

Frequently Asked Questions

EMPLOYEE CONCERNS AT CAMPUS MEETINGS

HR Compensation visited the campuses on May 11 and 12 to meet with employees and answer questions regarding the FY06 Compensation Study. Here is a summary of the most Frequently Asked Questions addressing employees' concerns.

- 1. Did the consultant read my PAQ?** The job duties in my draft job description are not what I wrote on my PAQ. The consultant read each PAQ 2, 4 or more times. Often other job classification experts at Public Sector Personnel Consultants (PSPC) read them as well. When you read the draft job description, remember, the new job descriptions are designed to be more generic and summarize duties more. This actually helps match jobs when we conduct salary surveys.

 - For shared titles (those with more than one employee in the title), the consultant's goal was to combine all the job duties on all the PAQs and summarize them on the job description.
 - For unique titles (those with only one employee in the title), not every job duty listed on a PAQ was included on the job description. Often individual PAQ duties have been combined in a summary statement.
- 2. We all did a lot of work on our PAQ. Why do we have to do more work and review our job descriptions?** A Compensation Study is a lot of work for everyone. The consultant, in order to meet the timeline, hired additional writers to write the job descriptions. As a result, they were not written in one "voice". And, some of those writers did a more thorough job when creating the job descriptions. The consultant has agreed to have one person rewrite them, after ACC employees have had an opportunity to review them. Your review will ensure that the description matches your position responsibilities.
- 3. How will we know the job descriptions will be any better when they come back to us?** HR Compensation will audit each job description before it is accepted as final. It must meet or surpass the current standard of quality and completeness of the current official ACC job descriptions.
- 4. How long will it take before the consultant returns the final job descriptions?** We are allowing two months for them to complete them all. They are due back in July. If more time is needed, it will be given.
- 5. My supervisor and next level supervisors never told me what they put on my PAQ.** All supervisors were asked to communicate with their employees any comments, agreement or disagreement concerning the employee's PAQ. If the supervisor failed to do this, the employee should ask to see their supervisor's comments. If the employee is unable to secure a copy, the employee can email dtucker@austincc.edu to receive a copy.

6. I'm going from non-exempt (Classified) to exempt (Prof-Tech). Will my new salary be based on my current annual salary, or my take-home rate of annual salary plus overtime pay? Annual salaries are based upon the "base" salary and overtime is not included since it is not guaranteed. This means the employee will lose the opportunity to receive overtime in the new fiscal year.

7. How will a FLSA exemption change affect my work?

- **From Non-Exempt (Classified) to Exempt (Prof-Tech)**

You will no longer be paid overtime when you work over 40 hours in a week. When you work over 45 hours in a week, you will earn comp time on a straight hour per hour basis, in accordance with ACC's policy. Comp time must be approved by your supervisor in advance.

- **From Exempt (Prof-Tech) to Non-Exempt (Classified)**

You will be required to be paid overtime for all hours worked over 40 in a week. Overtime must be approved by your supervisor in advance.

8. Are all FLSA exemption status change recommendations being reviewed by the labor lawyer? Yes.

9. My FLSA exemption status is changing. How will I learn about different pay dates, timesheets, etc.? The employee and supervisor will be notified of the change and its impact. HR will be holding workshops providing budgeting experts to review each employee's actual financial situation, and give advice on how to budget and adapt to being paid monthly or bi-weekly. Additionally, classes will be held on completing eTime timesheets, and explaining overtime regulations and the Prof-Tech compensatory time policy.

10. Will a change in my FLSA exemption status affect my benefits? No. Your benefits will remain the same.

11. Will a FLSA exemption change affect my vacation or sick leave accrual? Your leave will accrue with each bi-weekly or monthly per pay period. Effective 09/01/2006 the leave accruals for full-time non-exempt (classified) employees will be:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Less than | 5 Years |
| <u>Leave Type</u> | <u>5 Years</u> | <u>or more</u> |
| Sick | 3.70 hours | 3.70 hours |
| Vacation | 4.62 hours | 6.16 hours |

Leave accruals for full-time exempt (monthly) employees will be:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Less than | 5 Years |
| <u>Leave Type</u> | <u>5 Years</u> | <u>or more</u> |

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Sick | 8.00 hours | 8.00 hours |
| Vacation | 10.00 hours | 13.34 hours |

Part-time leave will accrue proportionate to each employee's percentage of work.

