

HUMAN RESOURCES

Item #	Staff Raised Issues/Concerns ¹	Staff Identified Impact(s)	Staff Proposed Solution(s) ²	WG#4 Recommendations, Comments, and/or Actions Based on SME Discussion	President's Council Response	Status
	Compensation					
1 HR	Salary Setting Process					
	<p>The hiring and reclassification processes are time consuming, requiring numerous iterations and negotiations with HR. There is also a lack of guidance and flexibility in setting salaries for new hires and reclassifications – HR and UCAR/NCAR entity comparative data and performance/experience factors are often inconsistent.</p>	<p>Lost opportunities for hiring the best employees.</p> <p>Loss of confidence in system for setting salaries.</p> <p>Reduction in staff morale.</p> <p>Significant time spent by administrators negotiating with HR.</p>	<p>1) Give more autonomy to the hiring supervisor and less (rigid) emphasis on parity issues across all entities.</p> <p>Although parity needs to be monitored across UCAR. Entities need some flexibility to manage parity in their respective organizations.</p> <p>2) Conduct more relevant surveys on the current market data reflecting the local job market (Denver, Boulder, Longmont area), particularly for SAs, SEs and other “hot” job categories.</p>	<p>Comments: Many of the ‘HR process’ issues raised under this topic are the result of UCAR’s salary stagnation problem. The stagnation of salaries across UCAR over the last decade or so has caused some significant problems to accumulate which is impacting our ability to remain competitive as a national ‘center of excellence’. Approximately 70% of UCAR staff have salaries below the salary range mid-point (1.0 compa-ratio), which suggests that 70% of UCAR staff are below average performers (if one assumes that pay is generally tied to performance). The current salary adjustment practice is not consistent with a “pay-for-performance” system philosophy, particularly when real cost-of-living factors are considered (pay barely keeping up with the local cost of living).</p> <p>The impacts of this overarching problem include:</p> <p>a) Increasing difficulty in attracting top candidates across nearly all job categories.</p> <p>b) Difficulty in providing appropriate salary adjustments (to address low compa-ratio problems) when promoting existing staff when salaries across the institution for the same category are too low.</p> <p>c) Reduction in staff morale making it more difficult to retain current staff, particularly those in attractive job categories.</p> <p>d) Additional HR scrutiny during the hiring and reclassification processes to ensure the UCAR does not hire new staff or adjust salaries above existing staff. This is directly related to the staff feedback that indicated that the hiring and reclassification processes “require numerous iterations and negotiations with HR”.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>1) A salary parity plan should be developed that will allow salaries across UCAR to be adjusted (over x years) to be more consistent with our pay-for-performance system and current job market data. It is recognized that this will be difficult in our very tight budget climate and will likely require tough programmatic decisions to be made. However, if salaries continue to fall behind, UCAR/NCAR’s ability to meet its respective missions and remain a ‘center of excellence’ will be in increasing jeopardy and, staff morale will suffer.</p>		<p>For FY15 UCAR approved an above average merit increase of 4%. The market average was 3%. The additional 1% was to begin to address low compa ratios, high demand positions and performance. Focusing on performance and high demand positions should have a positive impact on retention issues. After the proposed but not yet approved merit adjustments UCAR’s overall CR is just above .99, bringing overall pay almost to market rates.</p> <p>In addition NCAR, UCP and UCAR made a commitment to bring the CR floor to .90 for employees who were performing well. This is expected to have a significant impact on attraction as current employee pay becomes more competitive with new employee pay requests.</p> <p>While one year of above average increases does not indicate a trend, it shows management’s commitment to employee salaries.</p> <p>HR has re-aligned its hiring processes. The HR Generalists (Konnie and Nancy) now review PDs, post the position, review resumes and complete the final hiring process for their groups. HR processes are being reviewed as part of the business re-engineering effort beginning September 15, 2014. UCAR averages 230 hires per year; this year there were 131 reclasses and 18 equity adjustments.</p>

¹ This column list the issues and concerns raised by staff that were collected during the feedback solicitation process and clarified during the subject matter expert (SME) meeting(s).

