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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: VSoE Faculty, Department Managers and Coordinators
FROM: Maja Mataric', Senior Associate Dean for Research
DATE: December 5, 2006 – Revised December 8, 2006
SUBJECT: Salary Guidelines for Postdoctoral Research Staff

In response to the new State of California minimum salary requirements, Department of Labor prevailing wage guidelines, and best practices of universities in our cohort, the Viterbi School of Engineering is establishing the following minimum salary guidelines for junior-level postdoctoral research staff (Postdoctoral Research Associates and Research Associates) effective immediately. The salary matrix below reflects the minimum salary levels that will be approved for newly appointed research staff.

The matrix takes into account the PhD degree date and years of experience. The current National Institute for Health postdoctoral scholar salary minimums are shown for comparison. Starting salaries for more experienced Senior Research Associate and Research Scientists should be substantially higher due to the increased years of experience.

Research Experience Years Completed	NIH Minimums as of 1/6/2006	VSoE Minimum Annual Pay effective 11/1/2006
0 (<1)	\$36,996	\$38,000
1	\$38,976	\$39,984
2	\$41,796	\$43,183
3	\$43,428	\$45,342
4	\$45,048	\$47,605
5	\$46,992	----
6	\$48,852	----
7 or more	\$51,036	----

It is expected that the few existing postdoctoral research staff whose salaries fall below the above guidelines will have their salaries increased to the minimum amount over the next few fiscal cycles. This will allow time for the sponsoring principal investigator(s) to work with research contract and grant funding cycles.

For reference, the State of California has a minimum salary requirement for exempt employees. Beginning next year, the State minimum salary will increase in two stages with the minimum salary becoming \$31,200 effective January 1, 2007, and increasing to \$33,280 on January 1, 2008. The VSoE salary minimum in the matrix above is higher reflecting the education level of our postdoctoral research staff as well as the cost of living in our region.

In addition to the above, research staff candidates who require sponsorship for a visa are also subject to the federal Department of Labor (DOL) "prevailing wage" rules. The federal government requires that visa applicants earn a certain wage based on the government's industry information. This "prevailing wage" is higher than the VSoE minimum wage levels shown in the matrix and varies by specialty area (civil, biomedical, etc). If you have a postdoctoral staff candidate who requires visa sponsorship, I strongly advise you to work with USC's Office of International Services before making a salary offer in order to comply with DOL prevailing wage requirements.

New appointment and re-appointment requests for research staff should be directed to the VSoE Human Resources Director, Marilee Reynolds, who is authorized to approve appointments and re-appointments on my behalf, based on the above minimum salary matrix.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.