To: Dr. Kim Wilcox, Provost

From: Michael Rich, ASAC Chair 2010-2011

Date: 7 April 2011

Re: Salary Pool Recommendation for Academic Specialists

MSU’s 650+ Academic Specialists are actively engaged in unison with the faculty in fulfilling the University’s mission of providing an educational foundation to prepare students to contribute globally as engaged leaders; conducting research to expand human understanding on local and global issues; and advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development to lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities. The skills of Academic Specialists are practiced in over 100 offices and departments distributed across the major academic units here at home as well as abroad. It can be reasoned that Academic Specialists are involved in every aspect of the University’s academic efforts in teaching, advising, research, and outreach -- and have been doing so for over 50 years at Michigan State University.

The Academic Specialist Advisory Committee is the collective voice of Academic Specialists in the academic governance system, offering advice and recommendations to the Administration on issues of importance to Specialists, including annual salary adjustments. ASAC does not enjoy the same level of resources as faculty committees such as UCFA, and because of this, ASAC has historically reviewed the UCFA recommendations for annual market and merit salary adjustments. The alignment of Academic Specialists with faculty stems from the similarity and overlapping functions of the two groups. With this in mind, ASAC has reviewed the memorandum from UCFA for faculty salary adjustments for the next fiscal year.

The UCFA memorandum from Chair Dr. Moriarty notes the loss of benefits and compensation to faculty, which extends to Academic Specialists, during this era of financial challenges:

- for new hires as of July 2010, elimination of funded post retirement health care coverage
- for new hires as of July 2005, elimination of funded post retirement health care coverage for spouses
- for all faculty, as of July 2002, initiation of health care premium sharing
- the substantial increase in additional premiums for Community Blue coverage announced in March 2011.

In addition to the above changes, Professional Development Funds for Academic Specialists were dissolved in 2010. The loss of these benefits and compensation are more burdensome for Academic Specialists which as a group have substantially lower salary levels then faculty.
ASAC has reviewed the UCFA recommendations for salary adjustments for the upcoming fiscal year 2011-2012 and endorses the proposed 2% increase for the merit pool and 1% increase to market adjustment pool. When faculty and Academic Specialists receive the same percentage increments, the disparity in salaries between faculty and Specialists grows ever larger. In these difficult budgetary times, the community of Academic Specialists believes that the 2% and 1% increases is in keeping with the budgetary constraints facing the University while simultaneously moving MSU to a slightly improved position among the Big 10 Universities for mean faculty compensation. ASAC recommends that these adjustments be granted to Academic Specialists as well as to faculty.