² This column lists proposed solutions from the staff feedback process.

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	Compensation (cont.)					
1 HR	Salary Setting Process (cont.)					
				<p>Comment: HR reports using multiple highly regarded national surveys that provide salary data from industry and laboratories, and university data is used exclusively for ladder track scientists. Denver/Boulder/Longmont surveys are used for non-exempt jobs. When there are recruitment and retention difficulties for any job, the assigned salary range is reviewed to ensure market competitiveness.</p> <p>Federal discrimination and pay laws, interpreted and enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP), require that UCAR view salaries organization-wide rather than by a single entity, lab or program. Therefore, HR uses organization-wide pay and job content data to advise on salaries. Federal law also states that employees in jobs requiring similar skill, effort and responsibility should be paid equal wages, allowing for differences due to education, prior work experience, performance and time in the job. HR supports reasonable differences in pay when there is appropriate justification for doing so but must always ensure that pay differences can be legally justified.</p>		<p>The Compensation Advisory Board has developed a draft competency based performance appraisal system that will be closely linked to merit increases.</p> <p>UCAR continues to use the most appropriate national and local survey data for exempt and non-exempt positions.</p>
2 HR	Salary Competitiveness					
	<p>UCAR has salary ranges with minimum, midpoint, and maximum salary figures but we are frequently told that we cannot hire a new employee in at a salary that is higher than the current highest paid UCAR employee for that salary range. This is particularly problematic when trying to attract the most qualified/desirable candidate who may be getting a higher salary at their current job.</p> <p>This problem is worsening as UCAR salaries stagnate. We've lost highly qualified candidates for positions simply because HR wouldn't approve the higher starting salary that was within the salary range that they themselves established, citing compa-ratio issues with similar positions within the organization. The salary range is "a range", and entity</p>	Inhibits our ability to hire the best and brightest candidates for a position and keeps us from competing with universities and industry especially in emerging areas such as information science and big data management.	1) Provide flexibility to treat each case individually rather than being set to a formula (currently, too much emphasis on the internal compa-ratio as the arbiter). We should be matching the competitive market for salaries, not matching our internal averages, which are falling behind the marketplace in some categories.	2) Recommendation: See item 1 (page 1)		HR examines new employee salaries relative to the pay of current employees with similar skills and responsibilities. Labs and/or programs may justify pay differentials, as always, and HR reviews these justifications, collaborating with PC members. HR works with labs and programs to find appropriate data to justify pay differences based on discipline.

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	Compensation (cont.)					
2 HR	Salary Competitiveness (cont.)					
	management shouldn't have to negotiate with HR when we're within that range and consistent with job requirements, internal parity, experience, etc.					
3 HR	Salary Range Adjustments					
	<p>Salary ranges should be broken out and specific for most job categories so that annual range adjustments (if any) can reflect current market trends for specific job types. There is no reason that all annual salary range adjustments should be the same across all job categories.</p> <p>There is a significant amount of concern amongst staff that HR is not performing adequate market surveys or keeping up with market trends for selected job categories. The cost of living in the Boulder area should also be factored into the market survey.</p>	<p>Adds to problem of trying to catch up with compa-ratios when all the salary ranges move together. Some jobs are 'hotter' than others, so the range adjustments should reflect this.</p> <p>Concern and frustration that UCAR salaries are falling behind in the Denver/Boulder/Longmont market region.</p>	<p>1) Let salary ranges adjust independently based on updated market data.</p>	<p>Comments: HR appeared supportive of the idea and indicated that it seems to make sense that job categories have independent salary ranges so they can follow market trends independently. HR noted that they would be meeting with the PC on this topic early in 2013.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>3a) UCAR should develop a new salary range mapping method whereby each job category salary range is able to be adjusted independently based on updated market data.</p> <p>3b) HR should develop a summary document describing the strategy, methods and techniques utilized when performing salary market surveys and make this material available to UCAR leadership, administrators, and other key staff members. This document should reflect when the information was last updated for each job category.</p>	<p>HR has met several times with the PC regarding this</p>	<p>3a) In June the PC agreed to adjust the FY15 salary ranges, consistent with standard practice to keep ranges current with the market. If a market salary changes significantly HR will move the job into a different range, consistent with the data.</p> <p>3b) HR provides two compensation training classes per year that describe the process that is followed for setting pay. HR is working on getting this training online and is developing FAQs for the website to make the process is more transparent.</p>

