

# Faculty Senate



## **M2025.3.25: Motion to Provide 9/10-month Full-Time Faculty/Employees a 12-month Pay Schedule Option, Consistent with Majority Practice in the State**

### **Originators:**

**William Alexander, Chemistry, CAS, Chair of Research Policies Committee;**  
**Stephanie Huetten, Psychology, CAS, Chair of Committee on Committees;**  
**Edith Gnanadass, Leadership, COE, Chair of Academic Policies Committee;**  
**Stephen Karr, Music, Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music, Chair of Budget and Finance Committee;**  
**Bradley Dixon, History, CAS**

Whereas,

In December 2024, the University of Memphis emailed all nine-month faculty to inform them that, beginning in August 2025, the university will no longer defer salary for nine-month academic year faculty. The UofM will no longer defer a portion of the academic year's faculty salary, which used to be disbursed as a paycheck over three summer months.

Whereas,

The University of Memphis claims that this decision was made to bring the payroll practices in line with other Carnegie-classified Very High Research institutions. Specifically: "Aligns the University's compensation practices with other R1 institutions."<sup>†</sup> Initial fact-finding from members of faculty senate examined the compensation practices of the 34 (of 147 total) R1 institutions in the "Balanced arts & sciences/professions high graduate coexistence" category (thought to be most like UofM). Data was able to be gathered from 30 (88%) of these institutions. While it is true that a majority (67%) of these institutions *default* to a version of the new UofM 9/10 month pay model, it was found that 65% of those institutions allow faculty to opt in to a 12-month salary model. For institutions that default to a different model (i.e. 10 monthly paychecks), the most common mechanism is for faculty to opt in to the 12 monthly pay model during the annual benefits election period via a simple form. All together, faculty at 77% of the institutions sampled can access a 12-month salary pay model.

Furthermore,

All of the other public institutions in Tennessee allow 9/10-month faculty to have their 9-mo. salary disbursed over 12 monthly pay periods (as is the current model).<sup>\*</sup> This includes UT Knoxville (another R1 institution). The other R1 institution in the state (Vanderbilt) also allows a 12-mo. pay model.

Furthermore,

A sudden shift to a 10-month faculty salary pay schedule may be burdensome. Hardships may include: additional time required to for personal budgeting, tax and financial consultant

expenses, reduced pay during double benefits withdrawal months after two months of no pay, unanticipated tax changes/expenses, and additional bank account maintenance fees. This burden falls to faculty and no assistance has been offered to faculty. While personal financial budgeting is always on the employee with any job, any large change to the way income is disbursed is likely to cause additional stress, anxiety, and require additional emotional and cognitive labor on an ongoing basis.

Whereas,

The University of Memphis claims that this decision had to be made based on the University's shift to Oracle HRM software; however, many Tennessee institutions also currently run Oracle HRM software and are able to pay 9-mo. faculty over 12-months. Furthermore, employees knowledgeable with the innerworkings of this process in the UT System (DASH, which is built on Oracle) have even offered to help UofM Human Resources to implement this model. Contrary to the reality of the situation, the University of Memphis administration has acted as if this is "impossible" to implement.

Whereas,

The University of Memphis claims that this decision was made based on feedback from faculty and staff. Specifically: "Feedback from academic leaders and faculty that express concerns with the delay in receiving compensation for their work."<sup>†</sup> However, no formal or informal polling was undertaken to legitimately gain feedback from the faculty by the University of Memphis.

Furthermore,

To the best of the Faculty Senate's information, these decisions are being made by Human Resources, ultimately approved by CFO Bustamante, at the guidance and/or request of the SOAR implementation team. The SOAR team is a group tasked with implementation of Oracle across campus. No member listed on the SOAR team website could be identified as being a "9- or 10- month faculty member or employee," meaning those involved in this decision making likely have little-to-no personal experience of this employee class. [The Faculty Senate President is a 9-mo. faculty member and is listed as being involved with SOAR in an advisory capacity; however, this role does not afford practical influence into the decision-making process.]

Whereas,

The University of Memphis claims the switch to this non-deferred model will eliminate process inefficiencies in HR that happen during outlier scenarios involving faculty moving roles in the university, issues with early terminations or non-standard hiring dates, etc. Specifically, the change "Eliminates challenges with pay errors and pay manipulations when faculty are hired, experience salary changes and/or leave employment during the academic year."<sup>†</sup> In practice, "strange cases" will always arise; changing a pay schedule will not remove the necessity for creativity and human intervention in these cases. The move to Oracle itself should alleviate the bulk of the inefficiencies found in these cases, which usually arise from multiple disparate systems "not talking to each other"; the move to Oracle is supposed to fix these sorts of issues across the University by consolidating processes into one system.\* New faculty start dates are usually in August, but these faculty are generally not paid for their August work, instead

receiving their first paycheck for September. This is a particular challenge that can be addressed during this transition.

Whereas,

The University of Memphis had 4436 employees, of which only 2717 are full-time. 1061 were full-time faculty, most of which (899) are 9/10-mo. employees. This corresponds to 33% of the full-time employees at the UofM.<sup>†</sup> This is an enormous fraction of the university, and those who are responsible for the overwhelming majority of the teaching and research that makes up the core function of the University. Having a different pay structure for this large employee class (as it is currently) is not unreasonable.

Be It Resolved,

The University of Memphis will develop and prepare a mechanism for faculty to opt into a 12-month pay schedule, consistent with majority practice across the state, with new employees beginning their pay period in August as laid out in new employee contracts.

**Recipients:**

Bill Hardgrave, President

David J. Russomanno, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Rene Bustamante, Chief Operating and Financial and Executive Vice President

Maria Alam, Chief Human Resources Officer

\* June 2024 SOAR Newsletter <https://www.memphis.edu/erp/pdfs/june2024soarnewsletter2.pdf>

† “Deferred Pay Presentation” SOAR, available on UofM HR website.

[https://www.memphis.edu/hr/pdf/faculty\\_deferred\\_pay\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.memphis.edu/hr/pdf/faculty_deferred_pay_presentation.pdf)

‡ “Employee Headcount” UofM Office of Institutional Research Interactive Reports (based 2024 data)

<https://www.memphis.edu/oir/data/index.php>

\* Data gathered from Tennessee University Faculty Senates.

**Motion Passed 03/25/25**

**Vote: 31 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain**