Staff Salary Pool priorities for Fiscal Year 2009-2010

The staff on the Compensation Committee met with Human Resources on November 21, 2008 to discuss a recommendation for staff salary pool recommendations in the coming year. After Barbara Wilson presented HR’s analysis of the market information from MSEC and CUPA, we found it difficult to develop specific recommendations for staff salaries given the current uncertainty about budget issues and the economic situation faced by the college.

Rather than craft such a report out of context, we decided to take the approach of establishing priorities for allocation of the salary pool. Our hope is that this list will provide guidance while being flexible enough to be applicable regardless of the specific amount of money the college will be able to provide for salaries in the coming year. The list is intentionally generalized to provide for flexibility, and we would like and expect to participate in using this list to apply whatever amount is available once that number is finalized.

The list of priorities, in ranked order, follows:

1) We strongly believe that, in light of the economic situation this year and in the spirit of fairness and community, whatever monies are available for salary increases should be the same percentage for all campus employees (i.e. faculty and staff). One group should not get a higher percentage than the other.

--- note: we are talking about increases outside the ‘progression through the ranks’ system for faculty
This issue is of paramount importance to us since we believe that all members of the community should come together and help bear whatever financial burden is required. We believe that the alternative, to make one classification of employee bear a larger portion of the burden than another group, would not be consistent with our core values.

2) The next priority should be increasing the non-exempt salary structure by 1.9% to bring up the CC minimum wage (a total cost of $5,217). This process is researched by HR and done each year to ensure we’re competitive in the market for new hires – the cost comes from raising salaries of employees who are below the minimum of their grade after the adjustment.

3) The next priority should be assistance for those who need it most: namely, the 13 current employees whose salary is below the calculated El Paso County Self Sufficiency wage (SSW) for 2 working adults with 2 children. Currently the SSW is $11.69 and the CC minimum wage is $10.65). The compensation committee staff will be looking at how this is measured in the future, but for this year we propose the following: if the total family income of these 13 staff falls under the self sufficiency wage, these employees can request assistance paying for their healthcare plan in the 2009-2010 plan year using a process and for an amount yet to be determined. This program would be by request and effective only for one year.

4) The next priority should be to help address market gap issues, identified by HR based on the MSEC and CUPA data, for positions at CC (primarily non-exempt) where salaries are significantly below market. This adjustment would be contingent on a good performance review, and would only be a partial increase to help get the salary closer to market.

5) The next priority should be some form of across-the-board pay increase to help everyone weather tough times. This amount should in some way be based on CPI, and be intended to help with cost of living. It is important to note that we recognize the CPI number for this year will likely not be possible for the college to meet fully, but we would like to see some allowance based on it.
6) Finally, if additional funds are available, they should be allocated for merit increases. We recognize and agree with the notion that more merit pay should be available at Colorado College in general but, given the realities we all face, we believe it is important and consistent with our core values to structure the priorities as we have above for this year.