

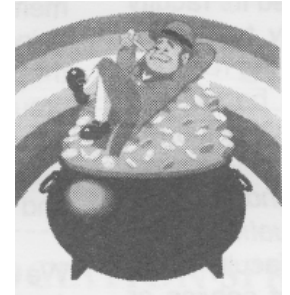
# SILVER BULLETIN

Newsletter of CSU, Sacramento Emeritus Association

Spring - 2000

## MERIT PAY- TWO ATTEMPTS JERRY TOBEY, PRESIDENT

For decades we have heard claims, first from the media, then from the Board of Trustees, that faculty salaries should reflect merit rather than a "lock-step seniority system." The campaign has always ignored the many merit measurements in our traditional system - e.g., competitive hiring, yearly evaluations of probationary faculty, tenure evaluation and competition for promotion sequencing. Nor did the campaign recognize the power of faculty peer approval - an approval granted for excellence; nor did it recognize the importance to academe of a special feeling of community, of faculty collegiality. It proposed instead the division of the community into two classes, in which ("especially meritorious") faculty should have salaries markedly higher than the rest of us.



Over the past five years, the Board of Trustees have, with the enthusiastic approval of the Chancellor's office, imposed two specific merit systems on top of existing faculty evaluation procedures. The first was the *Performance Salary Increase* (PSI); the second, inaugurated during the past Fall semester, the *Faculty Merit Increase* (FMI) was intended to correct some of the objectionable features of PSIs. How successful were the two systems? First, they differ in significant ways:

Under the PSI system *individual faculty* applied for the special merit raises. Their letters of application were judged by their departments, then by a university-wide faculty committee and finally by the President who could accept, modify or reject the committee recommendations.

The FMI system requires that all faculty submit an annual report of professional activities-although faculty may decline to have the report serve as a raise application. Department committees then evaluate the reports and recommend a raise (this Fall, typically from 1.5 to 2.5 percent). Those recommendations then go to the deans of the colleges for approval or modifications and so on to the Provost and the President for a final decision. The new system provides for appeals to an elected faculty committee: In this year's inaugural run, the committee heard 45 appeals, half from the College of Mathematics and Natural Science, and approved all appeals. In sum, the new system strengthens the role of the departments and provides a faculty appeal system, while at the same time giving the deans a crucial evaluative role.

Like many colleagues I boycotted the PSI system, chiefly because it was designed to generate a faculty class system ruinous to our collegial ethos. The PSI invited faculty to declare themselves so superior to their colleagues that they deserved a raise in base salary (at CSUS of up to five steps) while their colleagues got nothing or marginal increases. (One of the sad aspects of the business was the fervor with which some faculty attacked the system as corrupt while applying for and commonly winning enormous raises.)

Like many colleagues, however, I first thought that the FMI system was a fundamental improvement because it required self evaluation by all faculty and provided for departmental recommendations of specific raises. Whereas the PSIs required that faculty applicants declare themselves superior to their colleagues, the FMIs seemed more democratic and so less divisive.

Did it work out that way? It still may, but only if we correct serious weaknesses evident in the first year of evaluations; otherwise, it will end, I think, by being more rather than less divisive. The chief weakness involved standards, but in an unexpected way.

**The standards specified in the policy were reasonable and allowed departments to make sound recommendations, but those standards changed on the way to the President.** Those changes involved (1) the relation of the three areas of evaluation, instructional effectiveness, service and scholarship, and (2) part-time faculty.

ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON  
WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 19, 2000  
SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 7

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*Merit Pay - Two Attempts* (continued from page 1)

(1) A university policy summary explained that faculty might argue their merits on the basis of teaching instruction alone, or instruction and service or scholarship or both. In short, it was supposed to be possible to justify a raise on the basis of instructional effectiveness alone or on that basis and either service or scholarship. My department, History, and I think all others faithfully followed that evaluative process, only to find out that the deans were using different standards. The deans insisted on evaluating all three areas and it turned out to be prohibitively difficult to justify a raise by virtue of instruction alone. In fact, I sympathize with the deans; it is difficult to tell whether faculty are so superior at teaching as to deserve an extraordinary raise. My point, however, is that the deans effectively changed the policy standards midway through the process.

