



**Saint Martin's**  
UNIVERSITY

## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

- **People-first Policies and Practices**
- **Equitable Compensation**
- **Professional Development**

### **Background**

At Saint Martin's University, we value every member of our community, their individual gifts and talents, and the many ways they invest themselves in our University's success. Since 1895, our community – this unique collective of people who embrace our traditions and unite to pursue our mission – has enabled generations of students to become leaders and mindful citizens of the world.

Like those who served before us, we face the challenges and welcome the opportunities of our time. Consistent with universities across the nation and businesses within our local and regional communities, we are challenged to recruit and retain the talented people we need to fulfill our mission. And, this leads us to the opportunity to holistically invest in the people who dedicate themselves to Saint Martin's. This [holistic approach](#) will encompass 1) people-first policies and practices, 2) equitable compensation, and 3) professional development.

This summer we began assessing our practices for recruiting, motivating, rewarding and retaining our full-time staff and found an urgent need to address the compensation gaps that have evolved over time. It is clear that we have overlooked compensation benchmarking and the necessary adjustments for too long. This coupled with the [great re-evaluation](#) has left many departments with low morale and lean teams, which is impacting our ability to best serve our students.

With a holistic approach to Investing in Our People, a top priority for this year and future years will be to develop transparent, clear, equitable, and consistent hiring and compensation policies and practices. This document serves to guide and outline our initial efforts in this area.

## **Actions for Summer & Fall 2022**

1. **Develop a [Staff Pay Plan](#)** to provide appropriate salary structures for effectively recruiting, motivating, rewarding and retaining SMU staff members. The Staff Pay Plan combines objective measurements of job responsibilities with competitive market analysis to create a pay system that is both equitable and competitive. The Staff Pay Plan covers regular full-time staff and regular part-time staff for all job classifications. This fall, our initial focus is salaries for regular full-time staff members, which will be followed by salaries for regular part-time staff members in spring.
2. **Conduct the CUPA-HR benchmarking and analysis** program to:
  - a. Assign each SMU position to the most appropriate [CUPA-HR](#) benchmark title based upon objective measurement of position responsibilities
  - b. Discuss CUPA-HR benchmarks with the Staff Welfare Committee
  - c. Compare salaries of all regular full-time team members to the selected CUPA-HR benchmarks
  - d. Determine salary changes needed to ensure all team members are paid *no less than the median* of the university-determined CUPA-HR benchmark
  - e. Gain approval on salary changes from the Board of Trustees
  - f. **Communicate and implement the staff salary adjustments to the median pay<sup>1</sup>** for the selected CUPA-HR benchmark position effective Nov. 16, 2022
3. **General staff salary increase of 1%<sup>1</sup>** effective Nov. 16, 2022
4. **Develop a hiring policy** to ensure [equitable and transparent salaries](#) consistent with SMU's compensation plan (e.g., median for the university-determined CUPA-HR benchmark and pay equality for women and minorities) throughout the recruitment and hiring process of new team members
5. **Conduct an external audit of all HR policies and practices** with the consulting firm [Steptoe and Johnson](#) to ensure federal and state compliance and inclusivity. The audit results will be reviewed with the Staff Welfare Committee and Faculty Senate, and an action plan will be developed to resolve any issues.
6. **Update our mileage reimbursement rate** according to IRS-provided guidelines effective immediately including an increase to 62.5 cents per mile for business travel through the end of the 2022 calendar year. IRS mileage reimbursement rates for the 2023 calendar year will be published later this fall.

<sup>1</sup> *Staff salary adjustments to median pay and general staff salary adjustments exclude deans, provost and president positions.*

### **Actions for Summer & Fall 2022, *continued***

7. **Implement a Christmas break practice** to provide all team members with time for celebration and rejuvenation with dates for the next three academic years as follows:
  - a. 2022-23: Friday, Dec. 23, 2022 – Monday, Jan. 2, 2023
  - b. 2023-24: Friday, Dec. 22, 2023 – Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024
  - c. 2024-25: Monday, Dec. 23, 2024 – Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025

### **Actions for Spring 2023**

1. **Review and update staff job descriptions** that are more than three years old, or as recommended by a department head or supervisor
2. **Review part-time staff member pay rates** and develop a financial plan to move part-time staff to median rates for the selected CUPA-HR benchmark position (prorated to part-time appointment)
3. **Begin publishing salary ranges on all job postings** as required by state law, which will reflect 100% of the CUPA-HR median for the position
4. **Evaluate health insurance pre-payment practices** for new staff members to provide more flexible payment options
5. **Explore [Academic Impressions](#)** programs, cost structure and financial feasibility for professional development
6. **Review findings and create an action plan for external audit** of HR policies and practices

### **Closing**

During my inaugural year at Saint Martin's, I am asking the President's Cabinet to place the highest priority on Investing in Our People to ensure we can fulfill our mission. In doing so, we are focusing on the most significant challenges and the greatest opportunities in higher education today.

