

Instructor/Clinical Faculty Promotion Raise Analysis and Recommendations

Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee

September 2023

I. Recommendations (approved by the Provost, September 2023)

The Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC) recommends that a minimum promotion raise of \$4,000 be established effective FY25 (July 1, 2024) for promotion to teaching associate professor and \$6,500 for promotion to teaching professor.¹ ARMAC further recommends the following:

- A. As with tenure-track/tenured promotion raises, instructor promotion raises for instructors promoted during the previous fiscal year should go into effect at the start of the new fiscal year (July 1). The July 1, 2024, start date enables instructors promoted to senior instructor or principal instructor during the 2023-2024 academic year to receive the promotion raise.
- B. The \$4,000 and \$6,500 raise amounts should be prorated for FTE.
- C. It is at the discretion of schools, colleges, departments, and programs to go above these minimum promotion raises, utilizing their own resources, if there is a school/college-wide policy to do so and/or if unit-level bylaws/salary procedures specify a larger promotion amount than the minimums.
- D. The \$4,000 and \$6,500 raise amounts should be adjusted annually in keeping with the annual compensation pool percentage raise. This is in keeping with the annual adjustments for promotion raises for tenured faculty members.
- E. The promotion raise standard amount should be reviewed at least every five years.
- F. Until such time that a mechanism for a compression pool might be available, ARMAC recommends that schools/colleges engage in compression analysis and determine a strategy for addressing compression resulting from instructor/clinical faculty promotion raises. Compression may, depending on the school/college and unit, affect instructor/clinical series faculty and/or assistant professors. ARMAC recommends that schools/colleges partner with Institutional Research in this analysis. For schools, colleges, departments, and programs that already have instructor/clinical faculty promotion raises, it is assumed that relatively little (if any) compression will result, whereas for units currently providing no promotion raise compression issues will be more pronounced.

II. Background

ARMAC makes these recommendations in response to, and in general support of, Boulder Faculty Assembly resolution BFA-R-2-092722_Rev102022 (“Resolution to endorse a salary increment upon promotion for Teaching/Clinical Faculty”), which stated that the BFA

¹ Unless referring to practices at other institutions (where titles may vary from those at CU Boulder), we use “instructor,” “senior instructor,” and “principal instructor” throughout this document. These ranks correspond with the working titles “teaching assistant professor,” “teaching associate professor,” and “teaching professor.” In this document, references to “senior instructor” and “principal instructor” are intended to also apply to corresponding clinical faculty titles and ranks.

“welcomes the input of the Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC) as the committee researches and benchmarks peer institutions to recommend raise amounts for teaching faculty at promotion, just as it did for tenure-stream promotion raises.”

On receipt of BFA-R-2-092722_Rev102022, ARMAC began benchmarking analysis of instructor/clinical faculty promotion raises at Association of American Universities (AAU) public peer and CU System campuses. ARMAC also queried CU Boulder schools and colleges to understand current practices regarding instructor/clinical faculty promotion raises. Sections III and IV below present the results of ARMAC’s analysis and the factors the committee considered in its recommendations concerning instructor and clinical faculty promotion raises.

III. Benchmarking

As noted above, ARMAC considered current practices at AAU public universities, CU System campuses, and CU Boulder schools/colleges in formulating its recommendations. Throughout its research, ARMAC remained cognizant of the BFA statement that “benchmarking research should not be used as the sole determiner of the promotion raises given the widespread exploitation of non-tenure-track faculty from across the country.” ARMAC also considered BFA’s suggestion that “only those universities that offer promotion raises for teaching/clinical faculty should be considered in this exercise” and that “ARMAC should bear in mind both the low salaries of teaching/clinical faculty and the high cost of living in Boulder.”