(2) An additional mid-stream change in standards involved our part-time faculty colleagues. CSU has for some time deliberately changed its faculty mix, shifting from full to part-time faculty to reduce salaries and increase work loads. One of the reasons the FMI system seemed attractive was because it allowed exploited part-timers to apply for raises judged by the same standards as their full-time colleagues. Again, after the process was in motion, indeed after departments had completed their evaluations, the administration informed us that part-time faculty could not justify a raise request on the basis of service or scholarship because the current contract does not require such work of them. Our part-time colleagues were then caught in a Catch 22 bind: They could not cite service or scholarship and the deans were reluctant to grant raises recommended by departments on the basis of instructional excellence alone. In the end, the President granted some credit for scholarship related directly to the courses they taught-whatever that means.

Everyone acquainted with the current working of our departments knows how unfair such limits are. True, part-timers are not paid for such service as holding office hours, but they hold them anyway because they are professionals who know that meeting with students is essential to a sound course. True, they are not required to do scholarship, but many of them do remarkable work because they are professionals devoted to their fields, and a chief argument for scholarship is that it improves the instructor's knowledge of a field-and so teaching in the field. How odd that faculty colleagues are denied credit for serious work done simply because the law does not require that they do it.

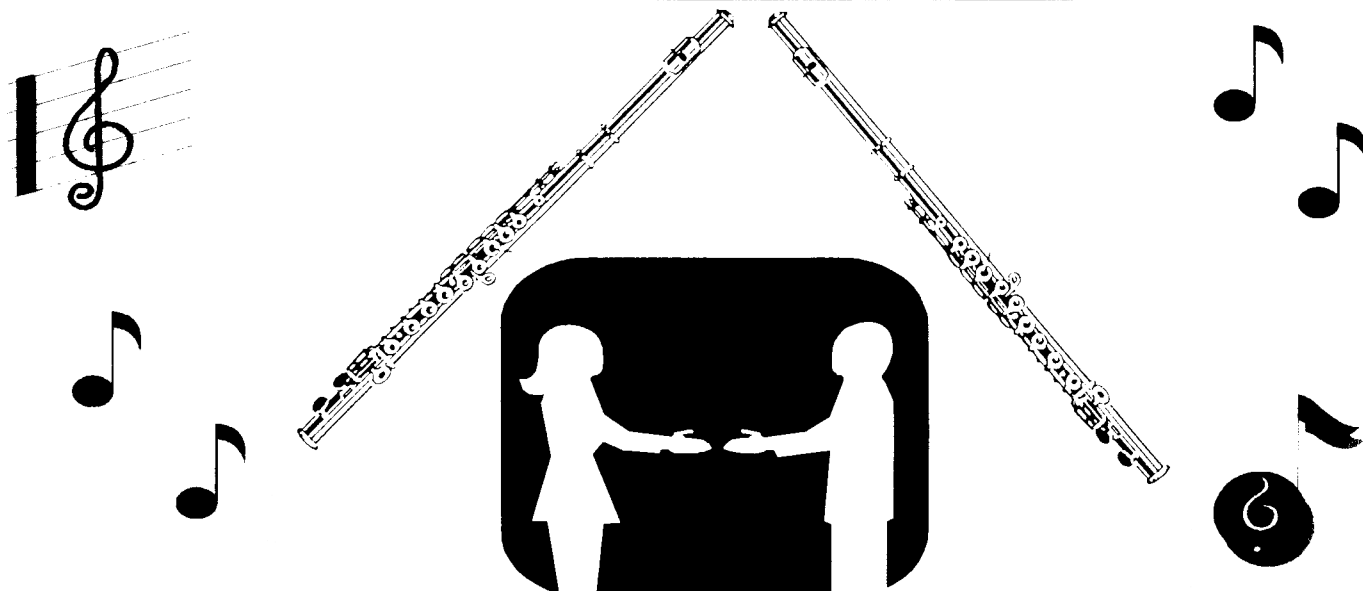
Surely, if extraordinary merit pay means anything, it means rewards for accomplishment beyond that required for employment. CAMPUS UPDATE ON "MERIT" PAY President Jerry Tobey has detailed some of his concerns about the current system for evaluating faculty. Recent reports from our campus indicate that the current process for evaluating faculty has gone seriously awry. Data indicate that the discretionary monies available to the president under the contract have been substantially increased, and that the most significant increases have gone to department chairs and senior faculty-despite the avowed intention of rewarding individual faculty for meritorious teaching. In many cases, departmental recommendations were ignored or substantially changed by administrators, with one result being that outstanding junior faculty received insultingly insignificant pay raises.

