Update: Enhancements to the Staff Performance Evaluation & Merit Processes

The wage and salary committee has been working to conclude the Compensation Review Project. One of the outstanding issues is how best to support the staff and administrative objective of securing pay for performance as the primary driver of pay increases. Particularly in the absence of the benchmark program, which will end June 30, 2007, the committee recognizes the importance of providing staff with a sound and reliable mechanism for determining merit increases.

The following changes were recommended by the Wage and Salary committee and endorsed by President Liebowitz and his staff. Improvements have been made in three areas: manager and supervisor training, the creation of a direct link between the Performance Feedback Development Process (PFDP) and merit increases, and updates to the PFDP to better match current program objectives.

New Manager and Supervisor Training

A new training program for managers and supervisors has been developed with a focus on providing appropriate performance feedback and successfully conducting the PFDP each year. This required training demonstrates a commitment to the value of performance feedback and the need for managers to develop proficiency in providing feedback. The sessions bring together managers and supervisors from across campus, fostering a shared understanding of how to assess performance consistently. It also provides staff with the assurance that someone with appropriate, consistent and timely training is evaluating them.

Provide a Direct Link between Performance Evaluation and Pay Increases

Many departments on campus have been using the PFDP for several years, while others have not been introduced to the process. In order to ensure consistency across campus, all departments will be oriented to the PFDP by June 30, 2007. As a result this will be a transitional year and the entire institution will be following a unified merit process by July 2008.

For the past two years, merit increases have been determined by the performance level departments establish in May for each staff member. Managers drew input from the performance documents from the previous 12 months. However, there was no requirement that the performance level set for merit increases match the performance level reported on the PFDP. This was because not all departments were using the PFDP and because evaluations are done at various times throughout the year and an up-to-date assessment is needed for merit increases. This allowed for the possibility of a performance level used for merits differing from one established during the review process.

(Please see “Compensation Review Project” continued on page 3)
Brenda Currier: College Advancement – 25 Year Club

In 1982, Brenda Currier answered a classified ad for a part-time data entry job here at Middlebury College. She got the job in what was then called the Data Processing department, and after three days, she was working full time. She was 18 years old, and it was her first job right out of high school. Today, she certainly must be one of the youngest inductees in the 25 Year Club.

You don’t often hear stories like Brenda’s. She had married the year before coming to work at the College, at age 17, and is still married to the same man. She and her husband Jerry have two daughters, Jennifer age 23, and Brooklyn who is 9! She has dedicated her home life to her husband and daughters and her working life to the College. In Brenda’s own words, she’s a “lifer.” She’d like to remain here until “they kick her out.”

Over the 25 years, Brenda has worked for three different College departments, none of which are now called what they were named back then. Starting out in Data Processing doing data entry, Brenda remembers working with “big 5-inch floppy disks,” which she called the first step up from the cardboard key punch cards. Brenda moved over to Accounting, part of what was called the Comptroller’s Office when she was there. Currently, Brenda is the Manager of Gift Administration, part of College Advancement, but it was called Development when she started. Day-to-day, Brenda works mostly with the gift officers and colleagues within her department, but she also does a good deal with colleagues in finance. One of her main responsibilities is to make sure donors’ money goes to the funds they intended it to, and within her office, to make sure everyone has correct, complete gift information.

Outside of work, family is what occupies Brenda’s energy. She and her husband already saw one daughter through the teenage years, and now their younger girl is about to embark on adolescence. It’s a little scary to Brenda even though (perhaps because) she’s already done it once! Not too long ago, Brenda’s husband started a logging/transport business, so she helps him with the paperwork. She also dedicates time to helping out her 83-year-old mother who lives in the area.

When asked if any of her interests have changed in the course of her time here or if they have been influenced by anyone she’s met here, the first thing that came to mind was that Lynn Dunton has been a big influence on Brenda athletically and has become a true friend. Lynn got Brenda into running for fitness and fun, and off and on for the past few years they run together at lunchtime. Brenda enjoyed running a relay in the Burlington Marathon with Lynn and some other friends about four years ago.

Being a part of the Bicentennial Campaign from its start to finish is an experience Brenda is proud to have been a part of. She enjoyed the energy behind the whole effort she and her colleagues put in to surpass the $200 million goal and raise $213 million by the end of the campaign. Brenda was constantly pulling reports together and gathering the information so the department was always aware of where it was in the fundraising effort.

