

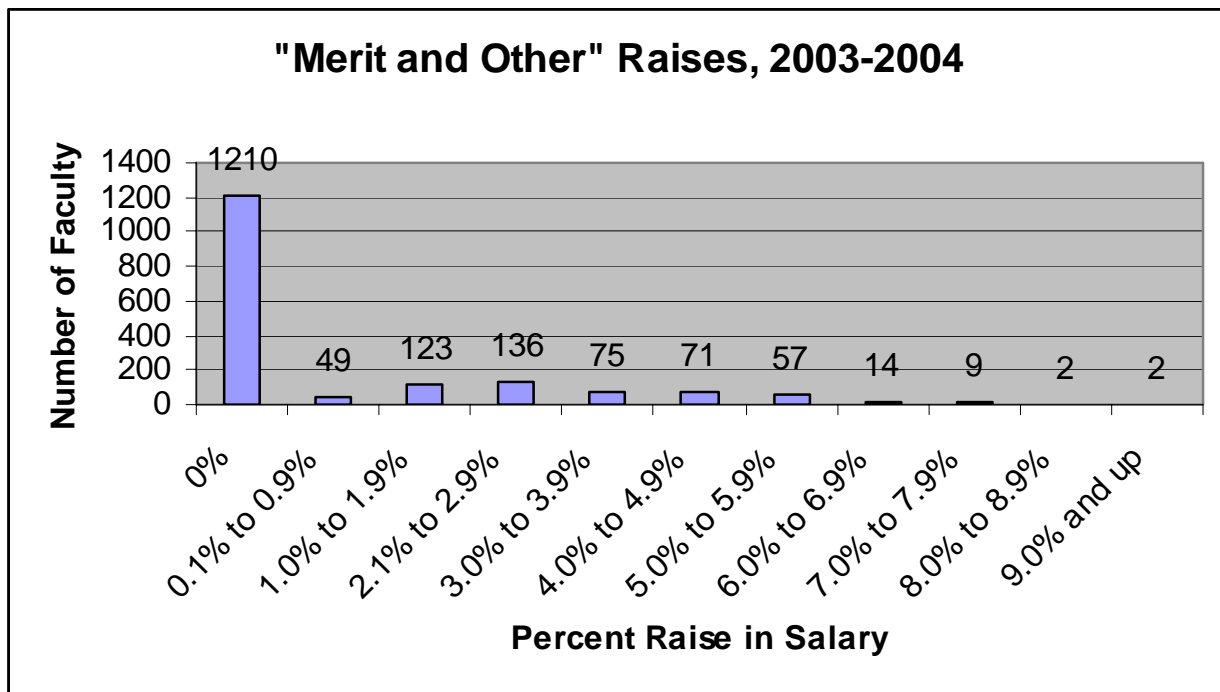
## AN OPEN LETTER ON “MERIT AND OTHER” RAISES FOR 2003-2004

May, 2004

Dear FSU Colleagues:

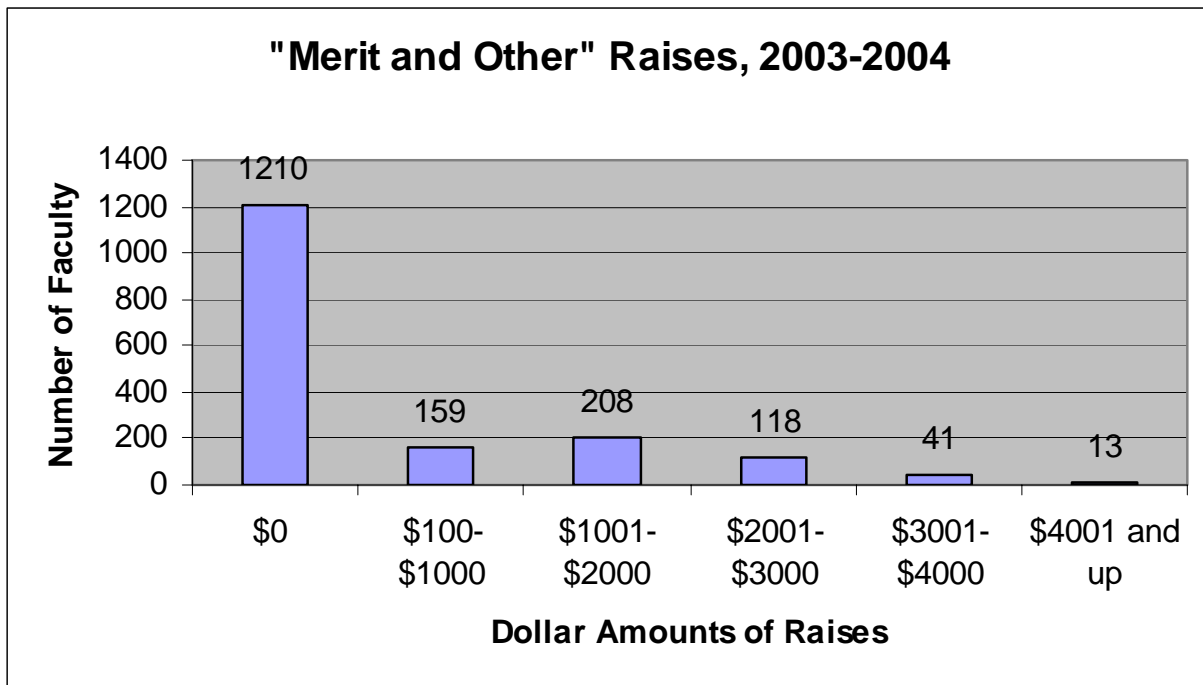
Many of our deserving colleagues received substantial raises, at least by FSU standards, in the recent round of “merit and other” salary increases announced by President Wetherell last fall and distributed during the spring 2004 semester. In fact, it appears that nine of eleven UFF-FSU Chapter Executive Council members, our Chapter’s official leadership, received these raises, and we’re proud of them. Did we mention that one Executive Council member was just awarded a named professorship? Way to go, BA Case! We’re also proud of another UFF-FSU member who just received a named professorship. Way to go, Mary Pohl!

