

Questions from USS Senate Open Forum
November 2018

February 13, 2019

Compensation/HR

1. How will employee merit raises and cost of living adjustments be planned for and addressed in the new budget model?

A: Since the state does not consistently fund employee salary and benefit increases, the increases are funded from tuition, restricted fees, SRO and auxiliary funds. The goal of the new budget model is to implement a strategic budget model that rewards enrollment and student credit hour growth, incentivizes and aligns with university priorities, energizes innovation, provides greater financial accountability and transparency, unlocks the historical budget, and preserves K-State's land-grant mission. Coupled with the Strategic Enrollment Plan, the university is working to generate additional revenue through enrollment growth to fund university strategic goals including faculty and staff salary increases.

2. With new hires, you use a new matrix to determine their pay rate. Why were current employees not adjusted using this same matrix? **A: We have two tools that are used in determining pay. We have a managing pay within the range chart and a salary estimator tool. Both are tools we provide to managers to determine the "correct" pay according to what they bring to the position (knowledge, skills, experience, performance, etc.). In both cases, we are providing tools – not decisions – and welcome their efforts to assess and address situations of employees being underpaid in their range. As far as adjustments/placements for current employees within the range, HCS/Compensation did not place ANY employees based on a matrix, performance, experiences, KSAs, etc. We did slot them into the most appropriate title and pay grade based on the job duties presented in their JAQ.**

3. The university admits employees are undercompensated. What steps is it taking to correct this issue? **A: The efforts around Strategic Enrollment are central to addressing employee compensation. Stable, positive trends in student enrollment really are the key to increased revenue and the ability to provide salary increases for employees. We are also working with the Board of Regents to request restoration of the state general fund reductions made to higher education by the Kansas Legislature.**

4. The continued raise in parking and health insurance is effectively a pay cut due to lack of cost of living increases. **A: University leadership is aware and concerned with our health plan costs and is doing what it can to address those concerns. Our health plans and the costs associated with them are controlled by the State of Kansas. We are making efforts to reach out to our governing bodies to discuss these issues. We appreciate USS leadership doing the same. Parking services is self-supporting and works hard to be efficient and minimize parking permit increases. The last permit increase was in July 2014.**

5. Why did the university opt last year to disregard the 2.5% raise to employees opting with the 1% across the board? **A: University leadership gave a 2.5% increase to employees in FY 2018. The University planned for a 1% increase that year and then the legislature provided 2.5% to certain employees who were hired within five years. The President and Cabinet made the decision to fund the 2.5% increase for all employees.**

6. Why is upper management continuing to receive pay increases, yet hourly employees are left with the line “call your supervisor”? **A: Without specific examples it is difficult to comment on this. There is not an effort to grant increases to one particular type of employee and leave others out. The majority of any mid-year increases or reclassifications within the last year were given to employees making \$40,000 or less.**

7. Why was senior removed from job classifications? **A: During the JAQ process, CBIZ utilized job responsibilities to match to the market for market pay. CBIZ did not find many of these titles, or when they did, they were mapped in the same pay grade as the non-senior position (e.g. Plumber Senior versus Plumber). Also, the university reviewed positions that only utilized certain titles because of the pay grade from the old state system (e.g. Carpenter Senior was only ever used; Carpenter was not being used. So what is the value of being a Carpenter Senior if it’s not being distinguished from the lower level?) We present this as being a “reset” on job titles to create a more streamlined classification structure. Also, the state specifications for many of our USS positions did not reflect the level of work that was identified in the market (e.g. in today’s State of Kansas classification specs system, the Plumber would be comparable to pay grade 05A, Plumber Senior would be 06A. The position we have in the new pay structure is Plumber work at the 07A pay grade.)**

Facilities

8. What is the status of hiring Facilities employees to get up to full staff? Is there an estimated time when departments can expect routine cleaning to be resumed, such as sweeping hallways/steps, scrub floors at least once a week...or month? **A: As of today we are very close to full custodial staff with the exception of recent positions that have been open for less than two weeks. Candidates that meet qualifications are actively being pursued to fill vacancies as they exist. Base custodial services, as described on the Facilities webpage (referenced below), are being fulfilled. (<https://www.k-state.edu/facilities/operations/custodial/index.html>)**

9. With most crew having been short-handed for 6 months or longer, are there any hiring plans being developed to combat this issue? **A: Most custodial crews are fully staffed or near that level. Vacancies are actively being filled with qualified candidates.**