Why has Brenda dedicated her career to Middlebury College? She truly enjoys what she does here and those whom she has worked with. When asked if there was a person on campus (or a retiree, former coworker) who mentored her or who she felt helped her grow to enjoy her work at the College, her response was, “quite a few, do I have to chose just one?” Jeanette Cyr, whom Brenda worked with in Data Processing helped her to become more than a “key punch operator” and also became a good friend. A former Comptroller John Palmeri was also someone who believed in Brenda’s abilities and encouraged her to apply for positions within his department so she could continue to grow. Ed Sommers hired Brenda to work as a Planned Giving Assistant in the then new College Advancement department, and Brenda considers him a mentor and friend, someone who gave her the opportunity to learn new skills in the Planned Giving area, provided opportunities for growth, and suggested she begin supporting Ann Crumb in her “spare time.” Ann is someone Brenda recognized as believing in her abilities and was instrumental in her being promoted to the Manager of Gift Administration position, even at the cost of losing her as an administrative assistant. Shelley Glassner, Brenda says, “is the one who pushes you beyond what you normally think you can do but gives you the confidence to know you can do it,” and for that she is most grateful.

The combination of these mentors and truly enjoying what she does here have gotten Brenda to this milestone. She also says the benefits the College offers have helped her put a daughter through college, an opportunity Brenda didn’t have herself but was determined that she give her daughter. The flexibility to get to her kids’ school to help out for special events is something Brenda really appreciates as well. She is happy that her managers have always encouraged her and other employees to put family first.

Today, Brenda is looking forward to being part of the upcoming initiative in College Advancement. As for outside of work, Brenda plans to continue traveling to places tropical with her family at least once a year. She wants to continue to grow and change, to “not get stuck in a rut.”

- Liz Hammel
Compensation Review Project, ctd. from pg.1

Once a department is oriented to the PFDP, the performance levels established in PFDP will be used for merit increase, creating a direct link between performance and merit increases. Beginning in the next fiscal year (begins July 1, 2007), HR will work with departments to encourage them to move to conducting performance evaluations in the first quarter of each calendar year (January, February and March). This will ensure that the link between evaluations and merit increases is more timely.

Updates to PFDP Form

Lastly, there have been modifications to the final page of the PFDP form. This is the section where overall performance is assessed and a performance level is determined. These changes will not affect departments that have not used the PFDP in the past, as they will begin with the updated form. However, those who have used the PFDP will notice changes. The “thermometer” (a space for documenting performance by shading along a scale) has been replaced by a performance scale of 1-5. The previous method left the performance level open for interpretation.

Staff have raised concerns that performance levels are interpreted differently across campus. To address this concern, the language used to describe the distinctions between performance levels has been clarified. The consistent application of the updated language is being reinforced in manager and supervisor training.

In particular, there is a desire to emphasize a common understanding regarding meeting institutional expectations in your work. It was clear that in some departments level “3” was used for staff performing well in their expected role, while other areas tended to use the top of the scale, “5,” for work at that level. In an effort to clarify the issue, the descriptive language for level 3 has been strengthened, and managers and supervisors will now be asked to provide a brief description of performance that exceeds expectations to add credibility and consistency to ratings above level 3. In addition, to support staff whose performance is in need of improvement, specific feedback will accompany ratings less than level 3.

There will also now be a feedback process where departments will receive general statistics (not linked to individuals) on performance levels campus-wide, following the merit process each year. With support from HR, this data will be used to improve consistency in the application of the performance scale across campus.

All of these measures have been made to increase the fairness and integrity of the merit process and attempt to provide staff with increased piece of mind that they will be evaluated by someone with the appropriate training, with a process and performance scale that is used consistently across campus.

For additional information, please contact Human Resources. The updated PFDP form is available on the Web by visiting the Human Resources page and clicking on “Supervisor Information” and then “PFDP (Performance Feedback and Development Process).”

- Ellen Uelton, Compensation Manager

Where on Campus?

“Smog” is indeed outside the east entrance to McCarell Bicentennial Hall, as ten readers responded correctly to last week’s “Where on Campus?” question. One reader admits to thinking, when first installed, that it was part of the cooling plant for air conditioning in the building!

“Smog” 1969–1970
Tony Smith, American, 1912–1980
Fabricated 2000
Painted Aluminum. Purchased by Committee on Art in Public Places with funds provided by the Middlebury College Board of Trustees

“Celebrating Life” Series

Estate Planning
Tuesday, April 24
10:00-11:30 a.m.
Mitchell Green Lounge

The Middlebury College Staff Development Committee is pleased to announce its final program as part of the “Celebrating Life” series. This series has been designed to help employees find and achieve an ideal work/life balance. Periodically, we have focused on different aspects of this balance, offering workshops and activities we hope have engaged and stimulated the College community.

