

Texas State University Faculty Retention and Salary Adjustment Requests

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Texas State University is committed to an effective program of faculty retention, including appropriate and competitive salary compensation. Deans, school directors, and department chairs are encouraged to develop practices for investing in high-performing faculty before they seek or receive offers from other institutions. Beyond salary, there are many other factors that affect faculty retention. However, in extraordinary circumstances, it may be necessary to consider a counter-offer or pre-emptive offer for a valued faculty member. In these cases, please use the following guidelines.

Guidelines

1. **Purpose.** Pre-emptive and counter offers are typically used in an attempt to retain high-level performers, especially areas that are specialized, hard-to-recruit for and/or fundamental to the university's strategic goals. Salary adjustments to retain individual employees do not justify salary adjustments for other employees.
2. **Faculty Eligibility.** In exceptional cases, a faculty member may be considered for a retention-based salary adjustment. Minimally, the faculty member must have received above-average merit evaluations in recent reviews, possess an outstanding academic record, and have clear impact on university programs consistent with rank and experience. Upon acceptance of a pre-emptive or counter-offer, the faculty member agrees to remain employed at Texas State for a minimum of three years. Although extremely rare, a faculty member is eligible for two retention-based salary adjustments during employment at Texas State.
3. **Characteristics of Competing Institutions.** The competitive offer must originate from a comparable institution or department. The university does not typically respond to offers from industry or non-academic employers.

Process

1. **Faculty member notifies department chair/school director.** When an outside offer of employment is imminent, the faculty member should inform his or her department chair/school director (where the faculty member is tenured or on tenure-track). The chair will discuss with the faculty member what terms would be acceptable as a counter-offer and request a copy of the outside offer or other supporting documentation. The chair will alert the department's personnel committee and the dean of the college of the outside offer.
2. **Personnel committee is consulted.** Upon receipt of a copy of the outside offer or other documentation, the chair will consult with members of the personnel committee. Consideration should be given to the individual's contribution to the department's mission and other factors as outlined below.
3. **Chair/Director submits request to dean.** In light of feedback from the personnel committee and other information, the department chair will submit a recommendation to the dean of the college. This recommendation will include an explanation of the faculty member's recent annual

evaluations, academic record, and impact on university programs. The recommendation will also detail all aspects of the counter-offer, including salary, research funds, space, workload, etc....

4. **Dean submits request to associate provost.** If the dean approves the department's request, the request will be forwarded to the associate provost and budget analyst in the Office of the Provost for review. The associate provost will consult with the provost, who approves the recommendation and funding. An email approval (or disapproval) will be sent to the dean with a copy to the chair and budget analyst.

5. **Chair/Director extends counteroffer.** If approved by the provost, the chair drafts a formal written offer to the faculty member and submits it to the dean or his/her designee for review. The offer letter should outline all terms of the counteroffer as approved by the provost. It should also have a place provided for a dated acceptance signature. The letter template is provided below. Upon verbal or email approval by the dean, and with any necessary revisions, the formal counter-offer letter should be extended to the faculty member.

6. **Faculty member responds to counter-offer.** If the faculty member accepts the terms, he/she should sign the counter-offer letter and return it to the chair by the close of business of the deadline date. If the faculty member does not accept the counter-offer, he/she should inform the chair in writing of his/her resignation by the deadline date. The chair should send the original response (either the signed acceptance letter or resignation) to the dean, who will in turn forward it to the associate provost and budget analyst.

7. **Budget analyst and department implement terms of the counter-offer.** If accepted by the faculty member, the budget analyst will move approved funding to the appropriate departmental account. The chair/director will work with department staff to process the salary adjustment and implement other obligations as stated in the signed offer.

Issues to Consider

Please use the following questions to prompt discussion about the unique circumstances and challenges associated with salary-based retention offers. These questions are for reference and do not need to be specifically addressed in recommendations by the department and college.

Record and Achievement:

- 1) Has the faculty member displayed a pattern of outstanding performance and above-average merit increases?
- 2) Do the teaching, research, professional and service contributions of the faculty member promote diversity and equal opportunity on campus?
- 3) In fields in which outside research funding is the norm, does the faculty member raise enough money to support his/her research program?
- 4) Does the faculty member's research program influence other research on campus (e.g., collaborations, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary research)?
- 5) How frequently does the faculty member entertain outside offers? Will a current-offer end a cycle of retention battles?

Potential and Estimate of Loss:

- 1) What does the faculty member's scholarship contribute to the national standing of his/her discipline and to Texas State's strengths? Is he or she the only person on campus in the field?

- 2) How do you estimate the faculty member's potential in terms of research, teaching, and campus leadership?
- 3) Does the faculty member meet the standards of "collegiality" set forth in the [AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics](#)?

Analysis of Competing Offer:

- 1) Is the offer from a peer or aspirant institution? If not, what are the grounds for responding?
- 2) Does the salary offer include a stipend or the equivalent for the administrative function? Is the salary calculated over 9 or 12 months?
- 3) How does the cost of living compare at the other institution?
- 4) Are there spousal or partner consequences for Texas State? For example, will the loss of the faculty member entail the loss of a faculty/staff member in another unit?

Offer Letter Template

Date

Dear [Professor XXXX]:

In recognition of your value to Texas State University and recruitment by other institutions, the Provost has authorized me to make the following offer to you. Beginning [September 1, 20XX], your 9-month academic salary will be [\$XX,XXX]. In addition, you will be provided with [list any additional commitments and terms of commitments here].

It is a condition of acceptance of this offer that you withdraw immediately from any searches at other institutions in which you are a candidate and that you remain employed at Texas State through XXXX (three years from the date the new salary goes into effect).

You are a greatly valued colleague. I sincerely hope that this offer will convince you to stay at Texas State University. I look forward to receiving your written response to this offer by ____.

Sincerely,

[XXXX XXXX]

Department Chair/School Director

I accept the terms of the above counteroffer, agree to decline all current outside offers, and will remain on the faculty at Texas State University through (three years from the date the new salary goes into effect). I understand faculty are limited to two such offers during employment at Texas State.

[Professor XXXX], Date

Reasons for Faculty Turnover

- Better opportunity - higher salary, more resources, more prestigious department/institution, administrative appointment (e.g., dean), position outside academe
- Location and family - career opportunities for spouse/partner, better policies related to key benefits or family concerns, desirable geographic location, to be closer to family
- Work environment and fit - better campus climate, intellectual fit, lack of collegiality in unit, potential for better work-life balance in a different type of position
- Retirement - “natural” retirement, early retirement for another position, negotiated exit for misbehavior
- Writing on the wall - not well suited to faculty career, poor likelihood of tenure, promotion, or contract renewal

Source: O’Meara, K., Lounder, A., & Campbell, C. (2014). To Heaven or Hell: Sensemaking about why faculty leave. *Journal of Higher Education*. 85 (5), 603-632

Language and concepts included in these guidelines are based on:

Purdue University, Office of the Provost:

<https://www.purdue.edu/provost/faculty/facultyInitiatives/retentionFund.html>

University of California, Santa Barbara, Department Chair’s Handbook:

<https://ap.ucsb.edu/resources.for.academic.employees/>

University of Texas, College of Liberal Arts: <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/business-affairs/manual/Faculty-Retention/>

University of Washington, College of Arts & Sciences:

<https://admin.artsci.washington.edu/competitive-and-pre-emptive-offers>

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