- A. Association of American Universities (AAU) benchmarking: Because CU Boulder regularly considers AAU public peers in its benchmarking analyses, in February 2023 the Office of Data Analytics queried counterparts at AAU public universities. Only four public institutions, all of them in generally lower-cost areas than CU Boulder, responded to the query. Two have no centrally mandated instructor/clinical faculty promotion raise amount, one has a promotion raise minimum of \$2,000, and another has a raise of \$2,500 for promotion from assistant to associate teaching professor and \$3,500 for associate to full teaching professor.
- B. CU System campuses:
 1. University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (UCCS): in fiscal year (FY) 24, the raise for promotion to senior instructor is \$4,238, and the raise for promotion to principal instructor is \$5,500.
 2. University of Colorado-Denver (UCD): in FY 24, the raise for promotion to senior instructor is \$4,000 and the raise for promotion to principal instructor is \$4,500.
- C. CU Boulder schools/colleges: To further inform ARMAC’s recommendations, in spring 2023 Academic Resource Management and the Office of the Provost collected information on instructor promotions from each CU Boulder school/college. Information collected included average annual number of promotions to senior instructor and principal instructor in the school/college, as well as dollar amount of promotion raise (if any).
 1. Some schools/colleges reported <1 promotion to senior instructor per year, while others reported as many as 5 promotions to senior instructor per year. Most schools/colleges reported 0-1 promotions to principal instructor per year; a couple reported up to 4 promotions to principal instructor per year.

2. Promotion raises in schools/colleges that provide instructor/clinical faculty promotion raises range from \$1,000 (senior instructor) and \$1,500 (principal instructor) to \$4,000 (senior instructor) and \$6,500 (principal instructor). One school/college provides no raise for promotion to senior instructor but a raise of \$10,500 for promotion to principal instructor. A few schools/colleges provide no instructor/clinical faculty promotion raise or leave promotion raise decisions to departmental discretion.
3. To supplement the survey responses, Academic Resource Management and the Office of the Provost gathered data pertaining to the count of the “promotion” action reason in the HR system (HCM). Promotions entered as “pay rate change” or “job change” (instead of “promotion”) are not captured in the HCM data. In addition, some compensation changes for promotions may have been incorporated into a higher merit allocation for individuals. Human resources system research and school/college responses indicate that salary adjustments for instructor and clinical faculty historically have been coupled with the merit pool and/or reappointment.

IV. Considerations

ARMAC considered a variety of raise amounts (e.g. \$2,000 and \$4,000; \$4,300 and \$5,500). As in the committee’s 2021-2022 discussion of tenure-track/tenured faculty promotion raises, ARMAC also discussed options such as flat raise amount vs. percentage of salary. In recommending \$4,000 and \$6,500, ARMAC members considered and endorsed the following factors and principles:

- A. As is the case for promotion raises for tenure-track/tenured faculty, schools/colleges and departments/programs should be free, within their resources, to add to any standard campus minimum raise amount, provided that they incorporate this into their school/college policy and/or unit-level salary procedures/bylaws.
- B. Any promotion raise minimum should adjust upward annually, as the tenure and promotion raise amounts do, based on the previous fiscal year compensation pool established.
- C. Similarly, the raise for promotion to principal instructor should be larger than the raise for promotion to senior instructor, just as the raise for promotion to tenured full professor is larger than the raise for the promotion to associate professor with tenure. ARMAC notes the CU Boulder Academic Affairs policy [“Titles, Roles, Appointment, Evaluation and Promotion of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty in Teaching and Library Positions,”](#) which states that “Promotion of non-tenure-track faculty on the instructor track or clinical track is not mandatory, nor is it a right. There is no expectation that promotion will occur at a particular point in the individual’s career, nor is there an expectation that each such individual should seek promotion.” The policy also describes the standard of excellence needed for promotion to senior instructor and the record of distinction needed for promotion to principal instructor. ARMAC assumes that, as with promotion to full professor for tenured faculty, not all senior instructors will be promoted to principal instructor (and not all instructors promoted to senior instructor).

- D. ARMAC also considered the average percentage increase compared to the average salary of rank being promoted from (adjusted for FTE) for tenure-track/tenured and instructor/clinical faculty ranks.
- E. While ARMAC members expressed energetic support for standard minimum promotion raises for instructor/clinical faculty, there was some concern regarding funding, in view of budgetary constraints. In formulating the spring 2022 recommendations pertaining to tenure-track/tenured promotion raises, ARMAC members had similar concerns related to opportunity cost (i.e. investing funds in raises means not investing these funds in other priorities).
- F. Concern was also voiced regarding potential compression effects of instructor promotion raises on assistant professor salaries. In keeping with the limited AAU public and CU System benchmarking data available, ARMAC recommends that instructor/clinical faculty promotion raise amounts be lower than tenure-track/tenured promotion raise amounts. ARMAC also strongly recommends that a peer benchmarking analysis of CU Boulder assistant professor salaries be undertaken to better understand and begin to address any market and compression issues.