Yet, despite our pride in the accomplishments of our leaders and members, and of FSU faculty in general, there’s still something about the process followed in distributing “merit and other” raises that stinks. The plan for awarding these raises was unilaterally and rather quietly implemented during spring semester. Failing to consult with the UFF, the bargaining agent duly selected by a 733 to 36 vote of FSU faculty last October, not only shows poor judgment, it’s against the law and contemptuous of shared governance.



The UFF is most certainly not opposed to rewarding meritorious performance. We are opposed to unilateral actions that fail to recognize the faculty’s choice for a bargaining representative. We are also opposed to a “merit and other” plan that presumes 80% of the faculty are not meritorious performers. See the [www.uff-fsu.org](http://www.uff-fsu.org) web site for a copy of the memo outlining the plan.

And how did the implementation go? Well, it varies. Some colleges/departments/schools (“units”) appear to have followed the seemingly cynical spirit of the unilateral plan, distributing relatively large raises to a relatively small number of faculty members. Others spread the money around, giving nearly everyone in their unit an increase. Raise amounts awarded to individuals ranged from under \$100 to over \$7500. In one college, all department chairs were given \$2500 raises, although one refused to accept it on principle. In one department in another college, the chair received \$3000, three faculty members received of \$1500 or more, and eight other faculty members got nothing. In another department in a third college, all eligible faculty members received a raise. Across FSU as a whole, there were 49 individuals awarded raises of less than 1% (not counting roughly 1210 individuals who received 0%), and 25 individuals were awarded raises over 6%.



Some units used existing faculty review committees or existing merit ratings for 2002-2003 to allocate the money. Some didn't. Some units considered salary compression, some considered only annual merit, some considered both. Some units used highly subjective assessments of “market value,” and some ... who knows? When all was said and done, according to FSU Administration sources, roughly 30% of the UFF-represented faculty received “merit and other” raises, averaging 3%. While this result could be called less cynical than the initial unilateral plan calling for 20% getting raises averaging 5%, there are still some serious problems with the way this was handled.

Aside from the Administration's blatant disregard for Florida law, which sends a terrible message to the world about FSU, there is a more fundamental issue of fairness. Perhaps you are in a unit that followed faculty-approved procedures for distributing these raises. Perhaps you are not. Whether or not you were treated fairly appears to be largely a matter of how closely your

Dean/Director followed the directives in the Administration's unilateral plan, and on other unknowns, since in many units the process by which the raises were awarded is still mysterious.

Whether you, or any individual, received a raise, and how much, is not the issue that concerns us. What does concern us is the unfairness and arbitrariness exhibited by the Administration when it acts unilaterally and in a manner that suggests some top Administrators think they are above the law and above consultation with the faculty. We said from the outset that we would not seek to have anyone's raise rescinded, and we will not. We have also said we reject as inherently mistaken any plan that presumes 80% of faculty members do not deserve merit increases. And of course, we reject any plan that does not involve negotiating with the duly chosen representative of the faculty and in accordance with Florida law.

What can we do about this? Create a stronger voice for faculty. If you're already a UFF member, get active. We need your help. If you're not a UFF member, join the UFF. Your support helps to strengthen the voice of faculty at the bargaining table, where we are currently negotiating your contract, including provisions for raises in 2004-2005, benefits, and a host of other issues including tenure, promotion, appointment, assignments of responsibilities, performance evaluation, nondiscrimination, etc. You've seen what the Administration does when it acts unilaterally. Support the faculty's voice, a voice for fairness. Join now.

Jack Fiorito, President  
UFF-FSU Chapter

P.S. If you're not already a UFF member, you can join UFF now and pay no dues until August. Download and complete the membership form (available at [www.uff-fsu.org](http://www.uff-fsu.org)). It's easy, and it's the right thing to do.