

4. **U. T. System: Approval of the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Preparation Policies and Calendar for budget operations**

RECOMMENDATION

With the concurrence of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, the Chancellor recommends that the U. T. System Board of Regents approve the Budget Preparation Policies and Calendar on Page 161 for use in preparing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Operating Budget for the U. T. System as set out below:

U. T. System Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Preparation Policies

1. General Guidelines - The regulations and directives included in the General Appropriations Act enacted by the 83rd Texas Legislature serve as the basis for these guidelines and policies. In preparing the draft of the FY 2015 Operating Budget, the president of each institution should adhere to guidelines and policies as detailed below and as included in the General Appropriations Act. The Chancellor will issue detailed instructions regarding the implementation of those regulations and directives into the institutional budget process.

The president of each institution should examine the resources used at the institution and, where possible, redirect resources toward high priority mission critical activities and strategic competitive investments that are consistent with the goals and objectives included in the institution's Strategic Plan.

Overall budget totals, including retaining reasonable reserves for potential future financial shortfall, must be limited to the funds available for the year from General Revenue Appropriations, Estimates of Educational and General Income, and limited use of institutional unappropriated balances.

2. Maintenance of Operating Margin and Use of Prior Year Balances - Institutions should make all reasonable efforts to maintain a favorable operating margin within the FY 2015 Operating Budget. Use of prior year balances should be limited to critical items, unique opportunities, or projects funded from prior year income committed for that purpose. Generally, balance usage should be reserved for nonrecurring activities. Balance usage cannot be recommended to the U. T. System Board of Regents for approval without the consent of the Chancellor, the appropriate Executive Vice Chancellor, and the Associate Vice Chancellor, Controller, and Chief Budget Officer.
3. Salary Guidelines - Recommendations regarding salary policy are subject to the following directives:
 - A. Salaries Proportional by Fund - Unless otherwise restricted, payment for salaries, wages, and benefits paid from appropriated funds, including local funds and educational and general funds as defined in *Texas Education Code* Section 51.009 (a) and (c), shall be proportional to the source of funds.

- B. Merit Increases and Promotions - Merit increases or advances in rank for faculty are to be on the basis of teaching effectiveness, research, and public service.

As defined in *Texas Education Code* Section 51.962, administrative and professional staff and classified staff must have been employed by the institution for at least six consecutive months immediately preceding the effective date of the increase to be eligible for a merit increase, and at least six months must have elapsed since the employee's last merit salary increase.

Merit increases or promotions for administrative and professional staff and classified staff are to be based on evaluation of performance in areas appropriate to work assignments. In accordance with the Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, performance appraisals are required to be conducted annually for all employees of the U. T. System. To verify compliance with this policy, U. T. System presidents and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs for U. T. System Administration shall annually certify that all eligible employees (including staff and faculty) have completed performance appraisals. Subject to available resources and resolution of any major salary inequities, institutions should give priority to implementing merit salary increases for faculty and staff.

- C. Other Increases - Equity adjustments, competitive offers, and increases to accomplish contractual commitments should also consider merit where appropriate, subject to available resources. Subject to guidance issued by the Chancellor, such increases should be noted and explained in the supplemental data accompanying the budget.
- D. New Positions - Subject to available resources, new administrative and professional staff, classified staff, and faculty positions are to be requested only when justified by workloads or to meet needs for developing new programs.
- E. Reporting - The Chancellor will issue guidance on reporting of salary changes and amounts. It is expected that required reports will encompass high-ranking staff covered by Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rules 20203 and 20204 along with those staff receiving significant changes in compensation.
4. Staff Benefits Guidelines - Recommendations regarding the State contribution for employee staff benefits such as group insurance premiums, teacher retirement, and optional retirement are subject to legislative determination via the General Appropriations Act. The Chancellor will issue instructions regarding the implementation of the benefits into the budget process.
5. Other Employee Benefits - Employer contributions to the self-insured Unemployment Compensation Fund are based on an actuarial study. Workers' Compensation Insurance rates are experience-rated for each institution.