10. If Facilities is unable to hire staff, is there an option for departments to hire outside cleaning agencies? **A: Facilities is currently able to hire custodial staff to fulfill base service levels. If additional Custodial services are desired, please contact Facilities Customer Service (532-6389) to initiate a requisition for additional services.**

11. At one of our last support meetings that custodial went to 2 years ago, they talked about raises in 2 to 3 years, but we learned from other departments that plumbers, GRMTs and grounds people will be up for raises first. Custodial won’t be considered for another 5 to 6 years that being from 2018 now. When custodial went to support system, we would receive cost of living raises in a more timely manner. Custodial only makes around \$11 per hour where at KU they make \$14-\$15 per hour. Also it was talked about having a good evaluation would get you a raise but that has never panned out. In closing, custodians work hard like everyone else to make KSU look good! **A: Thank you to everyone who works hard, especially our custodial staff. Your positive contributions to K-State are important to our success. All USS and Unclassified positions were given a 2.5% COLA at the beginning of FY2018, funded by the University. Pay ranges for positions in Facilities have been defined through an assessment of market analysis**

by HCS, which is updated frequently to remain current. Salary increases for all employees are dependent on new funding from the state or tuition revenue increase through increased student enrollment. The university is pursuing both avenues working with the Board of Regents on funding requests from the legislature and pursuing our strategic enrollment plan to increase and stabilize student enrollment.

12. Employees in the NFE 70 program are given jeans, yet the custodians and plumbers who both use caustic and abrasive chemicals are not compensated for the destruction of personal paid for pants. Why is this? **A: Employees in the NFPA70E electrical safety program are required to wear flame resistant (FR) rated clothing when working in potentially hazardous environments. This required clothing is not necessarily available on the market and will continue to be provided as a function of the NFPA70E electrical safety program. A hazard analysis for tasks requiring exposure to caustic substances will identify proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), provided by Facilities, to minimize the impact of exposure of caustic substances.**
13. Why was the storeroom closed when the employees still have us locate our parts? **A: Storeroom hours are from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm. Recent upgrades to the Facilities Storeroom allow for an additional hour of service coverage compared to what was previously offered by staggering staff shifts for store room staff. A designated service desk was created for security and efficiency of storeroom operations as well as to provide a more formal means for which to collect inventory data. At times with when it is appropriate service staff may join the storeroom staff in part selection when a particular part may be difficult to describe, or when a maintenance staff member has a repair need for parts of a nature that is potentially workable but not fully known until the part or combination of parts is in hand and inspected.**
14. Why is there no minimum for on call employees? Many spend more time driving to and from than they are compensated for. **A: Standby procedures and pay are identified in Article 10 of the KAPE memorandum of agreement: https://www.k-state.edu/hcs/docs/KSU-AF_%202017_MOA_%20Final_Agreement_Eff.%209-24-17.pdf**

From PPM 4220 Call in/Call Back to Work.

Non-exempt university support staff only.

Employees may be called in to work on a regular day off or may be called back to work after a regular work schedule. In these instances, non-exempt employees will be paid at the appropriate rate of pay for the number of hours worked. Such employees will be paid for a minimum of two hours except in the following circumstances:

The employee was on stand-by status (.060 D) when called in or called back; or the employee was called in or called back during the two hour period immediately prior to the beginning of the employee's next regularly scheduled work shift. Only hours actually worked will be credited in determining eligibility for overtime compensation.

Time clocks

We assume these questions are directed towards the administrative units since they recently implemented a new time clock system (Kronos). Other areas using time clocks such as Veterinary Medicine and Housing and Dining have had their systems for several years.

