CFA/CSU Tentative Agreement: Frequently Asked Questions

CFA and California State University management have been negotiating our latest contract since December 2013. On October 15, we reached a tentative agreement with the CSU administration. Subsequently, the CFA Board of Directors unanimously voted to recommend that CFA members vote “Yes” in favor of ratification.

We have put together this FAQ to answer many of the questions that have already been asked of our leaders. As more questions come in over the next few weeks, we will add them to the FAQ.

We are CFA. We are strong. And together, we are improving faculty working conditions to ensure quality student learning conditions.

**ON SALARY**

**Q 1:** What does the TA provide for in terms of salary increases?

**A:** For the first year, the contract sets in place:

- Salary Recovery Adjustments for faculty who are below the Service Salary Increase (SSI) maximum; this 3% increase affects all tenure-track faculty (all probationary and tenured faculty) under the SSI max, temporary faculty with 3-year appointments and coaches with six or more years service in the same classification.
- A CSU-wide equity program to address inversion and compression caused by hiring issues and lack of raises during the recession. It is based on a formula that considers both salary and hire dates.
- Lecturer Salary Corrections to fix misclassification of lecturers who have languished in extremely low-paid salary ranges. Eliminates the lowest pay category for lecturers.
- A 1.6% General Salary Increase (GSI) for all faculty members.

**Q 2:** Why does the CSU keeping talking about 3%?

**A:** In thinking about salary increases, faculty members tend to care about what specific programs have been negotiated and how they will affect one’s own salary. The administration thinks of salary increases in terms of what all the negotiated increases will cost the system.
In the case of this year’s negotiations, 3% represents the increase to the entire compensation pool for our members that will result from implementing all the salary programs we negotiated. Out of that 3% pool, we have for this year funded the programs that are described above in Question #1.

**Q 3:** Why is the GSI 1.6%?

**A:** The 1.6% GSI is the base increase for everyone. The specific GSI number represents what remains in the pool after providing for a variety of other programs. In this first year, CFA took as its primary goal to begin correcting the dysfunctional salary structure that has resulted in faculty not being able to progress upward on the salary scale because of lack of SSIs or other salary increases in recent years. The specific programs that address this systemic problem are the Salary Recovery Adjustments (to address lack of SSIs), Equity increases (to address the inversion that has occurred because of lack of raises), and Lecturer Salary Corrections (to address extremely low salaries due to misclassification).

In year two, we planned and will still be able to address salary compression, a problem experienced by those at the upper end of their salary ranks or ranges.

**Q 4:** How much can I expect my salary to increase?

**A:** It depends on how much you make now, your classification, how far below the SSI max you are, and how long you have worked in the CSU. There is a base raise for everyone and other raises in addition, depending on how a person is affected by distortions such as misclassification and inversion/compression. We will have worksheets available that will help you calculate your approximate raise, but you will need to know your current salary, rank, and hire year.

For help estimating your salary with the adjustments included in the tentative agreement, please see our salary worksheet: [http://www.calfac.org/pod/worksheet](http://www.calfac.org/pod/worksheet)

*Let’s look at a couple of hypothetical situations:*

**Tenure track:** Maria Gonzalez is an associate professor, hired in 2006, and is currently making $63,624 per year. In the new contract, Maria would receive the 1.6% GSI, plus the 3% Salary Recovery Adjustment, bringing her annual salary to $66,581. Maria would also be eligible to receive an estimated $40 to $50 more per month under the system-wide equity program. The exact amount of money she would receive under that program, however, has yet to be determined.

**Lecturer:** John Smith has a terminal degree, is currently ranked Lecturer A, and earns a salary at the bottom of his range, at $42,456 per year (if he works full-time). In the new contract, John would be reclassified as Lecturer B (with a minimum of a 5% increase) and receive the 1.6% GSI. John would then be at the bottom pay of Lecturer B, with an annual salary after the 1.6% GSI of $51,486. If John also has a three-year contract, the
increase is even higher.

**Q 5:** What is the order of implementation for salary proposals?

**A:** The general order of implementation for salary proposals is as follows: Lecturer salary corrections (if applicable), then the GSI, then the SRA, then equity increases. Each faculty member’s salary adjustment will vary depending on his/her classification and eligibility.