On Tuesday, April 24, Unsworth Barra & Jarrett PLC will offer an estate planning program from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in Mitchell Green Lounge.

When people hear the term “estate planning,” they often think it only applies to millionaires and billionaires. In reality, estate planning is about making sure that you and your family will be protected in the event of illness, incapacity or death. Topics for discussion will include ways to control how your estate will be distributed, how to plan for a special needs child’s future, and how to provide for young children or grandchildren after you are gone. The session will also address the importance of creating an up-to-date Advance Directive to inform your family of your wishes regarding health care and end-of-life decisions. Finally, the program will address some common misconceptions about wills and trusts and provide information regarding their differences. Time for additional Q&A will be allotted.

To register, please contact Laura Carotenuto at x2012 or lcaroten@middlebury.edu.
Q&A About Changes to Staff Evaluation and Merit Process

After reading about the changes to the staff evaluation and merit process you may still be wondering...

Q: How are the actual increase percentages determined?
A: Each year, as a part of the annual budget process, the board of trustees determines the staff salary increase pool. In essence, they determine how much more will be spent on staff pay than in the previous year. They draw upon statistical information from the previous year and future projections, as well as the Consumer Price Index, to determine the increase amount.

For the past two years, this pool of money was distributed based on a staff member’s individual performance level established by the department. So any two staff members with the same performance level received the same percent increase. For example, last year everyone receiving a performance level of 3 received a 3.4% increase (this information was published in Midd Points during the merit process). The same process will used this year with the improvements mentioned in the lead article in this issue.

Q: What are the increase amounts for each performance level?
A: They will be different each year based on two factors. First, the size of the increase pool (how much money is available that year) and second, the number of staff that fall into each performance level.

Therefore, it is impossible to predict the increase percentages for each performance level until both the budget has been approved and all the performance data has been collected. Each year the percent increase for each performance level is made available to staff in a Midd Points article.

Q: What is changing this year?
A: We have been using the performance scale of 1-5 from the Performance Feedback Development Process form for two years to determine merit increases, but the following things are changing:

• All departments are being introduced to the same performance evaluation tool, the Performance Feedback Development Process (PFDP). This is a transitional year where some departments will use their existing process one last time. By next year, everyone will be using the PFDP.

• Managers and supervisors are receiving training on how to provide fair and consistent evaluations.

• The PFDP form has been modified to make the performance scale clearer to all users.

• The evaluation level you receive on the PFDP will be used for your merit increase, for those using the PFDP this year. Again, this will be true for all departments by 2008.

Q: Why are these changes happening?
A: They are some of the results to come out of the work of the Wage & Salary committee as it reviews and updates the staff compensation system and responds to the feedback received from staff. Staff indicated that pay for performance was a top priority, and the administration agreed. These are steps to improve the link between our performance evaluation system and increases in staff pay.

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Faculty Grants

William Waldron (Religion) has received a research/lecturing award from the Fulbright Scholar Program in support of his 2007-2008 leave. He will spend Fall 2007 in Kathmandu, Nepal, working on a research project titled, “Buddhist Thought and Cognitive Science: the Relation between Language and Consciousness.” He will be affiliated with the two national universities, Tribhuvan and Kathmandu Universities, where he will be teaching classic Buddhist texts connected to his research and working with Nepali scholars and students.

Michael Katz (Russian) has been awarded a grant to participate in a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute titled, “The Continuing Significance of Tocqueville's Democracy in America,” which will be held at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN. This institute directly relates to a new International Studies Senior Seminar he will be co-teaching next spring with Stephen Donadio on “French Views of America and Russia,” in which students will read Tocqueville.

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College Book Store

Open Monday–Friday
8:30–5:00

Open on Saturdays now through May 12!
Classifieds

Classified ads are free for members of the staff, faculty, student body, and alumni of Middlebury College. Ads must be submitted seven days prior to the publication date. Please send your ads to: Classifieds, Midd Points, HR, Service Building, or via Outlook to: Middpoints Editor or middpoints@middlebury.edu (electronic submissions preferred).

Real Estate

For Sale: 3 BR raised ranch, located at 2115 Case St., Middlebury. One acre. Brand new kitchen. Asking $199,000. Call 388-6264.

