefore brings additional opportunities to the department and college and benefits others beyond themselves.

Examples of categories for incentive pool expenditures that department heads and/or deans might consider include, but are not limited to:

- a. Faculty engaged in valued research and scholarship with little or no external funding opportunity could be rewarded and encouraged from the fund.
- b. Faculty contributors who were not named in the sponsored activities could be rewarded from the fund.
- c. Seed money for pilot projects, preparing applications, travel, and other research and scholarship related activities could be supported from the fund.
- d. Faculty development could be supported from the fund.
- e. Infrastructure support that would provide enhanced opportunities for future research and scholarship opportunities could be supported from the fund.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

All faculty eligible to serve as a principal investigator will be eligible to participate.

Participation in the RSIS for those faculty having split appointments between two colleges will be determined by each college separately and the amount of RSIS supplement will be prorated based on their respective appointments in each college.

It is intended and expected that adoption of the RSIS plan will not change the basis for allocating tenure track faculty positions to individual departments.

The proposed RSIS plan is separate and distinct from individual consulting activities of faculty as provided for in the Faculty Handbook and formalized with an approved UPO-10 form.

V. INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITY

Increasingly, sponsored projects involve faculty whose academic appointments may be in different colleges.

When faculty from different colleges have a portion of their salary provided from a sponsored project and when both colleges participate in the RSIS plan the following shall apply. For funded sponsored projects originating within college #1, all of the grant-recovered personnel funds associated with an individual in college #2 will go to college #2's RSIS pool. That is, college #2 would have the funds to provide RSIS supplements in the current year and would have any remainder available to support research and scholarship as recommended by that Department Head/Chair and dean.

If, for whatever reason, college #2 chooses not to participate in the RSIS supplement plan the freed up university salary of individuals involved in sponsored projects from college #2 will be treated according to the current salary savings plan appropriate for that college.

VI. OTHER ISSUES

The OMB Circular A-21 (*Cost Principles for Educational Institutions*) states*"In no event, will charges to sponsored agreements, irrespective of the basis of computation, exceed the proportionate share of the base salary for that period. This principle applies to all faculty members at an institution."* Assuming the salary charged to a sponsored agreement is both reasonable and accurate then it is argued that it is an institutional decision as to what purpose the freed up university funds may be put to. Released time and incentive salary supplement are two options.

When faculty budget their time on sponsored projects and therefore participate in the RSIS plan it will be important that they remember to identify alternative strategies to meet any required cost sharing that may arise.

Faculty on nine month appointments will receive 100% of funds budgeted for their summer salary on sponsored projects. If they have additional extramural salary support they may participate in the RSIS plan during the academic year but not during the summer period.

VII. EXAMPLES

Situation One

A faculty member's base salary is \$30,000. He has a one year grant committing 15% of his time during the academic year. Funds recovered from the grant for his time amount to \$4,500 (15% of \$30,000). A

salary of \$4,500 is freed up from his state supported base salary and goes into the RSIS pool of the college.

It is possible for him to receive up to \$6,000 (20% of \$30,000) in incentive salary. Based on his grant he has accrued an incentive contract of \$3,375 (75% of \$4,500). This money will be paid to him in two annual installments. Thus, with his incentive supplement, his total compensation will be \$33,375.

The Department Head/Chair will have available \$675 (15% of \$4,500) and the dean will have available \$450 (10% of \$4,500) to support additional research and scholarship.

The one year grant was terminated at the end of the year. The incentive supplement is no longer available to the faculty member in the next year. His total compensation in the subsequent year will only be his university base salary for that year.

Situation Two

Another faculty member, whose base salary is also \$30,000 is involved in two funded contracts. The first, similar to Situation One involves 15% of her time. The second contract involves 20% of her time. In this example, the freed up university funds from her base salary amounts to \$4,500 (15% of \$30,000) plus \$6,000 (20% of \$30,000), a total of \$10,500.

It is possible for this faculty member to receive up to \$6,000 (20% of \$30,000) in RSIS supplement. She is assured of receiving at least 75% of the freed up funds or \$7,875 (75% of \$10,500). Therefore, she will be certain of an incentive supplement of \$6,000. Her total compensation for that year will be \$36,000. She may use the remaining \$1,875 (\$7,875-\$6,000) for other research and scholarship purposes.

The Department Head/Chair will have available \$1,575 (15% of \$10,500) and the dean will have available \$1,050 (10% of \$10,500) to support additional research and scholarship efforts for the current year.