Based on the extensive set of actions we have planned for the 2022-23 academic year, and with our forthcoming efforts to solidify our Strategic Plan, this will be a year of discovery, cohesive problem-solving and strategic decision-making. As we dig into issues and learn, our action plans will change accordingly and likely include other factors related to compensation such as merit and longevity. I will regularly communicate our progress with the Board as our plans evolve.



## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE – FAQ

*At the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year, we started to define the Investing in Our People priority, which includes a multi-year effort to address the issue of managing salaries equitably. Since then, we have communicated our initial plans to the campus community and received many questions. We welcome the opportunity to provide answers. The following FAQs represent the most common and broadly relevant questions that have been raised.*

### **1. Who reviewed current job descriptions and matched them to the CUPA-HR category?**

- All full-time staff positions were reviewed by HR and the respective President's Cabinet members. In some instances, conversations between HR and the PC member occurred to ensure the assigned CUPA-HR category was the best option available. When needed, President Bonds-Raacke also joined the conversation.
- This process is standard and considered best practice when companies are conducting market analyses in an expedited time period. Although the process was typical for companies in this situation, our HR Office and President's Cabinet members approached the work with a Benedictine frame, focusing on respect for persons and dignity of work as guiding values.

### **2. Why did we benchmark the median salary for the CUPA-HR category?**

- Market analyses require institutions to pick a comparison value. The President's Cabinet and Staff Welfare Committee discussed the pros and cons of using the mean or the median as the comparison value. The median was selected because it is less influenced by outliers.
- Market analyses also require a decision to be made around what percentage of the comparison value should or can be achieved. Many institutions set goals such as 85% to 90% of the median. Given the cost of living increases and lack of raises in recent years, we prioritized 100% of the median as the comparison value, which resulted in more and higher adjustments for our team members.

### **3. What if the job description that was used is not an accurate representation of my day-to-day work?**

- During the Spring 2023 semester, all full-time staff members will have the opportunity to review their job descriptions with their supervisors to ensure job descriptions accurately reflect the day-to-day roles and responsibilities for each team member. Job descriptions are written to ensure Saint Martin's can best serve its students in delivering our mission. Therefore, individual preferences regarding specific items may be considered but are not the final factor used to determine specific duties included in the job description.
- In addition to the knowledge and expertise which already exists in HR around constructing job descriptions, our team members are currently receiving training through Academic Impressions in developing inclusive job descriptions, which focuses on demonstrating behaviors around the institution's core values.
- It is also worth noting that job descriptions do not reflect temporary responsibilities or reassigned time included within the regular work week.

### **4. Why were job descriptions not updated *before* CUPA-HR categories were selected?**

- The President's Cabinet and the Staff Welfare Committee discussed this option during the summer. We decided to benchmark current job descriptions as a first step to ensure timely financial relief for those team members needing it the most.
- Evaluation of job descriptions is a time consuming process. We can expect the process to take between 10 and 12 weeks during the Spring 2023 semester. As we move forward, Saint Martin's has also committed to reviewing job descriptions of full-time staff members every three years or when recommended by the supervisor.

### **5. How soon will I receive a compensation adjustment after my job description is updated?**

- Supervisors will be trained by HR and the President's Cabinet members on how to evaluate existing job descriptions and the process for submitting recommended revised job descriptions to HR for approval. This will occur during Spring 2023.
- HR and the new CFO/VP of Business and Finance will build a financial model, calculating the financial expense to implement the recommended revised job descriptions across the University. This will occur during Summer 2023.
- The University Budget Committee will review the model and recommend to the President when the plan can be implemented or how the plan could be implemented in phases. This will occur in early Fall 2023, during budget construction and pending final approval by the Board of Trustees.
- This cross-functional type of endeavor is important and complicated work. Our approach aims to balance efficiency with accuracy and fairness.

**6. University communications indicated over \$770,000 was invested this fall in staff salaries.**

**How is that number possible when my individual adjustment to the median was small?**

- More than \$770,000 was added to the annual budget for CUPA-HR median increases and the 1% increase for all full-time staff.
- This total amount added to the annual budget moving forward includes CUPA-HR median increases, 1% salary increases, **and** the associated increase in benefits and taxes for the new annual staff salaries.
- Approximately 35% of full-time staff members received CUPA-HR median increases.
- Approximately 70% of those staff members who received CUPA-HR median increases had earned an annual salary of less than \$60,000 before the increases.
- The President, Provost, and Academic Deans were not considered for CUPA-HR median benchmarking at this time.

**7. My colleague down the road has a higher compensation for my same position. Why did the CUPA-HR median adjustment not increase my pay to an annual rate comparable to the local community college or four-year state institutions?**

- For the CUPA-HR benchmarking process, our comparison group was 700 four-year, private-religious institutions across the nation with a similar operating budget. Our comparison group did *not* include institutions in the local market outside of these descriptors.
- This comparison group was selected to allow us to benchmark Saint Martin's with institutions with similar missions (i.e., primarily bachelor's degrees, religious values) and budgets. As a first step in a multi-year effort, it was particularly relevant to compare our staff salaries to other institutions with a similar focus and budget constraints because comparing ourselves to institutions with significantly larger budgets would not be a financially viable starting point for our work, especially in the post-COVID enrollment landscape.

