

## **Appendix E: Exempt Staff Step Progression Plan and Criteria**

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Effective July 1, 2005

Revised July 1, 2007

### **A. BACKGROUND**

In April 2004, the Board of Governors directed Employee Groups to develop criteria for future step increases for their constituent groups. The Exempt Staff Step Criteria Committee had developed draft criteria in the fall of 2003 and through the Meet and Confer process subsequently revised the criteria to include a plan and process for implementation. The process to apply for and receive, or be denied, step advancement is the same for all levels and types of full time regular exempt staff.

In formulating the step advancement criteria, it was discussed that the criteria be achievable and attainable within a fiscal year, verifiable, progressive or distinguishable from past years, relevant to the job and/or career, requires energy and effort from the employee and is distinguishable to that employee.

### **B. PURPOSE**

In the spirit of the College Mission “to develop our community through learning,” exempt staff recognizes that both the individual and organization benefits through continued professional development and personal growth. The Step Progression Plan is a voluntary, employee-elected means to a monetary reward based on established criteria.

### **C. PROCESS FOR STEP ADVANCEMENT**

Threshold Test – Employee must meet the following to be eligible:

1. Be a classified exempt employee at the time of submission of the plan. (For the purpose of this plan, a classified, full time exempt employee is defined as an employee who is working in a position/FTE which is authorized and budgeted as regular.)
2. Initial hire probationary period has been satisfied prior to plan completion.
3. No Disciplinary Action at the time of plan submittal or that occurs during the plan year.
4. Not subject to Second Corrective Action Plan, in accordance with Section V., G., 2. of the *Personnel Policy Statement for College Employees* at the time of plan submittal or occurs during the plan year.

#### D. SUBMISSION OF STEP PROGRESSION PLAN

1. Employee completes the Step Progression Plan (SPP), identifying the specific objectives and/or activities to be accomplished after April 16. The SPP time period will be from April 16 to April 15 of the next year to accommodate Budget Development. To the extent possible, the plan will include target completion dates of the activities as well as expected outcomes. Activities which are not accomplished in one fiscal year may be carried forward into future fiscal year's SPPs.
2. Initial hire probationary period has been satisfied prior to plan completion.
3. This plan will be submitted to the appropriate supervisor within the employee's work unit. **The initial SPP may be submitted at any time between April 16 and October 31** (see SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES). Exempt employees hired after September 4 have 60 calendar days from date of hire to submit a plan for a step increase.
4. The supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the SPP. The plan is either authorized or is returned to the employee for additional detail or rework and must be resubmitted; however, the SPP should be recognized by the supervisor as an individual enrichment plan for the employee. A plan should benefit the organization and be a collaborative effort of the employee and supervisor. It is the responsibility of the supervisor or designee to notify the employee of the acceptance, or rejection, of the SPP in writing within 15 working days of plan submission. The employee will be notified in writing by hardcopy or e-mail within 15 working days by the administrative supervisor or designee if the completed SPP is approved or rejected. If it is rejected, reasons will be provided in writing by the rejecting authority. A lack of notification by the stated deadline automatically results in the approval of the SPP. If plan is rejected by the supervisor, the employee may appeal (see APPEALS). If the employee has further questions regarding the nature of the rejection, the employee may contact the Chief Human Resources Officer for resolution.
5. The supervisor signs the SPP and forwards it to administrative supervisor in the employee's work unit for approval. It is the responsibility of the administrative supervisor or designee to notify the employee of the acceptance or rejection of the SPP, in writing within 15 working days of receiving the plan. The employee will be notified in writing by hardcopy or e-mail within 15 working days by the administrative supervisor or designee if the completed SPP is approved or rejected. If it is rejected, reasons will be provided in writing by the rejecting authority. A lack of notification by the stated deadline automatically results in the approval of the SPP. If plan is rejected by the administrative supervisor, the employee may appeal (see APPEALS). If the employee has further questions regarding the nature of the rejection, the employee may contact the Chief Human Resources Officer for resolution.
6. The original signed and authorized SPP is to be filed in the office of the administrative supervisor and a copy of the SPP is given to the employee.

