The Future of Merit—Some Questions for Discussion
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Now that the process of merit allocation for FY2015 is fully in train, it behooves us to consider a number of questions about what merit will look like going forward. Given that we don’t know how frequently merit will appear, or whether it will accompanied by COLA, establishing a policy long into the future is difficult. At the same time, establishing some basic principles makes a good deal of sense. The thoughts of the Senate now might help to guide, but not bind, future bodies. The following questions seem to be ones worth considering especially:

- Shall UNLV allow for at least some of the achievements in 2008-13 be counted again in the next merit exercise? This would have the effect of minimizing (though not eliminating) the “discounting” of those achievements in the six-year exercise now underway.

- Shall UNLV adopt a three-year moving window or some other multi-year system that might have the effect of pushing faculty to aim higher in their work, safe in the knowledge that a single but profoundly meritorious achievement will not earn them less than several modest or mediocre ones, precisely because it will be counted more than once?

- Shall UNLV continue with the same six dollar amounts going forward? Arguably, the highest category (now $4500) should be raised somewhat merely to keep pace with inflation. Moreover, I have heard the argument that there should really be no limit at all on reward for genuinely astounding and metaphorically earth-shattering accomplishments. Finally, some contend that merit might be calculated as a percentage of salary rather than a fixed dollar amount. To summarize these questions:
  - Shall UNLV retain six categories or use some other number, or even dispense with categories altogether, leaving the matter to individual colleges?
  - If categories are retained, shall UNLV use percentages rather than fixed dollar amounts?
  - If dollar amounts are retained, shall those be altered to take account of inflation or any other factor that might suggest their alteration?

Of course, there may be other questions that warrant consideration, and I would be happy to include those in any discussion as well.