

## Merit Reality, part 2: Merit Distribution Within Colleges 2011

by Art Hochner

In TAUP's e-Bulletin of September 22, 2011, on "[Rewarding Faculty Work: The Reality of Merit Distribution at Temple University](#)", readers could see the overall distribution of merit by category, as well as by faculty appointment track. The graphs showed two clear patterns:

1. Two of every three merit units are awarded for research, while teaching and service each get one out of every six of the units, with service units greater than teaching ones, despite the primacy in the merit guidelines of both teaching and research over serviced; and
2. Four of every five merit units are awarded to tenure-track and tenured faculty, while nontenure-track faculty receive just one of every five, despite NTTs being 40 percent of the full-time faculty.

Are all colleges alike in these patterns? As you can see below, colleges and schools actually differ quite a bit in their decisions on merit pay. The pie charts represent the percentage distribution of each college in the TAUP bargaining unit for the units disbursed in spring 2011 (for the merit period of July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010). Here we focus on merit categories, which give plenty of data to chew on. Research awards vary from 38.1% to 87.5% of total awards in the various schools and colleges; teaching varies from 6.9% to 44.1%; and service ranges from 5.6% to 44.7%. Of course, about 90% of all NTTs (teaching/instructional; clinical educator; practice) are hired mainly to teach and often excluded from consideration for research merit awards.

A picture may be worth a thousand words; pie charts perhaps don't rate quite that many, though they raise many questions about the differing priorities of our schools and colleges. What accounts for the miniscule attention paid to teaching and service in CLA and CST? Do their standards differ that much from CHP, Education, Pharmacy, and SCT, where teaching was awarded at least one-quarter of the merit units?

What do we mean by outstanding performance in these three categories? Of course, disciplines differ in their standards. But these disparities call for discussion both within and across the entire faculty. I'll end my comments here, let the pictures tell the story and urge us to come to a better consensus on what merit pay represents and the uses to which it is put.