For Sale: Cornwall 3 BR Farmhouse on 5 acres, recently renovated. New standing seam & slate roof, new windows. New heating, plumbing & septic systems. Oak flooring, radiant heat in some areas, slate countertops, wood stove, Jenn-Aire range, butcher block kitchen island; asking $282,000. Contact Eileen at efahey@middlebury.edu or x5064 for photos and more information.

For Sale: 7 room house ideally located on Chipman Hill 5 min. from downtown, with southern exposure and hiking trails across the street. 3 BR, 1.5 BA, and two wood stoves. Floors recently refinished. 1,800 sq. ft., plus basement, breezeway, garage, and a small deck. $325,000. Avail. immediately. Call Doug Sprigg at 247-9399.

For Sale: Charming New Haven cape on a 10+ acre lot with gorgeous westerly views and a pond. Quality, frame construction (built new in 1992). More than 2,200 sq. ft. of living space: 3 BR, 2 full BA, LR, DR and recently finished basement with 2 playrooms and an office. Nice kitchen with center island and atrium doors to the deck. 6 min. drive to center of Middlebury. $275,000. Possession at closing. Please call Will or Silvia at 453-4902 for a viewing appointment.

For Rent: Sabbatical sublet for the 2007-8 academic year, available summer of 2007 (flexible with dates). Furnished bright and spacious faculty apartment with parking. Heat and trash/recycling/snow removal included! 2 BR plus dining room, 5 minute walk to the college library. Back yard. No pets or smokers. $1,052/month + electricity and phone. Internet access. Please contact: hplein@middlebury.edu.

For Rent: 1 BR apartment in downtown Middlebury. Cozy, quiet, beautiful view of Otter Creek, fully furnished, kitchen fully equipped. Parking and use of a bike included. Washer and dryer in the building. Quiet neighbors. 4 min. walk to campus. Available June 1-August 31. Rent: $600/month + electricity and basic cable. For more info: cmadeiro@middlebury.edu or 802-388-3082.

For Rent: Sabbatical rental for the '07- '08 Academic Year. Two story house on Chipman Hill (High St.). 2 BR, 2 BA, recently remodeled kitchen/breakfast room and downstairs bath, large living room and master BR upstairs, 2 studies. Adirondack views & Middlebury schools. $1,250/month + utilities. For more info: kmoss@middlebury.edu.

For Rent: Sabbatical rental, 2007-08 Academic Year. Charming renovated 1800 farm house. Rural setting, an easy 15-minute drive from Middlebury in Shoreham. Semi-furnished. 3-4 BR, 2 BA. Breakfast room with wood-burning cook stove. $1,100 + utilities. Rent reduction for care of two cats. Call Bill or Kitty Waldron @ 802-897-5109.

For Rent: Sabbatical sublet, July 2007 to July 2008. 3 BR, 1.5 BA house 4 miles from campus. Located north of Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge on the banks of Otter Creek. $1,000/month furnished. For more info. contact Peter or Maggie Ryan at pryan@middlebury.edu or x2557 or 802-545-2679.

For Sale: Oval coffee table. Excellent condition. $20. Call x2095.

For Sale: 1994 Toyota 4-Runner SR5. 6 cyl., 5-speed, 4WD, AC, PDL, PW, moonroof. 126K miles, very good condition. $3,500 OBO. Call Jason at 453-6499.

Auto


For Sale: 1994 Toyota 4-Runner SR5. 6 cyl., 5-speed, 4WD, AC, PDL, PW, moonroof. 126K miles, very good condition. $3,500 OBO. Call Jason at 453-6499.

Other

For Sale: Nike Golf spikes, men's size 7.5, one year old, worn a few times but still like new. Waterproof. $20. Call x2095.

For Sale: Oval coffee table. Excellent condition. 18"H, 26"W, 60"L, with drop leaves. 45" with leaves down, dark coffee brown stain. Will bring to campus. $35. x5052.

Garage Sale: Saturday, May 5, 9:00-4:00, rain, snow or shine! 11 Carver Street, Brandon. New household items. Curtains, sheets, comforters, pillows, seat cushions, desk lamps & shades, wire storage units, small tables and bureaus (still in box). Large mirrors, outside lanterns (in box). 2-piece maple hutch (was an unfinished piece), large TV cabinet. Everything priced to sell. Questions, dfoley@middlebury.edu.