**Q 6:** What if I’m temporary faculty—do I qualify for the 3% SRA increase if I receive my first three-year appointment in fall 2014?

**A:** Yes. However, the adjustment begins on the date of your appointment, rather than July 1, 2014 (the date of retroactivity for other salary adjustments in the new contract).

**Q 7:** How can I figure out what the SSI max is for my classification and rank?

**A:** Please see the chart below.

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**Q 8:** Does the SSI Max go up as a result of the GSI?

**A:** Yes. The SSI Max, as well as all the minima and maxima within the entire salary schedule, adjusts upward as a result of the 1.6% GSI.
Q 9: Why does the TA have a one-year salary deal with reopeners in years two and three?
A: Since the Administration was unwilling to provide more than 2% in years 2 and 3, we decided to agree to 3% this year with reopeners in the next 2 years. By accepting 3% for this year we ensure that our faculty get some raises by January or February. Since our reopener clause provides that if the parties cannot agree on a salary package next year faculty retain our right to strike, we will have our economic weapons to use next year or the year after. In the meantime, we can be building our power for the reopener contract fight.

Q 10: Is the Salary Recovery Adjustment (SRA) like a Service Salary Increase (SSI)?
A: It is similar in that the SRA funds progression through the range up to the SSI max. It is different in that the SRA is simply based on faculty’s current base salary and whether it’s below the SSI max. Also, the SRA is available only to tenure track faculty and temporary faculty members with longevity in service. It is also different from an SSI in that there is no limitation on number of SSIs already received and no complicated discounting for other increases. (For instance, there will be no subtraction of the old Faculty Merit Increases in determining whether someone is at the SSI Max.)

Q 11: Does your chair stipend count toward your SSI max when determining whether you are eligible for the Salary Recovery Adjustment?
A: No, it does not count. In order to calculate your salary in relation to the SSI max, you need to first deduct your chair stipend.

Q 12: Does this contract have any “takeaways”?
A: No. Unlike other public sector contracts in recent years, this contract does not include takeaways. For example, other contracts may grant a salary increase, but also include adjustments to health benefits resulting in higher employee medical contributions. We defended against changes to health benefit and pension contributions or other takeaways.

Q 13: Will FERPers qualify for the salary increase? How does it impact their salary?
A: Yes current FERPers will receive the 1.6% GSI but it will not affect their retirement income.

Q 14: If you are 12-month faculty, do you have a different SSI max?
A: Yes. It is proportionally higher than the regular SSI. (Please see chart on page 2)

ON EQUITY

Q 15: What is the statewide equity program?
A: It is a system-wide program funded with $2 million intended to give eligible probationary and tenured faculty members who have been severely affected by the lack of raises in recent years a small bump in their salaries. There is language in the contract that also gives campus presidents the discretion to enact separate campus-based equity programs to continue the necessary repairs to the salary structure. These campus-based salary increases would come out of campus budgets.

Q 16: Who is eligible for the statewide equity program?
A: All tenure-track faculty (all probationary and tenured faculty) who have a base salary that is below the SSI max in their rank after the Salary Recovery Adjustment (SRA). The following groups of faculty are eligible for the statewide equity program:
  • Assistant professors and equivalents hired between 2006-2013
  • Associate professors and equivalents hired between 2000-2013
  • Full professors and equivalents hired between 2000-2013

Q 17: What role does CFA play if a campus president enacts a campus-based equity program?
A: These programs must address campus equity issues such as inversion and compression. Before implementation, the campus President MUST consult with local CFA representatives in developing procedures and criteria for the awards.; those criteria must be based on a campus- wide review of salary issues.

This is a ONE-YEAR PROGRAM. It will provide several benefits to our effort to improve faculty salaries:
  1) It is a one-year TEST of the commitment of the campus presidents to address long-term equity problems on the campuses;
  2) The more presidents who commit campus funding to these raises, the less money will be needed at a system-wide level and the more money there will be available for GSIs and SSIs.
  3) If too many campuses fail the test, we will have ample evidence in reopener bargaining that more system-wide resources will be required.

Q 18: Does my campus have money in its budget to pay for a campus-based equity program?
A: Likely so. Even if this program is not yet a line item in your campus budget, consider what else your campus is spending money on. It’s all about priorities.