- 12. If I become Non-Exempt (Classified) and am asked to work more than 40 hours in a week by my supervisor, and there is no overtime money in our department's budget, will I still be paid overtime?** Yes. It is federal law that you be paid overtime in that situation. Your supervisor will have to make arrangements with a next level supervisor or Administrator to find the funds to pay overtime. That is why HR will be providing training for the supervisors of employees who are undergoing FLSA exemption status changes.
- 13. What is a benchmark job?** A benchmark job is a job for which we can consistently get market data on through a comparison of job scope and duties.
- 14. What is a job grade?** A job grade is very much like a current level. Each job grade is a way of labeling a salary range.
- 15. What are job families?** Job families are a group of jobs that are grouped together by function. They may not be specific to one department. Usually, when there is more than one title in a job family, there is a hierarchy, or a career ladder, within the job family.
- 16. There is a lot of change going on. What is so great about this new system?** The new classification system of job families creates a measurable internal relationship among all titles within the family. Each family has at least one benchmark job, for which we can consistently get market salary data. Because of that measurable internal relationship, each job has a relationship to the benchmark job. This means that every year we survey the job market, we can get salary comparison data for every single job! This is very fair and consistent for every staff employee.
- 17. How is that different from what we do now?** Over time, we have lost the internal relationships with our benchmark jobs. So we rotate job titles to be included in the survey each year. That rotation allows only a few titles to be compared to market each year. Several years may pass before a particular title is compared to market again.
- 18. There is a lot of change going on. Should we slow down?** No. Things may seem like they are rushed, but the Study is right on schedule with the original timeline. The most difficult work has almost been completed. The Classification Phase of the Compensation Study includes analysis and definition of each job performed by staff at ACC and each title. New titles are assigned to each family. Then, job descriptions are written. A relationship to a benchmark in each family is established for each job by assigned a job grade. All of that has taken about seven months. Once all that is completed, the next step of doing the market salary research for the Compensation Phase of the Study should take about 3-4 weeks.

- 19. Don't job descriptions have to be finalized before we do the market study?** No, because it is the job scope, purpose, and general duties that are compared to create a job match in a market survey. Almost never do two job descriptions from two different organizations for the same job match duty for duty. The consultant matches at a ratio to ensure a good match in the market or if not, the data will not be used.
- 20. I've heard talk that the employee associations are being dissolved.** No, that is not true. The consultant has suggested that all staff jobs will be on the same pay scale. The distinction of FLSA exemption status based on job title is dissolving. There will be both exempt and non-exempt employees in jobs with titles like Coordinator, Technician, and Specialist. So the basis of FLSA status and separate pay scales are being removed that support separate employee associations. There is no reason to dissolve the employee associations since they are a critical part of the shared governance philosophy.
- 21. If the employee associations merge, when will they merge, who will be president, which by-laws will be used?** Questions like that must be answered by the associations and employees involved in the shared governance process.
- 22. If the employee associations merge, won't the employee voice diminish?** This must be considered by the associations.
- 23. The educational level for my job has been lowered. Won't that affect who we hire for vacancies?** No. The consultant has recommended that to be in compliance with federal law, the required educational level for a job is that level of education of the employee with the lowest educational level that is actually performing the work. When we post a vacancy we will consider applicants who meet the required and preferred levels of education. We can hire at either the required or the preferred level.
- 24. Will the Living Wage be part of the Compensation Study?** Yes. The consultant will conduct a market analysis with and without application of the Living Wage. When applying the Living Wage to the salary ranges, it will be applied to the entire range to avoid salary compression.
- 25. I've heard other employees say they did not trust the Administrators' role in the Study and HR is not releasing information provided by the consultant. What's up with that?** The role of HR is to facilitate the process and decisions made by the administration. It is understandable that employees may be frustrated because they are not involved in the entire process of the study, only parts of it. The administration receives information from the consultant and then it is determined what decisions need to be made; the administration is the body responsible for making the final decisions on all recommendations. It is unfortunate that our culture has a long history of internal lack of trust however, we can all be sensitive to how and when we communicate and we can embrace and practice the principles of Servant-Leadership.

HR Compensation has maintained that this Study is transparent. There are no secrets. There are no hidden agendas. However, when recommendations from the consultant are in

draft form, it is not appropriate to share that information, at that time, with the employee population. Once the recommendations are finalized, of course, they will be shared with all employees. And once we have a final system with which to work, HR Compensation will make available the draft information if employees so desire. However, to release draft, unapproved information because it is finalized would only cause confusion.