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	Hiring					
4 HR	OpenHire Web Application					
	<p>The OpenHire system is confusing and not well designed for use by hiring supervisors. It is hard to navigate and is cumbersome.</p> <p>Staff members do not believe that OpenHire is a productivity tool for hiring supervisors and administrators. "The tool was implemented to make HR's job easier, not ours." Some staff would prefer to go back to the "old" email system for transmitting resumes from HR to the hiring supervisors. A lot of entities have come up with workarounds.</p> <p>Staff raised a concern that when new systems such as OpenHire are being considered for use at UCAR they are asked for feedback and once they state their initial concerns, their feedback is no longer sought and things move forward without them. Staff expressed deep concern that Lab/Program feedback is not taken into consideration or weighed enough in the decision process when evaluating new tools.</p>	<p>Frustration and wasted time by administrators and hiring supervisors trying to figure out the OpenHire system, including forms, and status notifications.</p>	<p>1) Go back to process where hiring supervisor prepares the required paperwork and (they or the entity administrator) emails the package of documents to HR for processing and then HR forwards application materials to the hiring supervisor for review and action. Or, find a better system than OpenHire to manage the preparation and tracking of documents.</p>	<p>Comment: OpenHire may have been envisioned as a productivity tool, but it has not simplified the hiring process for non-HR users.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>4a) HR should explore ways to enhance or replace OpenHire with a more intuitive system and/or process that is easier for all stakeholders to use.</p> <p>4b) HR should ensure that whenever a new productivity tool with broad use such as OpenHire is being envisioned, representatives from all user categories (e.g., HR, NCAR/UCAR administrators, and hiring supervisors) should be involved in identifying functional requirements and in the evaluation of candidate tools. Formal usability studies should be conducted to ensure that the system meets the needs of all users. Feedback from non-HR users should be considered in the final selection process.</p> <p>Comment: HR agreed to review the hiring process and OpenHire capabilities taking into account lab/program user perspectives.</p>		<p>4a) OpenHire will be reviewed as part of the business re-engineering project. Consultation with users is an integral part of the process. In the meantime, HR has, and continues to, work with the vendor on product enhancements. HR has reviewed and updated UCAR's OpenHire user tutorial provided to hiring supervisors and also conducts one on one user training sessions upon request. The online training is currently being developed.</p> <p>In April 2013, HR surveyed administrators who are frequent users of OH then held a meeting with those surveyed to discuss the survey findings and to understand user concerns. HR found users most liked the electronic approval process; and they were most concerned about the Requisition that has too many fields UCAR does not use, making it confusing to complete. We also found that some issues were due simply to a lack of user understanding. HR attempted to clear up these concerns by having three Administrators demonstrate for their peers common OpenHire processes.</p> <p>After the user meeting HR spoke with the OH product manager to address some of the issues raised by administrators. Some fixes are now in place and by Jan 2014 the important Requisition customization is expected to be addressed to the extent possible.</p> <p>4b) OpenHire was not selected without input. Small groups of lab/prog Administrators were part of the vendor evaluation and selection process. However, we understand the WG's recommendation that such a process be more robust in the future.</p>

