

MEMORANDUM

To: College Presidents and Deans

CC: José Luis Cruz, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Hector Batista, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer; Glenda Grace, Senior Vice Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, Strategic Advancement and Special Counsel; Matthew Sapienza, Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer; Doriane Gloria, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

From: Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor



Date: April 27, 2020

Re: University Vacancy Review Board for Personnel Actions

As mentioned in my message dated April 21, 2020, the University is implementing a freeze on all vacancy/new hire and personnel action requests (involving pay increases) across the system.

A Vacancy Review Board has been created to review exceptions campuses might want to have considered relevant to the hiring freeze. Please refer to the below information about the purpose, scope and membership of the Vacancy Review Board, the criteria for potential exceptions, and the responsibilities of each campus.

I. Vacancy Review Board

Membership

The University Vacancy Review Board will consist of five of the system office's senior leaders as follows: Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer, Hector Batista (Co-Chair); Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost, José Luis Cruz (Co-Chair); Senior Vice Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, Strategic Advancement and Special Counsel, Glenda Grace; Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, Matthew Sapienza; and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Doriane Gloria.

Scope of Positions Considered

The Vacancy Review Board will consider exceptions that fit the following criteria:

- Demonstrate a direct relationship to safety, academic excellence and retention, strategic investments, operational disruption or cost reduction.
- Paid with state or city tax levy operating and capital funds, funds held by the NYS treasury (Income Fund Reimbursable), funds held by NYC (ACE, Tech Fee, Non Misc. Income), non-tax levy funds in unincorporated entities or accounts, and tax levy supported non-grant funds at the Research Foundation (RF).
 - Colleges can continue to hire grant funded positions on the RF, if, and only if, there is a clear understanding that the position is only funded as long as the grant funds exist.
 - Funding from State or City appropriations or from City Council or similar funds are NOT considered grant funds.
 - Colleges can continue to hire positions funded with other separately incorporated affiliated entity revenues; only after direct consultation with the college President. Prudence is highly encouraged due to predicted financial shortfalls at those entities.

Personnel actions are defined as promotions, increases in pay based on merit, step increases, or any other change that increases compensation expenses other than those required by a collective bargaining agreement.

In addition to reviewing the submissions, the Vacancy Review Board will also consider campus staffing levels and the current and projected financial condition of the campus. They may also consult with University and College subject-matter ‘experts’ if and when needed.

Meeting Schedule and Process

The Vacancy Review Board will meet on a weekly basis. A schedule of the meeting times and submission due dates will be provided shortly. Campuses and Central Office will use the attached fillable form to submit requests for review to a dedicated email address at VRB@cuny.edu. All requests will require approval of the college President or Dean along with a detailed justification; Central Office requests will require the approval of the respective Senior or Executive Vice Chancellor. Again, only requests for positions and actions which demonstrate a direct relationship to safety, academic excellence and retention, strategic investments, operational disruption or cost reduction will be considered.

II. Approach to Part-Time Positions

Adjuncts – We need to prepare for the possibility that enrollment declines in summer and fall might affect adjunct hiring. It will be the responsibility of the colleges to closely manage the

adjunct hiring process. We encourage a rigorous review of class sections offered and class sizes to create enrollment maximization and potential savings.

Part-Time Non-Teaching Staff (including non-teaching adjuncts, college assistants, etc.) – Colleges are asked to closely review their part-time staffing to determine which positions are critical to their operations. The hiring freeze mentioned in the Chancellor’s April 21, 2020 message also applies to the part-time staff – which means that vacant part-time positions should not be filled at this time. Every college is expected to generate savings by not filling vacated part-time non-teaching positions and only reappointing part-time staff that are critical to the college operations. As decisions are being made, please consider the impact of COVID-19 on the work of part-time staff.

College Assistants who will have worked the maximum 1,040 hours by June 30th should not receive a commitment for reappointment for July 2020-June 2021 at this time. College Assistants whose appointment was for less than 1,040 hours and who would have been reappointed if not for COVID-19 may be reappointed through June 30, 2020 where budget permits. There will be no change to the appointment of College Assistants who have worked less than 1,040 hours and who were expected to work up to 1,040 hours through June 30, 2020.

Targets and additional guidance may also be implemented during the budget allocation process. As a reminder, notification procedures should be followed, as outlined by any applicable collective bargaining agreements. The notification should be in writing, with a copy to the Office of Labor Relations and the Office of Human Resources Management (Senior Vice Chancellor Pamela Silverblatt and Vice Chancellor Doriane Gloria).

III. Pending Hires/Actions

For new hires who have not yet started, pending or accepted offers dated prior to April 21, 2020 should not be rescinded and will be honored. However, Colleges should provide the following information in an email to the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources no later than COB April 30, 2020:

- Position title
- Salary offered
- Justification
- Date offered
- Date accepted (if applicable)
- Funding Source

Any personnel actions such as promotions and/or pay increases promised prior to April 20th but not processed as of that date will need to be submitted for review by the Vacancy Review Board and are subject to revocation.

IV. College Responsibilities

It is the colleges' responsibility to consider the function of each position and its direct impact on core and essential business operations before seeking an exception. Colleges should also take the following actions:

- Establish guidelines for submissions. Colleges may continue their current processes for requesting and approving positions (such as the HEO screening committee) or amend their process by instituting a Vacancy Review committee for their campus; however, only the President has the final authority to move any position forward for consideration by the Vacancy Review Board.
- Review Part-Time Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff to ensure that resources are used in the most efficient, effective and strategic manner.

We will be closely reviewing the financial condition of the University and individual colleges.

We appreciate all the vital work that is being done on the campuses. During these challenging times, our continued partnership will ensure that the University remains on solid financial ground while providing the core academic and administrative services our students deserve.

Attachment