ON WORKLOAD

Q 19: What did CFA secure to help improve working conditions?
A: We successfully secured a pool of funds to aid in several improvements to faculty workload, including:

- All probationary faculty who teach will have, at minimum, a reduction in course load duties of one course per term during their first two years of employment. Some campuses already implement this policy for their new probationary faculty, while others don’t. The program will be implemented at campuses that do not already follow this protocol.
- During each year of the contract, faculty who have exceptional service commitments or excessive student contact hours will be eligible to apply for assigned time relief from a pool of $1.3 million per year system-wide.
- Protection of coaches performing off-season work.
- Improvement in work schedules for librarians and counselors.

Q 20: Are there changes in the contract for librarians?
A: Librarians have wanted the term “faculty” used in describing them and their work for years. We have that. We also have new language clarifying the work and planning process in terms of where and when librarians work. Librarian faculty members may be assigned any number of activities that need not be performed in an on-campus location.

Q 21: Are there changes in the contract for counselors?
A: We have new language clarifying the work and planning process in terms of where and when counselors work. Like librarians and other tenure track faculty, counselors are assigned any number of activities that need not be performed in an on-campus location.

Q 22: Are there changes in the contract for coaches?
A: Yes. One of the most important is that 10-month or academic year coaching faculty can no longer not be required to perform duties outside of his/her work year. It also includes progression within range for coaches with six or more years of experience on the same campus, within the same classification.

Q 23: What else is in the contract that I should be aware of?
A: This tentative agreement also attempts to rectify issues of cultural taxation and workload disparities. It also includes protections to FERP, no increase in faculty contributions for healthcare or pensions, a one-year freeze on parking, increased protections from intrusive use of metrics in evaluation of online courses and clarity and expansions on non-discrimination and worker safety.

The full tentative agreement will be available to download and read on our website, www.calfac.org.

WE HAVE A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ... NOW WHAT?
Q. 24: When and how will the contract be ratified?
A: We plan to hold a ratification vote online in the coming weeks. We need to have our ratification process completed before the CSU Board of Trustees meeting on November 12 and 13. Otherwise, we would have to wait until late January 2015 to present the ratification to the board, and we would wait even longer for raises.

Ratifying quickly also allows campus-based equity programs to be set in motion before we go back to the bargaining table in May 2015.

We will reach out to members in the coming days with details about the process.

Q. 25: Who will vote?
A: Only CFA Members can vote, but non-members are invited to join CFA so they can have voting rights. Non-members are also invited to let their local leaders know what they think about the tentative agreement.

Q. 26: What is needed for a ratification vote to pass?
A: 50% plus one of those voting.

Q. 27: Can I vote if I’ve just joined CFA?
A: Yes. You can join CFA and will have voting rights as a member.

Q. 28: When will campus meetings about the tentative agreement be held?
A: Starting the week of October 27.

Q. 29: If the contract is ratified by CFA members, followed by the CSU Board of Trustees by November 13, when will faculty see more money in their paychecks?
A: It depends on CSU state Controller’s Office ability to quickly implement the payroll changes. We expect to see a change in paychecks in early 2015.

Q. 30: Will the salary increases be retroactive?
A: Yes, they will be retroactive to July 1, 2014. The way retroactive payments are paid is up to the state controller, but usually a separate check for a lump sum adjustment is issued to each faculty member. The new rate of pay will be in place from that point forward.

**IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER**

Q. 31: Who benefits the most from this contract?
**A:** We all do. While it is true that the TA gets at correcting some of the worst salary problems, and they fall primarily on the lowest paid in a particular rank or range, all of our members benefit. If we don’t begin to address the salary inequities now, we will exacerbate compression and inversion. The CSU will continue hiring in new faculty, and our current members will fall further behind without progression in their ranks to catch up. This contract is a first installment on much-needed salary increases, and on workload improvements. Among other things, it also provides important new protections of intellectual property and improvements for faculty teaching in Extended Education.

We need your help in years two and three of the agreement.

**Q 32:** Can we strike in years two and three if we don’t get the salary increases we need?
**A:** Yes. Our right to strike is protected.

**Q 33:** Should members vote to ratify this contract?
**A:** Yes. The CFA Board of Directors has unanimously recommended that members ratify this tentative agreement.

**Q 34:** Who can I talk to if I have a question about the tentative agreement?
**A:** You can call or email your local chapter president or CFA field staff.