- 26. Why did so many employees not get their classification letters?** Letters were mailed from HR on Thursday and Friday, May 4 and 5. A few were as late as Monday, May 8 leaving ACC. The Post Office did not deliver all mail the next day. Many employees got their letters on Saturday, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week. There were a number of misdirected letters and HR Compensation apologizes for the confusion that resulted. Some of the letters were sent to old addresses. Misdirected mail is being researched to determine the source of the problem and find a solution for future mailings. All affected employees will have a full two week period to appeal should they wish to do so. Email copies of employee letters were sent to all employees requesting them the same day the request was received by HR Compensation.
- 27. Draft job descriptions were posted to the Compensation Study website <http://www.austincc.edu/hr/compensation/compstudy/index.php> on Friday, May 5. There were some missing. What happened?** We did not receive 23 draft job descriptions from the consultant. Those job descriptions were written and sent to us by Thursday, May 11. They are currently listed as the fifth group of draft job descriptions on the website at <http://www.austincc.edu/hr/compensation/compstudy/JobDescription.php>.
- 28. The draft job descriptions are in PDF format. I cannot copy or type on them. How can I make my suggestions in RED type to change the job description in the Job Description Review Process if I can't type on it?** IT burned 70 CDs with the draft job descriptions in Word format. HR Compensation burned 50 3.5 floppy disks with the "Missing 23" draft job descriptions. They were put in campus mail on Friday, May 12 for immediate delivery to all Campus Managers and Administrators. The Administrators are requested to email the draft job descriptions to Direct Reports and each Direct Report should send appropriate draft job descriptions to the supervisors and supervisors to the employees as needed. The Campus Managers Office is requested to send any draft job description to any employee requesting it. The whole distribution process should not take more than a day or two, and every employee will have access to a Word version of their draft job description so they can participate in the Job Description Review Process.
- 29. My draft job description was one of the "Missing 23" and I did not see it until Friday, May 12. While the due date for Job Description Review is May 31, I have a week less than other employees to conduct that review! Is that fair?** No, it's not. And that is why we are extending the review deadline for employees with the "Missing 23" job descriptions to allow them the same amount of time as other employees for the Job Description Review Process.
- 30. How did HR handle the distribution of the "Missing 23" job descriptions?** First, HR Compensation notified the employees that could be identified as impacted by the missing

job descriptions that they would be emailed a copy of the appropriate job description as soon as we received it from the consultant. Upon receipt of the “Missing 23” job descriptions, it was made a priority in HR Compensation to send them immediately, and we did so.

- 31. My title was merged with another title (i.e., the I’s and II’s were merged together), am I getting demoted? Will I earn less money being merged with a I title?** When the consultant found that the levels of work being performed by a title with a current sequence (i.e. Science Lab Tech I, Science Lab Tech II, etc.) were close in function and scope, they combined them into one title. The assignment to job grade (like our current job levels) is made at the higher title.
- 32. My draft job description title does not match the title in my letter. What’s going on?** The draft job descriptions were posted to the web on May 5 and the letters were sent May 4 and 5. On Monday through Wednesday, May 8-10, the Administrators received titles and job grade assignments. Some titles were changed. Employees who are affected by such changes will be sent a letter indicating the new title. For these employees, the title appeal process will be extended to allow them a full two weeks to appeal like other employees.
- 33. Some employees got draft job descriptions late. Some employees got letters late. How can they meet the deadlines for Title Appeal and Job Description Review, not having the same amount of time as other employees?** It is only fair that all employees have the same amount of time to appeal a title or review a draft job description. The deadlines for such employees will be extended two weeks to allow them the same amount of time as all other employees.
- 34. I have an extended deadline for Title Appeal and Job Description Review. The Compensation part of the Study is being presented to the Board on June 5. My deadline may go past that time. How will I be included?** Enough money will be included in the initial estimate of approval of the Study to go back later and make “late” adjustments. Your Title Appeal and Job Description Review will be included in the final version of the Study results.
- 35. How were the internal relationships and pay grades established for jobs within job families?** The consultant did a preliminary placement in job grade based on the content of the PAQ and on initial market data. The Administrators received the recommendations and made recommendations based on internal ACC structure and equity. The current levels were used as a general guideline. The results will be reviewed against full market data and may have to be revised again to establish a final, market driven relationship among jobs.
- 36. What criteria were used to establish the internal relationship among jobs in a job family and job grades?** The first job grade started at \$5.15 per hour, the Federal Minimum Wage. A 5% differential was applied to the next grade from that, and so on. That is not 5% of \$5.15/hour, but a 5% increment of measure, which will later tie into salary range midpoints in the Compensation Phase of the Study. ACC’s lowest pay grade was 13. Each pay grade has the same 5% differential between jobs. .

- 37. I'm a new employee. No one told me my title would change.** Hiring supervisors have been asked to explain the Compensation Study to each candidate during the interview. Evidently this is not happening 100% of the time. HR Compensation will begin explaining this at the time of the job offer, as well, to ensure the new employee is aware of the Compensation Study. And, we will add a brief statement to the offer letter until September 1st, when the Compensation Study results become effective.
- 38. My title changed and I feel like I have been demoted!** HR has instituted a policy that the Compensation Study will not result in any employee being demoted. A demotion is a result of lowering salary and job classification level, not a title change.
- 39. My supervisor doesn't agree with my title appeal, what do I do?** The supervisor has ultimate responsibility for a job title and job duties therefore, if the supervisor and next level supervisor do not agree, the title may not be appealed.
- 40. When will we get results of the study?** The preliminary results will be presented to the Board on June 5th. Employees will receive information about the progress of the study before that time.