# Faculty Salaries: 1969–70 Year May Have Ended an Era for Academe

For higher education, the 1969–70 academic year seems to have marked a transition to uncertainty from a decade which, by and large, was a favorable time for faculty pay and status and for institutional autonomy.

Increases in faculty pay last year on the average barely outpaced the rise in living costs, and many state-financed colleges and universities found their patrons in the state legislatures determined to exercise closer control.

A combination of factors appears to have brought about the change. Public reaction against campus disturbances doubtless contributed. But the deepening financial plight of many colleges and universities and the drastic tightening of the academic job market which occurred last year appear traceable mainly to the pressure of rapid inflation occurring after a period of very rapid expansion in higher education and to the drastic cutback in federal expenditures.

The trend in faculty compensation is the most readily documented. The annual survey of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) on the economic status of the profession, although sometimes criticized on technical grounds, is the standard reference on the subject. The report for the 1969–70 academic year published in the summer issue of the *AAUP Bulletin* puts the advance in faculty compensation (9-month salary plus fringe benefits) for all ranks in both public and private institutions at 7.1 percent last year. Since the rise in the consumer price index reached 5.4 percent, according to government figures, the increase in the faculty's real purchasing power was less than 2 percent (see Fig. 1).

This is the smallest advance in purchasing power in the decade and the first time in that period that the increase has fallen below 3 percent. The same pattern applies when salary alone is taken into account. The total advance in 9-month salaries was 6.6 percent and the real increase in purchasing power about 1.1 percent.

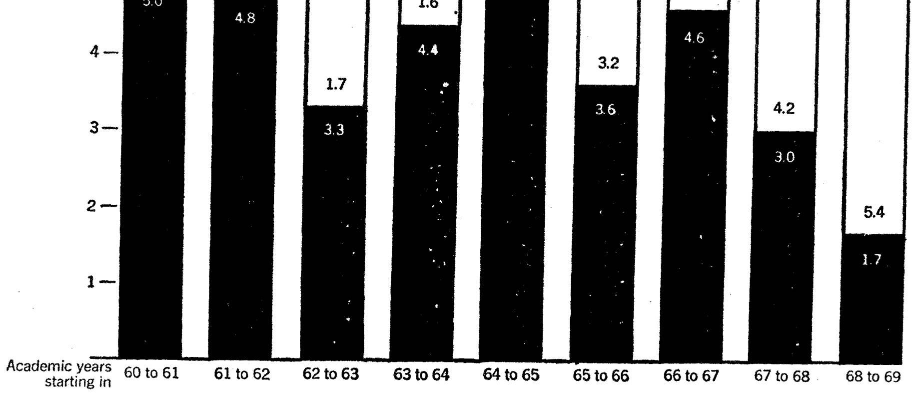


Fig. 1. Growth rates of faculty compensation, all ranks combined. *CPI*, Consumer Price Index. [From *AAUP Bulletin*, Summer 1970]

The AAUP survey data are obtained from college and university administration sources. The information is incomplete in the sense that it does not indicate faculty earnings from sources such as consulting, summer teaching, or summer salaries paid through research grants. The AAUP has until now made no effort to collect data on income beyond the regular salary since that would involve the difficult task of gathering data from individuals. And no other group that does general studies on faculty pay attempts to gather information on trends in total earnings by faculty.

For scientists and engineers in particular, earnings above regular salary represent a very significant portion of income, of course, but there seem to be no hard data to support the impressions expressed by some observers that cuts in federal research funding and tightening up by industry on consultantships have substantially reduced these extra-salary earnings.

### An Upward Trend

There are some obvious objections to the practice of computing salary figures on the basis of data drawn across the board from institutions large and small, public and private, rich and poor. But the gross features lend perspective. A recently released survey, *Salaries in Higher Education, 1969–70,* by the research division of the National Education Association estimated that the median salary paid professors in the reporting institutions rose from $10,256 in the 1961–62 academic year to $16,799 last year; the median for associate professors went from $8,167 to $12,985 in the same period; and, for assistant professors, from $6,900 to $10,698.

This year's AAUP report focuses on the public institutions of higher education, which enroll an estimated 70 percent of students in colleges and universities and employ about 60 percent of the faculty. According to the AAUP figures, salaries in public institutions showed the sharpest deceleration, with the increase in real purchasing power cut to less than 1 percent last year compared, for example, with a gain of 5 percent in 1964–65.

Public colleges and universities during the past decade not only expanded their enrollments spectacularly but have managed at the same time to reduce the once sizable differential between salaries paid faculty in private and public institutions. The AAUP study shows that between 1963 and 1969, for instance, salaries in public colleges and emerging universities overtook faculty salaries paid by their private counterparts in every rank except professor, where the average annual salary of $18,000 was barely shy of the figure for private institutions.

