May 28, 2008

Dear FAS Faculty Member:

I have received many questions about the changes in the summer salary policy announced last week. Let me begin by reiterating the reason for the change. Federal audit activities at higher education institutions across the country indicate that federal officials are enforcing new regulatory standards for the payment of faculty summer salary. Our new policy is intended to comply with these new regulatory standards while also providing flexibility for faculty who receive supplemental salary from grants. Our new policy (unlike the previous one) limits the amount of effort that can be charged to grants during the summer months to less than 100% so that faculty have the time to engage in activities that should not be charged to grants, including proposal writing, course preparation, writing letters of recommendation, committee work, and vacation. The new policy also recognizes that faculty with grant support devote time to these projects during the academic year, and it thus distributes during the academic year the part of any requests for supplemental salary from sponsored sources that exceed the summertime cap.

The new policy goes into effect beginning July 1, 2008. Faculty members are asked to make requests for summer salary for June 2008 as they have in the past; they may request a full ninth from federal (or non-federal) sources. For fiscal year 2009 (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009), faculty members have been asked to identify the number of ninths (not exceeding a total of three) to be paid from external and Harvard funds. Although the first form sent out did not ask faculty to specify any details about how they would like these ninths distributed across the fiscal year, further discussion has shown that the new policy better supports our faculty if we separate the number of ninths requested in the first half of FY09 from those requested in the second half of FY09. A new request will soon appear in your mailboxes.

In general, the new policy reflects three major changes: requests for supplemental salary will align with our fiscal year; supplemental salary from sponsored sources paid during the summer will be limited to a maximum of .5 ninths in June and .75 ninths in each of July and August; and for supplemental salary requests from sponsored sources of more than 2 ninths, the ninths above 2 will be paid during the academic year.

I realize that implementing a new policy while we are still receiving feedback from the faculty is less than an ideal approach, but the new federal audit practices leave us little choice. I am also attaching a document that answers a number of Frequently Asked Questions, which I hope you will find helpful. If after reading this document you have further questions, please contact Michael Jackson (5-1526, mjackson@fas) or Alan Long (6-2491, aklong@fas). If you’re in SEAS, please contact Harry Dumay (6-3075, dumay@seas) or Martha Mooney (5-5861, mooney@seas). We will have more time to discuss this new policy when the fall semester begins.

Sincerely yours,

Michael D. Smith
Dean of the Faculty

TELEPHONE: (617) 495-1566 FAX: (617) 495-8208