7. An employee may modify a SPP at any time during the year if the modification to the SPP is approved by the supervisor and then authorized by the administrative supervisor (applying the same timeline and procedure as stated in above). Supervisors may not require a modification of an approved SPP. An original of the modified SPP is to be filed in the office of the administrative supervisor; a copy of the modified SPP is given to the employee, and a copy sent to the Chief Human Resources Officer's office.

## **E. COMPLETION OF SPP**

1. Upon completion of the SPP, the employee submits a memorandum summarizing completed activities, a copy of the original or modified SPP and supporting documentation to the supervisor. This information must be **submitted by April 15**. Completed SPPs may be submitted earlier than April 15. Plans submitted after the deadline are ineligible for consideration unless there are special circumstances (see SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES). Both the supervisor and the administrator will evaluate the completed SPP and supporting documentation within 15 working days of submission. The employee will be notified in writing by hardcopy or e-mail within the 15 working days by the administrative supervisor or designee if the completed SPP is approved or rejected. If it is rejected, reasons will be provided in writing by the rejecting authority.
2. A lack of notification by the stated deadline automatically results in the approval of the SPP.
3. If the completed SPP is rejected, the employee may appeal that decision to the Step Progression Appeals Committee (see APPEALS).
4. Employees who have successfully completed and have an SPP approved will receive step advancement on the salary schedule in the first pay period of the next fiscal year. This step advancement is subject to Board of Governors' approval and funding. If funding is not available, the step advancement will roll over to the next fiscal year.
5. The administrative supervisor or designee is responsible for informing Human Resources of exempt employees who have been authorized for step advancement. Notification shall be done with a report showing the employee's legal first and last names and employee ID number accompanied by a copy of the completed SPP and supporting documentation verifying completion. The report is to be submitted to Human Resources by May 15.
6. While professional and personal growth of all employees is encouraged, employees who are at (or above) the maximum step of the pay grade for their classification, are not eligible for any additional step increases.

## **F. APPEALS**

1. An employee who is not approved for either a SPP (plan submission or modification) or a step increase (SPP completion) may appeal the decision to the Step Progression Committee, within 15 working days of written notification. An employee who is

- requesting an exception under special circumstances may make this appeal to the Step Progression Committee.
2. The notification of appeal will include a written response to the rejection explaining why the rejection is inappropriate or why a special circumstance exists. Copies of the SPP and/or supporting documentation must be submitted to the Step Progression Committee.
  3. The Step Progression Committee will review the materials and, if needed, schedule a time for the employee and the administrative supervisor to meet with the Step Progression Committee to answer questions.
  4. The Step Progression Committee will have 15 working days to review the appeal from the date submitted and to make a written recommendation to the Chief Human Resources Officer.
  5. The Chief Human Resources Officer will have 15 working days to review all written materials, meet with any of the involved parties if needed, and make a final determination in writing to all parties.

#### **G. STEP PROGRESSION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS**

1. This committee should represent the district and campuses and reflect the breadth of departments in the institution.
2. The ACES Board will appoint five exempt employees to the Committee membership, at least one of whom is not an ACES member.
3. One administrator will be appointed by the Chancellor.
4. If a Committee member works in the same administrative unit as the employee submitting an appeal, that member will excuse her/himself from that appeal. Should this person be the administrator, the Chancellor will appoint a replacement.
5. During the first year of the SPP process, three committee members will have a one-fiscal year term and two will have a two-fiscal year term.

#### **H. ACTING POSITIONS**

An exempt employee who serves in an acting capacity in a higher classification may use his/her experience to satisfy part of his/her Exempt SPP criteria.