**8. Do we plan to benchmark using the local community college or state universities?**

- We understand that each person must consider a variety of factors when selecting a place of employment. Employee satisfaction comes from a number of factors, including a match between employee expectation, employer capability and total compensation. We believe that using similar mission-driven institutions to set the benchmark gives the most accurate indication of employer capability. So, to help employees set their expectations, we have been and will continue to be transparent about our reliance on that benchmark. We have no plans at this time to benchmark local community colleges or state universities for salary planning purposes.

## **9. What other actions are underway to support staff during Fall 2022?**

- CUPA-HR median benchmarks and 1% annual salary increases are two of the seven actions items developed and executed for Fall 2022.
- Other action items include a.) the development of a [Staff Pay Plan](#), which included a hiring policy; b.) an external audit of HR policies and practices; c.) updated mileage reimbursement rates; and d.) additional gifted vacation days during the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.

## **10. Are there additional actions planned to support staff compensation during Spring 2023?**

- As published in the Investing in Our People document, many actions are planned for the spring semester. The actions include:
  - review and update staff job descriptions that are more than three years old, or as recommended by a department head or supervisor;
  - review part-time staff member pay rates and develop a financial plan to move part-time staff to median rates for the selected CUPA-HR benchmark position (part-time roles are prorated to reflect the hours allocated for the role, for example, 20 hours per week equals .5 of an equivalent full-time role);
  - begin publishing salary ranges on all job postings as required by state law, which will reflect 100% of the CUPA-HR median for the position;
  - evaluate health insurance pre-payment practices for new staff members to provide more flexible payment options;
  - explore Academic Impressions programs, cost structure and financial feasibility for professional development;
  - review findings and create an action plan for external audit of HR policies and practices.

## **11. When will merit and longevity be considered in salary raises?**

- This is a multi-year effort and based on the extensive set of actions we have planned for the 2022-23 academic year, and with our forthcoming efforts to solidify our Strategic Plan, this will be a year of discovery, cohesive problem-solving and strategic decision-making.
- As we continue our work and most likely align the Investing in Our People work with the Strategic Planning process, other factors related to compensation such as merit and longevity will likely be considered.
- Annual Improvement Plans (AIPs) will be deployed beginning June 2023, and based on Voice of Community inputs it seems likely that these important compensation factors will be prioritized by the campus community.

## **12. Does President JBR have ideas for other factors that should be considered around compensation?**

- Yes, President Bonds-Raacke has shared ideas from other institutions of higher education such as applying an Annual Aging Factor to CUPA-HR benchmarks to estimate for changes in inflation and providing incentives for activities leading to an increase in student retention.
- The President will empower community members to bring forward their priorities for future considerations through the Strategic Planning process. Regardless of the priorities selected, our community must remember that the Investing in Our People priority is a multi-year effort and the University needs to be able to afford these salary increases and other improvements, which means that we need to hit our enrollment numbers, manage operating costs, and find new/diversified streams of revenue generation.

## **13. I don't trust the CUPA-HR data.**

- We understand it is difficult to trust a process or use of national benchmarking data that is not familiar to our campus or based specifically on the local cost of living. We acknowledge that no benchmarking approach is perfect, and we may choose to update or improve the process as we move forward.
- CUPA-HR has measures in place to protect confidentiality of participating institutions and ensure “good” data. For example, you are not able to view specific data reported by an institution other than your own; no salary data is reported for positions with fewer than five responding institutions; and a comparison group for benchmarking must include a minimum of eight institutions.
- CUPA-HR benchmark data is a paid service and requires a subscription, so we are not at liberty to publish the data. However, if you have a specific question related to the CUPA-HR median for your role, please reach out to HR for assistance.
- While it is natural to have questions or doubts, we expect our team members to remain professional. If you are disappointed that your CUPA-HR benchmark did not result in the raise you had expected, or if you are disappointed Saint Martin's is not benchmarking to the local public institutions of higher education, please talk to your supervisor or HR, or consider suggestions included in this article, [How To Guarantee Disappointment Fuels Your Career](#).
- We ask that all team members refrain from disparaging colleagues or questioning the good will of colleagues in areas such as HR, finance, or members of the President's Cabinet who have gone above and beyond since July 2022 to prioritize our salary planning efforts, which we acknowledge were long overdue.



**14. I still have questions about my specific situation. What should I do?**

- Questions are welcomed. Please speak with your supervisor, HR, and/or members of the [Staff Welfare Committee](#).
- Or, if you are curious about the process or want to learn more, we want to welcome you to participate! There will be many opportunities across the next year or two to serve on support committees or Strategic Planning projects and to learn more. Your Staff Welfare Committee is another great place for learning and conversation.