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	Applicant Pool Screening					
5 HR	Screening Practices					
	According to many hiring supervisors, the initial screening of job applicants by HR is perceived as too stringent on occasion.	Can remove attractive candidates prematurely in the review process.	1) Send total list to hiring supervisor with HR suggested (filtered) eliminations highlighted or noted in some manner.	<p>Comments: Per HR, the hiring supervisor defines the requirements in the Position Description (PD) and HR screens for matches to the stated minimum requirements. HR is required keep a descriptive record on the disposition of each applicant. HR believes by performing and documenting the first screening to identify "qualified" applicants, the work load for the hiring lab/program staff is reduced because they would otherwise have to do this. Additionally, the screening would still need to be reviewed for validity by HR before proceeding to the interview stage.</p> <p>HR forwards applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the position. Sending on all applicants qualified or not creates problems when analyzing the available pool of qualified applicants for reporting purposes. HR noted that upon request they would be willing to sit down with hiring supervisors and go through the candidates that were removed from consideration. HR also noted that if there is a particular candidate that the hiring supervisor knows they want to review, the hiring supervisor can contact their generalist for assistance.</p> <p>5a) Recommendation: HR should let the hiring supervisor know how many applicants were filtered and offer to meet with the hiring supervisor to review the process if this is desired by the supervisor.</p>		5a) Equal Employment Opportunity and compliance regulations govern the definition of "qualified" applicants in regards to hiring practices. If the candidate pool is unacceptable, HR can discuss the process and options with the hiring manager.

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	Job Family Matrices					
6 HR	Matrices Updates					
	<p>1) The job family matrices are slow to change. Outdated job matrices result in lengthy back-and-forth discussions with HR in an attempt to figure out what is the appropriate job category for a new hire or reclassification.</p> <p>The lack of regular updates to the job family matrices also reflects badly on UCAR for not keeping up with how job requirements change over time. Often, we have employees whose responsibilities are significantly different from when they were originally hired into the position and their evolved job may not fit well into the UCAR established job classifications, especially when requirements and tasks overlap multiple job families.</p> <p>2) There have also been instances where the requirements within a job family matrix have changed without any notification to staff. For example, the recent change in the educational requirements and removal of the equivalency option for selected job families.</p>	<p>1) Lack of agility to get the right people in the right positions.</p> <p>Difficulties in hiring since job matrices are often out of sync with evolving job categories in the marketplace.</p> <p>2) Potential inability to reclassify existing and experienced staff members if they do not meet the revised requirements.</p>	<p>1) Job family matrices should be reviewed every 3-5 years for currency.</p> <p>2) Changes to requirements within any job family should not be made without soliciting feedback from staff.</p>	<p>Comments: HR agrees that the job family matrices should be reviewed regularly; however, HR indicated that they do not have the resources that would be required to routinely review all job classifications. The last time they did a review/job evaluation they had to bring on additional staff. A schedule whereby a few categories are reviewed each year may be the best approach.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>6a) Job family matrices should be reviewed by NCAR/UCAR SMEs (and perhaps external experts) on a regular basis (perhaps every 3 years) to maintain currency. SMEs (internal and external) should be asked to participate in the process of defining or refining the job family matrices. This process may also be used to identify the need for additional or a reduction in job categories.</p> <p>6b) Changes to requirements within any job family should not be considered without soliciting feedback from administrators and HR should be proactive in notifying stakeholders when changes are being implemented.</p>		<p>6a) The new Software Engineer/Systems Administrator matrices are being reviewed for FLSA compliance with Mountain States Employers Council and will be released in October. Subject Matter Experts were included on the revision committee(s).</p> <p>6b) HR is working with the Compensation Advisory Board to select the next matrices to be updated. Stakeholders will be consulted and notified when changes are contemplated. Subject Matter Experts were invited to share the contents with labs and programs. HR continues a dialogue with managers, which allows HR to remain current on our jobs and the needs.</p> <p>A communication plan is being developed for the rollout of matrices.</p>