In the category of universities, which includes the best private and state universities, a number of public institutions have more than matched salary increases by the private high-prestige institutions and have closed the gap. Overall, however, the private universities have maintained their edge (see Fig. 2).

The top of the AAUP listing of how institutions rank in average compensation for all academic ranks illustrates the pattern.

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| New School for Social Research | $22,175 |
| Harvard University | 21,100 |
| City University of New York (CUNY), Hunter College | 20,937 |
| CUNY, City College | 20,918 |
| CUNY, Bernard M. Baruch College | 20,700 |
| CUNY, Brooklyn College | 20,508 |
| Caltech | 20,410 |
| CUNY, Queens College | 19,817 |
| University of Chicago | 19,639 |
| Claremont Graduate School and University Center | 19,467 |
| Yale University | 19,458 |
| Stanford University | 19,320 |
| CUNY, Herbert H. Lehman College | 19,265 |
| Johns Hopkins University | 19,111 |
| M.I.T. | 18,896 |
| CUNY, Jay College of Criminal Justice | 18,820 |
| Northwestern University | 18,767 |
| CUNY, New York City Community College | 18,349 |
| Columbia University | 18,321 |
| Cornell University | 18,140 |

The AAUP report said their data suggest that public universities "are running into problems very similar to those experienced by their private counterparts." The major common factor was the budget cutback by the state legislature, a phenomenon so widespread last year as to appear endemic.

In its recent session, for example, the California state legislature voted a $330 million budget for the university system, a figure virtually unchanged from the previous year. In the face of rising costs and rising enrollment, a standstill budget represents a substantial cutback. As for the construction budget, a request for $83 million was answered with a $2.8 million authorization. To put a finer point on its action on higher education, the legislature specifically excluded faculty in the state-university and college systems from receiving a 5 percent pay increase voted for other state employees.

In a number of other states, it has been assumed that state legislatures took budgetary sanctions against public colleges and universities as a direct result of public resentment of campus disruptions. In Michigan, for example, the legislature departed from a long-observed laissez-faire policy on academic affairs by laying down guidelines requiring university faculty to log 10 "classroom contact hours" a term. The requirement is apparently being applied in a way that the faculty regards as reasonable. Different types of instruction qualify. For example, a faculty member's conference with a student could be counted as classroom contact. The restriction seems to have been more of a warning than a punishment, and legislators may talk a lot about retribution for campus violence, but most still distinguish irritation from intervention. But clearly that restraint is eroding.

If the legislatures' actions so far seem less inspired by social vindictiveness than by economic stresses, the effects on the universities' traditional prerogatives of self-determination are still substantial. The preface to a yearly report on state appropriations for operating expenses of higher education put out by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges relates a number of instances where austerity funding has not only curbed salary increases but has caused

## From AAUP's Status Survey

"Obviously, an immediate source of the current difficulties besetting public higher education is the cutback in spending by state and local governments. It is all too easy to attribute this development to backlash—to legislative resentment of student unrest and manifestations of radicalism on campus. No doubt these manifestations made the cutbacks easier, but there is another source underlying this change. If political developments on campus were the only reason for budgetary restrictions, one might more easily be led to hope that they will prove fairly temporary. However, economic pressures that have contributed to the funding restrictions are, unfortunately, likely to be with us for a long time to come.

"The problem is that state and city governments themselves have been subject to budgetary pressures that have mounted cumulatively. Their trouble lies in the relative inelasticity of their revenues, the lack of new revenue sources, and the very rapid growth in their costs. The cost structure of the services provided by state and local governments is very similar to that of the colleges and universities. Indeed, in the case of elementary education, one of the largest single items in their overall budgets, the analogy is perfectly obvious. But welfare, police and fire protection, and library services are also services in which the productivity of labor is not easily increased. As a result, as wages in these activities move along with those in the rest of the economy (though perhaps not as rapidly) the costs of the public services rise at a greater rate than costs in the economy generally because of the absence of productivity offsets. . . .

"State and municipal governments are, however, extremely reluctant to raise taxes sufficiently to keep abreast of their rapidly growing costs. There is no reason to expect this problem to be a temporary phenomenon—to expect local revenues to expand more rapidly or costs more slowly than heretofore. Unless it is made clear to legislatures and administrations that the general public and the community of higher education are not prepared to acquiesce in a progressive deterioration in educational standards, it will be all too easy for the public colleges and universities to become the victim of these fiscal trends."

*AAUP Bulletin*, Summer 1970

institutions to restrict faculty hiring, raise student tuition and fees to an extent that some feel threatens the traditional low-tuition principle of public higher education, and to forego putting new programs into operation.

