Resolution on University of South Carolina Wide Summer Teaching Compensation

Approved by FWC on March 26, 2018
Approved by Faculty Advisory Committee – March 28, 2018

Summer courses at USC have taken on increasing importance as more non-traditional students seek degrees and as both traditional and non-traditional students strive to complete their degrees as quickly as possible to minimize debt. Additionally, due to FICA compliance issues, graduate students employed as graduate assistants are now required to enroll in three credit hours during the summer and there are currently not enough graduate level summer courses offered for these students. Furthermore, since salaries at USC lag behind those at many other institutions, some faculty members face economic hardship if they are unable to teach during the summer, hindering faculty retention. Nonetheless, summer salaries should in no way be seen as a substitute for offering competitive pay during the school year. Finally, strategies are needed to minimize last minute course cancellations due to low enrollment, which can delay student progression and cause economic hardship to and wasted effort by faculty members.

Each department should develop fair and consistent procedures for assigning teaching and determining summer pay. Given the differences in normal course loads, enrollment numbers, and lengths of summer terms, it is not possible to offer a simple, universal formula for the amount of compensation that should be offered for each course; however compensation practices should follow the guiding principles outlined below. These guidelines apply to both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members.

1. Fair payment principles:

   • Summer pay should be based on the principle of full-time pay for full-time work. Thus, if the workload and amount of effort put forth by a faculty member during the summer is similar to the workload during the school year, faculty should be paid at the same daily rate as they are paid during the school year, which is 33.85% of base salary for faculty with 9-month appointments.

   • For faculty who teach part-time in the summer, pay should be based on the percent of full-time effort required. An advanced course with low enrollment may be just as much work as an introductory course with high enrollment and a course taught intensively over a three week period may require just as much effort as teaching more than one course over a longer period. Such factors should be considered when deciding the amount of compensation to be offered for each course. For example, if a faculty member teaches for the entire summer and the amount of effort represents half the amount expended during the school year, then the faculty member should be paid 0.5 X 33.85% = 16.93% of base salary.

   • Under no circumstances should a faculty member receive less compensation for teaching than the rate that would be paid to a similarly-credentialed adjunct professor or instructor.
• The dollar amount of payment for summer teaching should not be capped, as this is unfair to senior faculty. Additionally, students benefit from being instructed by experienced, highly successful faculty members and such faculty members should not be discouraged from teaching during the summer.

• Many units offer less pay for courses with low enrollment. Teaching even a small number of students requires considerable effort on the part of faculty members. Therefore, any pay reductions due to low enrollment should be commensurate with the reduction in effort and should be no less than half the rate paid for the same course with high enrollment.

• As mentioned in HR 1.81, remuneration is generally not offered for advising or mentorship of undergraduate or graduate students; however, compensation may be considered on a case-by-case basis for faculty supervising a large number of students and must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer.

2. Maximum payments:

• State law and HR 1.81 mandate a cap of 40% of base pay for summer teaching. This extra 6.15% pay is only to be offered under extenuating circumstances where the workload is higher than that required during the school year.

• With regard to faculty members who have extramural grant funding for summer research at 100% effort, grant compliance requires that all effort (not just 37.5 hours per week) goes towards research and research-associated tasks. Therefore, grant-funded faculty may only teach during the summer if one of the following conditions is met: (1) Grant funding covers less than 3 months, (2) the percent effort paid by the grant is less than 100%, or (3) course release is offered during the school year so that the faculty member can devote more effort to research during that time.

3. Course planning: Given the lack of budget allotted to summer courses, the summer courses offered by each department must generate adequate revenue to cover salaries and overhead expenses. This reality often leads to course cancellations that may delay graduation for students and cause economic hardship to faculty members who have given up external summer employment opportunities. Departments should use one or more strategies to minimize course cancellations and uncompensated effort.

• When deciding which courses to offer during the summer, departments should consider historical enrollment numbers and not offer courses that are unlikely to meet the required enrollment.

• In the event that particular courses are required for timely advancement of students, departments should consider offering high enrollment courses in order to offset deficits incurred by low enrollment courses.

• New courses require devotion of considerable time and effort prior to the start of classes and enrollment is uncertain, leading to a high risk of cancellation. Therefore, new courses should
not be offered during the summer term unless the department can guarantee that the course will run regardless of enrollment.

- Courses should not be cancelled later than three business days prior to the first day of class so that enrolled students can look for alternate courses.

4. Allocation of summer teaching: Summer teaching is highly desirable or even a financial necessity for many faculty members. Other faculty members prefer not to teach during the summer. Each unit should develop fair and transparent guidelines to determine who is offered the opportunity to teach summer courses. Several factors may be considered. Development and communication of clear procedures will reduce the sense that assignment of summer teaching is capricious or unfair.

- Specialization of individual faculty members will no doubt be a major factor in determining who is best suited to teach individual courses. Faculty should be told which courses they are considered qualified to teach.
- Faculty should be told whether senior faculty members are preferred for certain advanced courses.
- Faculty preference should be strongly considered so that those who prefer summer research or other activities do not feel pressured to teach and those who want to teach are given teaching opportunities.