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	Job Desk Audits					
7 HR	Audit Structure					
	<p>Staff members are troubled that many reclassifications resulting from revised or new position descriptions result in desk audits. Why is this done if the job description is the point of reference for either mapping to a job family or determining a single incumbent status? These audits are cumbersome and demoralizing for an employee and have the potential to devalue the employee's role and contribution to the division and to UCAR.</p> <p>Concern was also expressed that audits have been conducted by people not perceived as being qualified to judge the nuances of complex job duties.</p> <p>It is the perception of entity administrators that these audits are unfavorably biased toward non-scientific positions or positions for which there are inadequate descriptions in matrices.</p>	<p>Frustration, anxiety, and anger when staff members are asked to 'prove' what they do through job audits.</p>	<p>Job audits should not be conducted for specific individuals that are targeted for a reclassification.</p>	<p>Comments: HR indicated that the purpose of a job audit is to obtain additional information necessary to support a reclassification request. HR also statistically analyzed their audit process and concluded that there was no bias toward any specific job category.</p> <p>Recognizing that desk audits cause significant anxiety for affected staff members, Working Group #4 makes the following recommendations:</p> <p>7a) Desk audits associated with reclassifications should be done as a last resort when there is no other practical method of obtaining information necessary to process a reclassification.</p> <p>7b) Desk auditors should, to the greatest extent possible, describe the process and rationale behind the audit to the affected staff member to reduce any tensions that may exist.</p> <p>7c) The selected auditor should be recognized as an expert at interpreting the specific job duties associated with the review and include feedback from key staff members that work closely with the affected individuals.</p> <p>7d) HR should develop a document that describes the goals, objectives, rationale, and decision processes associated with desk audits and make this guidance document available to administrations and other key personnel.</p>		<p>HR is trying to obtain more information from division administrators and supervisors to lessen the impact of informational interviews on staff.</p> <p>There appears to be misunderstanding on the topic of job audits.</p> <p>The WG recommendations in 7A, 7B and 7C are now part of our informational interview procedures. Informational interviews are very infrequent, occurring approximately 3 or 4 times per year and are only conducted when additional information is needed that could impact a reclassification decision.</p> <p>HR will publish guidelines on desk audits consistent with item 7D by the end of the calendar year 2014.</p> <p>HR brings in subject matter experts and has formed committees to evaluate jobs for which they need more input. This has happened for both administrative and technical jobs. HR relies on supervisors to identify key staff members who could contribute to the job audit discussion.</p>

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	Communication					
8 HR	Open Communication					
	<p>There is a perception that HR's decision making processes are too closed and often seem arbitrary.</p> <p>There is an overarching need for more open communication between HR and UCAR/NCAR entity administrators.</p>	<p>Anxiety, distrust, and poor decision making when insufficient information is available.</p>		<p>Comments: HR and the SMEs agreed that additional communication and feedback would likely address many of the concerns expressed during this process.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>8a) HR should have annual or semi-annual meetings with entity administrators to openly discuss policy, procedural, and process issues related to salary adjustments, reclassifications, hiring, legal constraints, etc. Open and candid two-way discussions of issues and reasons behind approaches used by HR should be helpful in reducing any pent-up tensions and/or misperceptions. Topics for these meetings should be solicited from the all stakeholders.</p> <p>8b) HR related issues that may affect staff should be communicated to staff using a variety of media including Staff Notes, administrator notification pages on internal web sites, and/or applications that alert targeted staff via desktop bulletins when issues arise, policies change, and/or feedback is desired.</p>		<p>8a) For topical issues HR meets regularly with the NCAR B&P and the UCP Administrators groups; and the NCAR Executive Committee, UCP Directors.</p> <p>8b) A recent example of increased communication was the roll out of the new Postdoc Fellow and Researcher. HR partnered with the UCP and NCAR Directorates. The goal was to develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy and an announcement was placed in Staff Notes regarding the topic.</p>