Full-Time Faculty Salaries Barely Outpace Inflation for Third Consecutive Year

On average, salaries for full-time faculty members at US colleges and universities are 2 percent higher in 2018-19 than they were in the preceding academic year. But with prices in the economy as a whole growing by 1.9 percent during the year, faculty salaries barely budged when adjusted for inflation. This is the third successive year that increases in average full-time faculty salaries have barely outpaced inflation.

These are among the results of the annual Faculty Compensation Survey conducted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The AAUP collected data from more than 950 colleges and universities across the US, including community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and major research universities. The 2018-19 data cover more than 380,000 full-time faculty members, and also include salaries for senior administrators and pay for part-time faculty members.

Click here for the 2018-19 Faculty Compensation Survey Results, including 15 summary tables which allow for comparisons among different categories of colleges and universities, as well as three institution-specific appendices that provide average pay and benefits data for each participating institution. The AAUP is also collaborating with Inside Higher Ed to provide access to AAUP data through a searchable online interface.

More highlights of the data released today include the following:

- Salaries for women full-time faculty members continue to lag behind those paid to men. On average, women were paid 81.6 percent of the salaries of men during academic year 2018-19. The differences are attributable primarily to an unequal distribution of employment between men and women in terms of institution type and faculty rank. The AAUP will be exploring these differences in greater detail in a report to be released in May. [Survey Report Tables 3 and 9]
- Full-time faculty salaries vary by the type of institution as well as by faculty rank. For example, the average salary for a full professor at a private-independent doctoral university is nearly $196,000, while an assistant professor at a religiously affiliated baccalaureate college is paid about $61,000, on average. [Survey Report Table 1]
- The increase in overall average full-time salary was slightly higher at private colleges and universities (2.2 percent) than public institutions (1.8 percent). [Survey Report Table 1 comparison with 2017-18, not in published tables]
- Across all responding institutions, the average pay for a part-time faculty member teaching a three-credit course was $3,894—but the pay rates spanned a huge range. The lowest average rates of pay were reported by religiously affiliated private baccalaureate colleges, at $2,925,
while private religiously affiliated doctoral universities paid the highest rates, $5,858 on average.

- Salaries for college and university presidents continue to outpace those for faculty, with presidents paid three to four times the salary of even the most senior faculty members at their institutions, on average [Survey Report Table 11]. The median salary for a college president in 2018-19 ranged from just over $200,000 at public community colleges to nearly $700,000 at private-independent doctoral universities [Survey Report Table 10].

Since 2015-16, the annual AAUP compensation report has included data on part-time faculty pay. This year’s survey represents a new approach to collecting and publishing those data, by focusing on pay rates for part-time faculty members teaching a standard course section. More than 330 colleges and universities provided data on part-time faculty pay in the 2017-18 academic year for this year’s survey, making it the largest source for these data. The part-time pay data are summarized in one table (Survey Report Table 14) and in an institution-specific Appendix III—new this year—that lists minimum, maximum, and average pay rates per course section. Collecting part-time faculty pay data is challenging, and the data released today undoubtedly include some errors, despite a rigorous validation process as part of the survey. The publication of the new Appendix III represents an important step forward in revealing the substandard pay and working conditions for these faculty colleagues.