The following comments from one of the two FMI Appeals Committees are of interest: "We, the (six) members of the 1998-99 FMI Appeals Committee, wish to indicate in the strongest possible terms our dismay at the present FMI process. Although we are a diverse group both in terms of disciplinary training and years of service on the CSUS campus, collectively we have served on many committees and we have learned much and contributed much to the CSU.

We wish you to understand that our service on the FMI Appeals Committee has represented our least rewarding and most negative experience during our tenure at CSUS. We also want to express our disappointment that the campus administration declined to appoint a representative to be present at the appeal proceedings .... We find the negative aspects of the FMI process so overwhelming as to completely submerge any possible merit associated with (it)... After listening to appellants characterize the process as "capricious, disgusting, divisive, negative, discouraging, and irrational," we are persuaded that many faculty on our campus have suffered a loss of morale so substantial that they will not recover for many years. Indeed, their professional lives may have been diminished permanently.

We suspect that in its present form, the FMI process will ultimately persuade our junior faculty to reconsider the decision they made (to come to CSUS) and will persuade our senior faculty to revise their plans for post retirement financial and other support for the campus." (Emphasis supplied by Ed.)

The Committee concluded that the process has been "so devastating to faculty dedication and morale that it should be discontinued."



A special treat at our Spring Luncheon: Laurel Zucker, internationally known flutist and a member of the CSUS music faculty, will play for us. Accompanying her will be Jeremiah Bills, one of her students. They will play Flute Duets, by W.F. Bach.



### CSUS EMERITUS ASSOCIATION SPRING LUNCHEON

**DATE:** Wednesday, April 19, 2000  
**LOCATION:** University Center Restaurant  
**TIME:** 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The menu: Grilled Chicken or Vegetable Quiche // Mixed Green Salad  
 Garlic Roasted Red Potatoes // Seasonable Vegetables  
 Coffee -- Wine available

Please choose one entree offering and write in the number of persons for each choice.

Chicken: \_\_\_\_\_ \$16.00                      Vegetable Quiche \_\_\_\_\_ \$16.00

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**STREET ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CITY-STATE- ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**PHONE:** (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

We will meet at 11:30 in the University Center Restaurant. Wine & soft drinks will be available in an adjacent room.

Please return this sheet with your payment, which may also include your 2000-2001 dues of \$10.00, to:

**Floyd Mullinix - 1539 Gannon Drive - Sacramento, CA 95825**

**➡➡➡➡➡ DEADLINE FOR YOUR RESPONSE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2000**

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Emeritus Association Board of Directors California State University, Sacramento  
2000-2001

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

The Silver Bulletin will be much more interesting (and maybe more fun) if more members will send news items (about you and your colleagues) to Alan Wade, Editor - 2916 - 25<sup>th</sup> Street - Sacramento, CA 95818 (e-mail & fax listed above). Photos from trips etc., can be included and will be used if space permits. Black and white photos are best. ATTENTION: Articles for the Fall 2000 issue of the Silver Bulletin should be in the editor's hands by: OCTOBER 10.