(continued on page 6)
For Sale: Sea kayak and all accessories. Kayak - Wilderness Cape Horn w/rudder, 15.8’ (58 lbs.), Werner paddle (light-weight), pump & float, cockpit cover, spray skirt, Mary Jane wetsuit (size 10), PFD (medium) and Hully rollers for Yakima rack system. Great for beginner. All in excellent condition. Total package cost $1,800 new, will sell for $1,200. Contact Karen at x5973 or kshacket@middlebury.edu.

Free: Piano. Old Kirchhoff upright; just been tuned and repaired. Call or e-mail Carolyn for more details: x2195, 388-1420, ckuebler@middlebury.edu.

Wanted: Looking to rent a 2 BR apartment in Middlebury for 2 adults and 1 child. Willing to pay $650–$800 a month. Please contact Kara, kgennare@middlebury.edu or x5727 or 388-7069 (after 5:30 p.m.).

Wanted: Senior graduating in spring of 2007 and working in Middlebury is available as a house-sitter for ’07-08 or Fall 2007. Previous jobs include head-tutor and commons chef. I would be happy to cook and/or do childcare as well for those not taking leave. Contact Luke: lstrauss@middlebury.edu, 802-318-3650.

Wanted: To buy, old split rail fencing. Will pick up in place on your property. Joseph 247-3171, jwatson@middlebury.edu, x5487.

Q. Who ate 20 pizzas between the hours of 8 and 9 o’clock in the morning?
A. The Middlebury College staff members who attended Staff Council’s pizza party and breakfast/lunch reception in early April.

Staff Council recently held two pizza parties -- one at 4 in the afternoon and the other at 8 a.m. -- so college staff could meet their Council members, enjoy some good food and conversation, and provide feedback on two new Staff Council surveys.

Close to 40 staff attended the afternoon event and 100 more came to the morning get-together when the record number of Grille-made pizzas were consumed. According to Staff Council President Lisa Ayers, “Why would we serve pizza at 8 in the morning? Because that’s the lunch hour for many of the members of our Facilities and Dining staff who start their work day very early in the morning, some as early as 4 a.m."

Staff Council also served pastries and breakfast items at the 8 a.m. party, but the pizzas were the overwhelming favorite. “We chose to hold two events to express our appreciation for the many people who work behind the scenes here 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” Lisa said.

Two different surveys were circulated at the events – one about communication on campus and the other about staff involvement in the intellectual life of the college. Staff Council has compiled the data and comments, and at the Council’s next meeting the group will begin converting the feedback into tangible recommendations and goals. The results from the surveys will appear in a future issue of Midd Points.

“Staff Council is working to have a strong voice in important staff-related issues,” Lisa explained, “and we appreciate the high level of participation at our two most-recent events. We would also like to get feedback from those staff who were unable to attend the pizza parties, so keep an eye out for information about how to access these surveys in the future.”

Raffles were held at the pizza parties and the prizes were as follows:

From the Ralph Myhre Golf Course – 3 golf hats
Winner: Eugene Roy, Facilities Services; Jen Anderson, Facilities Services - Custodial

From the Health Center - First aid kit
Winner: Dan Celik, Facilities Services, Custodial

From the Museum of Art - Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur catalogue and bookmark
Winner: Jane Roy, Facilities Services, Custodial

From the Center for the Arts - 2 tickets to any CFA-produced event
Winner: Brook Escobedo, Admissions

From Dining Events - 2 Vermont products gift baskets
Winners: Cathy Collins, Reprographics; Robert Keren, Communications

In addition, the Council extended a special “thank you” to the following staff who unselfishly offered to contribute their skills as “prizes” for fellow staff members:

From Patti McCaffrey, Assistant Banquet Chef, Dining Events - 1 hour cooking lesson
Winner: Jim Friend, Facilities Services

From Mack Roark, Educational Technology Specialist, LIS - Two 1.5 hour sessions of computer training
Winners: Betsy Mackey, Alliance for Civic Engagement; Shawn Rae Passalacqua, Admissions

From Cindy Slater, Computing Specialist, LIS - Two 1.5 hour sessions of computer training
Winners: Deb Wales, College Advancement; Randy Comes, Facilities Services

For Sale: Sea kayak and all accessories. Kayak - Wilderness Cape Horn w/rudder, 15.8’ (58 lbs.), Werner paddle (light-weight), pump & float, cockpit cover, spray skirt, Mary Jane wetsuit (size 10), PFD (medium) and Hully rollers for Yakima rack system. Great for beginner. All in excellent condition. Total package cost $1,800 new, will sell for $1,200. Contact Karen at x5973 or kshacket@middlebury.edu.

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