

2021 PARs: Proposal for the FSEC

Proposal: The Faculty Senate recommends that Provost Urban place a hiatus on the PAR submission process in January 2021, and instead base 2021 faculty merit raises on the already completed January 2020 PARs (covering the three-year period 2017-2019).

In the next PAR submission cycle (January 2022), faculty members would submit PARs with information from the two years not yet included in PARs (2020 and 2021), and chairs would review both years, for a four-year total review period (2018-2021). PARs would resume their normal three-year review period in 2023 (2020-2022).

New faculty should either be given the option to complete a PAR in 2021 for their first few months at Lehigh, or be offered the average departmental merit raise.

Rationale: Faculty members have gone above and beyond this year in their efforts to support Lehigh's transition to mostly remote instruction; to maintain connections with students (many of whom are struggling either personally or academically); and to keep the academic side of the university running smoothly. They have done so despite the loss of merit raises and retirement benefits, while undertaking unpaid labor over the summer to prepare for the fall semester, and with the increased pressures of caretaking and other responsibilities at home. Asking faculty to complete a time-consuming review process when last year's review did not result in merit raises will further harm morale, and it will take valuable time that faculty could use to prepare for another semester of online teaching, to pursue their research projects, or to benefit their mental and physical well-being.

Since all of the documentation for us to receive our next merit raise is already in place, this approach would also reassure faculty that the university recognizes that past work and is committed to reinstating merit raises when fiscally possible. Such an approach would also help to alleviate anxiety about productivity in this unusual year, since their next evaluation would reflect a total of four years rather than three. It would also align with the university's acknowledgment, through the option of extending the tenure clock an additional year, that faculty productivity has been negatively affected by the pandemic.