

Kent State Success Pool Pays Out In Its First Year (11.13.09)

As a result of this year's successful incentive program, Kent State University will award to 819 continuing faculty members in the Tenured/Tenure Track collective bargaining unit a share of the Success Pool in recognition of their contributions to the university. These individuals will each receive \$2,855, before taxes, on Dec. 1, 2009.

Established as part of the 2008 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the university and AAUP-KSU's Tenured/Tenure Track collective bargaining unit, the Success Pool was designed to allow faculty to share in university success. The Success Pool provides faculty with annual bonuses based upon the university's ability to achieve certain goals. The three measures contributing to the Success Pool are funded research, student retention and funds raised in institutional development.

"We have taken a large step with faculty toward keeping the focus on our shared desire of enhancing faculty scholarship, advancing innovation and excellence in teaching, and improving the student experience," said Kent State President Lester A. Lefton. "While these types of awards are a common business practice in many industries, we are pioneering its use in higher education in order to provide our students with the highest quality education at an affordable cost.

"What we were able to achieve this year in terms of research grants, retention and fundraising, as well as our highest recorded enrollment in our university's 100-year history, is nothing short of remarkable," Lefton continued. "It took all of us coming together to attain these enormous results. We didn't just surpass our goals - we shattered them."

"I believe our members will be surprised, and I hope pleased, by their bonus," said Kara L. Robinson, Chapter President, AAUP-KSU. "I regard these bonuses as a sign that the university is doing well, but many others among our students and in our communities are not. The Association is encouraging our faculty who are receiving this larger than expected bonus to consider giving back, whether to the students by donating to one of KSU's scholarship funds or to the community by donating to a local charity of his or her choice. "

"The Success Pool demonstrates how the university's administration and faculty can work together to achieve mutual objectives in a responsible way," said Kent State Provost and Senior Vice President Robert Frank.

In the area of funded research, the goal was to reward faculty members for incremental increases exceeding \$2 million of the previous year's total research "grants and contracts" income. The university share amounts to 10 percent of the collected incremental amount for the Success Pool. External research funding grew to \$46 million from \$32.5 million in this contract year.

The student retention aspect of the Success Pool represents an amount equal to 40 percent of the incremental tuition revenue derived from an incremental increase in freshman retention rate based on the 15th day census data. In Fall 2008, Kent Campus first-year retention was at 68.3 percent; in Fall 2009, it was 73.5 percent, an increase of 5.2 percent.

The institutional development goal required an amount equaling a two percent incremental increase in fundraising over the previous year in order for faculty to achieve a share of the Success Pool. Despite a struggling economy, supporters committed more than \$37 million this past fiscal year, shattering the institution's previous fundraising record by nearly \$9 million.