#### **I. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Any special circumstances in meeting timelines must be submitted in writing to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee may consult with the Chief Human Resources Officer if needed. The exempt employee's circumstance will be addressed by the Appeals Committee in

writing within 15 working days of receipt. Special circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

1. FMLA leave;
2. Death of a family member as defined in Section IV. C, Bereavement Leave of *Personnel Policy Statement for College Employees*;
3. Return from acting assignment.

## **J. OVERVIEW OF CRITERIA AND CATEGORIES**

The criteria for step advancement are broad-based to allow each individual the ability to tailor activities to satisfy the criteria in ways that are meaningful to the individual's personal and professional growth and allow exempt employees to highlight their successes and growth relevant to their assignments.

The activities chosen by the exempt employee must be substantiated in a report, proof of certificate, transcript, or other means of documenting completion.

To qualify for step advancement, exempt employees will demonstrate and substantiate four measurable activities. One or two activities must be from the Professional Development category b. The remaining activities may be from any of the other categories.

## **K. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Exempt employees are professionals who have responsibilities that affect College operations and services. Therefore, for these employees it is important to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of areas within their span of control. An activity to satisfy the criteria may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Management of resources to optimize services that enhance success for their area of responsibility. Examples include: productive scheduling of staff, cross training of staff within their classification, increasing currency and accuracy of information, and increasing quality service
2. Proposing, revising and/or implementing new courses, programs or activities that result in demonstrable increases in services, FTSE/FTFE, fundraising, grant procurement, forging partnerships with the community and/or businesses that benefit the college and its programs
3. Recommendations to improve delivery of services based on customer feedback, department identified needs or personal observations
4. Achieving enrollment and financial goals as required by one's supervisor
5. Improving communication internally and externally
6. Developing new curricular, instructional, and service initiatives
7. Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data for operational improvements
8. Advocating for and/or implementing technological solutions to significant problems or challenges
9. Recommending new or improved procedures or processes

10. Exempt employees having specific assignments through the College Plan.

#### **L. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Exempt employees should identify significant professional development activities, indicating how these activities will significantly enhance their knowledge and competencies, improve the department, or enhance the College's image in the community. Activities that satisfy this criterion include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attending conferences or professional meetings. These conferences should relate to the advancement of higher education or to a specific body of knowledge or a subject area/service area relevant to the employee's job.
2. Presenting at conferences or professional meetings. The presentation materials should be disseminated to appropriate groups of people within the college community
3. Completing academic coursework at an accredited educational institution with a grade of C or better for a minimum of 3 credit hours
4. Having materials accepted for publication in journals or publications appropriate to higher education or the profession related to the exempt employee's job. The materials for publication should be distributed to appropriate groups within the College community
5. Completing pertinent PCC Organization and Professional Development workshops or other PCC training programs
6. Completing training programs that relate to the duties of the exempt employee

#### **M. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The exempt employee will assist in the accomplishment of the goals contained within the College Plan. An activity to satisfy the criteria may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Promoting and/or developing new partnerships with schools, businesses, government agencies and other community organizations
2. Promoting and/or developing new cultural or educational programs in the community
3. Facilitating development of scholarship programs with community individuals or organizations
4. Promoting service learning within programs and courses or other experiential education opportunities
5. Membership and involvement in community/civic organizations
6. Service activities of local, State, national or international community organizations
7. Service to a community organization through participation in a specific service activity
8. Volunteer professional activity within the community or professional organization

The administrative supervisor must approve participation in any of the above activities in advance.

## **N. TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE**

Demonstrate improved technological competencies relevant to one's position and/or one's unit of authority. Documentation of this activity must include a certification of completion or summary of the improved competencies. The new skill or improved competency may be applied, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Collecting and analyzing data
2. Applying technology to enable and empower learners
3. Increasing productivity
4. Communicating and collaborating with peers and the larger community
5. Updating technical competence
6. Obtaining professional licenses and certifications

## **STEP ADJUSTMENTS**

In any fiscal year, all step adjustments for regular employees as a result of the completion of step plans are subject to Governing Board approval and funding.

Any employee not approved for step advancement will have the opportunity to apply for step advancement the following year.