15. With the implementation of the new time clock system for some of our USS employees, there is a belief among some of those employees and their supervisors that this has added to the work load of those employees and their supervisors who are already struggling to get all of their work done. What ideas are being discussed to reduce employee and supervisor time spent on monitoring and correcting errors in the new system which would allow them more time to do their assigned tasks? **A: The intent is to streamline the process for supervisors and those individuals processing payroll. We have not had concerns or similar comments shared to staff in the Administrative Support Center. We would ask those that are struggling within the system to contact the ASC-HR office. Frequently we have found that when we work with supervisors and employees they are missing steps or that there is an easier way to accomplish the task. We have offered additional training and are doing one on one sessions with anyone who requests it.**
16. Time clocks were installed to pay us for the time we are here, yet they round the few minutes from lunch. This time adds up to less compensation for this. Has this fact been discussed? **A: The system is required to follow the K-State policy, which rounds to the quarter hour increment at 7 minutes, see PPM 4000.4220. K-State pays in 15 minute increments and rounds at seven minutes. Our time clocks have to round in order to meet that standard. The rounding at lunch is set to round to the total of minutes that an employee is gone. For instance if you clock out at 12:07 and return at 12:47, a total of 40 minutes, it will round the lunch time to 45 minutes for payroll purposes. If you returned at 12:25, a total of 18 minutes, it would round the lunch time to 15 minutes for payroll purposes. ASC-HR has had very few specific complaints about this once employees understand how the system works. They are happy to walk through the rounding process with employees if they still have questions.**
17. When Kronos and the time clocks were introduced, was there any discussion on the affect they would have on the already low and bad morale being experienced? **A: When discussions began about Kronos, we were looking for efficiencies, ways to reduce university funding during budget reductions and protect jobs. Additionally, we were concerned about creating a system that was accurate and fairly paid employees and ensured we were meeting the Department of Labor standards for employers. Our biggest concern regarding electronic time and leave was determining how many employees were "giving" time to the university. Since implementation, this has been the most common comment we have heard from supervisors, they were surprised by how much comp time they were allocating to employees. An electronic time and leave system can be very good for employees by accurately paying non-exempt staff for the time they work.**
18. Have there been any issues with the time clock process that are making the system less effective than planned? **A: Yes, nothing is perfect and every system has its difficulties. It has taken time for employees and supervisors to adjust to the new system but we think that will improve over time, which it has. We found that we have better efficiency and more accountability and accuracy in paying staff. Are we still learning? Absolutely! We would also remind everyone that we have only done the complete payroll process in Kronos 12 times. If it takes 3 weeks (that is 21 times) to make a new habit, then we are not there yet. We have encouraged employees and supervisors to reach out to the Administrative Support Center if they continue to see issues, have questions or want to understand the system better. We are not hearing these concerns from employees or supervisors and cannot improve the system or provide training when we are not aware of ongoing issues. Please help us share this message as the**

system will be most effective for all of us if we are communicating about its benefits and drawbacks.

Misc.

- 19.** Have considerations been given to one flat tuition rate, to include international, out-of-state, and global campus students? **A: The challenge with moving to a flat tuition rate for all undergraduate students is the loss of tuition revenue for students that pay the out-of-state rate. To implement a rate that is revenue neutral to the university would require a substantial increase to the in-state rate. The strategic enrollment management committee is looking at several changes to our out-of-state tuition rate to be more competitive in the out-of-state higher education market.**
- 20.** Is the administration exploring ways to encourage strategic thinking and planning from all employees? If so, what are some of those plans? **A: Administration encourages employees' participation in the many initiatives ongoing on campus including budget modernization, strategic enrollment management project and KSU Unite to name a few. Employees are encouraged to participate in the shared governance process on campus. If employees have ideas to improve efficiencies and streamline processes in their area, they are encouraged to work with their supervisors. Administration also meets regularly with USS Senate leadership to discuss ideas and ways to improve. That leadership is a perfect pipeline to get your thoughts directly to university leadership.**
- 21.** What, if any, plans are in the works to combat the morale issues that only seem to be getting worse? **A: #1 on this list is stabilizing and improving enrollment. Stable, positive enrollment leads to stable funding that gives us the ability to drive salary increases, hire more workers, etc. Stability in budget and finances helps calm a lot of waters. Beyond that we are working where we can to improve our health insurance issues. Our plans are controlled by the State of Kansas but we are keenly aware of the difficulties we all face and we are doing what we can including addressing these concerns at the board level and with governmental leaders.**
- 22.** Why does the university continue to involve KAPE who doesn't actually have the goals of most of who it covers best interest in mind? **A: The university has a memorandum of agreement with KAPE and recognizes it as the sole and exclusive representative in matters pertaining to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment for all employees covered under that agreement. [https://www.k-state.edu/hcs/docs/KSU-AF %202017 MOA %20Final Agreement Eff.%209-24-17.pdf](https://www.k-state.edu/hcs/docs/KSU-AF%202017%20MOA%20Final%20Agreement%20Eff.%209-24-17.pdf)**
- 23.** Why when an employee steals time from the university and when it's found out instead of termination, they are allowed to retire? **A: The university does not "allow" someone to retire from their position. If an employee meets eligibility requirements for retirement and chooses to do so, the university does not allow or disallow that choice.**