MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 1, 2015

TO: Binghamton University Faculty

FROM: Donald G. Nieman, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

RE: Presidential Discretionary Award Payment which affects UUP-Represented Faculty

The Agreement between UUP and the State University of New York includes a Discretionary Payment Program that allows Binghamton University to recognize faculty for outstanding performance.

- The pool will consist of .5% of total SUNY-wide basic annual salaries.
- The payment is a lump sum.
- There are two separate pools, one for full-time employees and one for part-time employees. Each respective pool must be distributed to those employees only, meaning the full-time pool can only be distributed to full-time employees and the part-time pool can only be distributed to part-time employees.
- Employees will be paid from the appropriate pool (pt/ft) based on the employees’ status at the time of payment.
- Due to the UUP contractual requirement to calculate the pool SUNY wide and then split the pool (72% to full time and 28% to part time), the actual individual pool amounts do NOT equal .5% of each individual employees’ salary – nor does the total pool equate to .5% of UUP salaries for our campus.

The discretionary payments are to be paid in December, leaving us to operate on a very compressed timeline. I am asking Deans to communicate their recommendations to me by October 19, 2015.

The criteria for the 2015 Discretionary Salary Program are outlined below. These criteria are intended to align closely the differing responsibilities carried by faculty and the ways in which faculty performance is recognized. In any given time period, individual faculty may be assigned very different responsibilities with respect to fulfilling the university’s mission. To be considered for a discretionary payment, a faculty member must (1) have filed the 2014-15 annual report, (2) have performed well in fulfilling all assigned responsibilities and (3) have made either outstanding contributions within a single aspect of the university’s mission (teaching, research, and service) or have made laudable contributions in more than one area.

In order to meet the timing for the late fall pay date for discretionary payments, it will be necessary for deans to send their recommendations to me by noon on Monday, October 19, 2015. The deans will set
their own dates for receipt of faculty recommendations. I appreciate that we are operating on a compressed timeline and am grateful for your efforts to complete this important process expeditiously and on short notice.

The availability of these funds gives me another way to learn about the outstanding contributions of Binghamton University’s faculty. I look forward to hearing more about faculty accomplishments and achievements in the weeks to come. While we all wish that the Agreement had provided for discretionary raises that were added to faculty members’ base salary, the current discretionary payments offer us a way to recognize and celebrate our colleagues’ achievements.

Process
Using the process that they have employed in awarding past discretionary payments, the Deans will collect and review all recommendations in their respective areas and will forward their decisions to me, using the form that is attached to this memo. I will then send my recommendations to Human Resources. HR will provide a final campus-wide roster to President Stenger for his review and approval. Presented below are the criteria to be used to evaluate contributions of faculty to the University and the procedures to be followed. The various units of the University are quite diverse in culture and ways of operating. These differences contribute significantly to the excellence that characterizes all sectors of this institution. This process enables us as academic leaders to learn more about the significant contributions the faculty here at Binghamton University make to the success of this institution. We look forward to hearing about our colleagues’ personal and professional accomplishments and achievements in the weeks to come.

Objectives & Criteria
The purpose of the discretionary program is to recognize significant contributions made by faculty members across the full range of the University’s mission: teaching, research, and service. It is not an across the board payment. Therefore, the program should grow out of the concept of a community of scholars. Academic units should use some process of collegial review to determine whom to recommend for a discretionary payment. Deans should plan an important role in the process as well, evaluating recommendations from departments and advisory committees and modifying them, if that is judged to be appropriate. Deans may also retain a portion of the allocation to recommend payments to faculty who have made especially important contributions to the school. Deans will forward all proposed awards from their school to the Provost.

In making their recommendations, Deans and academic units should seek to recognize truly outstanding performance by faculty in teaching, research, and service. Contributions within those areas should be broadly conceived to recognize outstanding performance in the many ways that faculty contribute to each area or a combination of areas.

Procedures

Academic Unit Allocation Guidelines
It is entirely appropriate within these guidelines to make different kinds of recommendations. One faculty member might be recommended to receive a payment to recognize his or her outstanding scholarly contributions. Another might be recommended for a payment to recognize outstanding
contributions to either teaching or service. A third faculty member may be recommended for laudable contributions among our instructional, research, and service missions. In no case should a faculty member be recommended for discretionary payment if that individual did not fulfill all of his or her assigned responsibilities at an acceptable level. This includes the timely submission of Performance Programs and Evaluations for professional and clerical staff if the faculty member is a supervisor. All recommendations must be made on the attached form.

Please note that the rationale should be brief; it may be as simple as “outstanding book published,” “high quality articles published,” “developed new course,” “graduated three doctoral students,” “extensive University wide service,” etc.

Alternative Process
Consistent with past practice, we will make a second pathway available to members of our university community governed by the discretionary salary program. Thus, a faculty member who is concerned about the primary process for evaluation, and who wished to have his or her performance recognized by a discretionary payment, can write directly to his or her department chair and/or dean. That letter should identify the basis for the request for review and should provide any supporting materials the individual wishes to attach. The department chair and/or Dean will review these materials and provide his or her own recommendation about a payment. Both the original request form the faculty member and the department chair and/or Dean’s recommendation shall then be forwarded through channels to the Provost. The Provost will review the candidate’s initial statement and the department chair/Dean’s opinion(s) in making his recommendations to the President for final approval.

C: Harvey Stenger, President
    Joseph Schultz, Associate Vice President for Human Resources