In almost every state with a sizable university system, decisions on higher education policy, which formerly were settled within the major universities, are now made by state governments. In Indiana, for example, development funds are being channeled into the new regional campuses of the university. As a result, Indiana University and Purdue face a virtual freeze on faculty appointments, and the only major construction activity on these campuses is on projects with outside funding like the federally financed accelerator and a new opera theater at Indiana University.

The established state universities, which were accustomed to dominating higher education in their states and to occupying positions of strength in dealing with the state legislatures, now find themselves competing for funds with other state colleges and universities that can often make stronger claims on the public purse. And probably more significant, a heavy demand is being placed on state revenues to finance other state services. State expenditures on public schools are rising rapidly, and most states this year are under particularly heavy pressure to increase their funding of welfare and unemployment compensation programs because of the effects of inflation and unemployment.

### Year of the Crunch

Although the past academic year was the year of the crunch for higher education as a whole, the trends had been discernible for at least a year or two. And, just as in the case of the squeeze on federal support of scientific research and education, there will be a lag before the full effects are felt. The impact of legislatures' actions on faculty pay and hiring, for example, is only now hitting the public colleges and universities. Partly for this reason, faculty reactions cannot be said to have been dramatic.

The heaviest shock so far has been borne by finishing graduate students aspiring to academic careers and by young faculty members. Junior science faculty for several years have been experiencing difficulties in finding support for their own research projects. Now, with conditions in the academic mar-

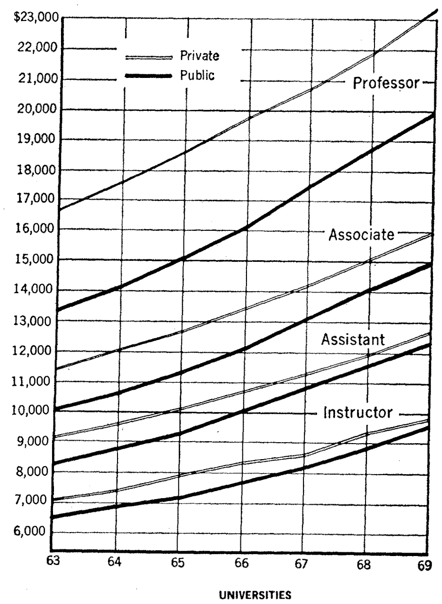


Fig. 2.

ketplace drastically altered, faculty aspirants in most disciplines find that competition for university posts is savage and that most openings are at regional campuses or community colleges where prospects for research are dim. More senior faculty are finding that their bargaining power to win new programs, equipment, or facilities is curtailed and that their job mobility has been reduced.

Faculty discontent increases the possibility that academics will turn to collective bargaining. Even before inflation gained momentum and the legislatures began to tighten their grip, there was a noticeable pickup in collective bargaining activity in higher education. Most of the organizing took place, however, in public 2-year colleges and in 4-year institutions that had evolved from state teacher training institutions. Most of the new community colleges are financed at the local level and must compete with other local education services for funds. School boards or locally appointed trustees oversee these new institutions, and relations between faculty and employers tend increasingly to follow the collective bargaining pattern developed in the public schools.

In universities and 4-year colleges, public and private, a relatively small number of bargaining contracts have been concluded with faculties. But there are some developments, including changes in labor laws, which indicate organizing activity will increase.

The opening wedge in the universities may well prove to be collective bargaining contracts with teaching assistants. A contract with TA's was concluded at Wisconsin last spring (*Science*, 17 April) and the signing of one at Michigan is said to be imminent. Union activity has generally been rejected by university and college faculty, but their attitude could certainly be altered by unfavorable changes in economic status or professional prerogatives.

Some academics with long memories are already harking back to the period before World War II when professors subsidized higher education with low salaries. The events of the last year hardly herald a return to those threadbare days. The academics, for example, have experienced nothing like the reversal that has struck sizable numbers of scientists and engineers in the aerospace and defense industries. But there is no doubt that there has been a change in the conditions that made higher education one of the most buoyant of the postwar growth industries.

### Public Attitudes

Public attitudes particularly affect public institutions, and the AAUP report includes the following bit of realpolitik.

"It has always been recognized that the weakest element in the economics of public higher education in the United States was the vulnerability of state institutions to changes in political climate at the state capitals. However, the simultaneous tightening of budgets throughout the nation constitutes a threat of an entirely different order of magnitude. It means the educational system in one state can no longer depend on competition from other states to keep up the levels of its scholarship assistance, its faculty compensation and its overall budget. When all states act together they can manage to reduce the flow of resources to higher education far more effectively than can be done by the sporadic action of individual legislatures."

Disenchantment with higher education should not be overdrawn. But it is probably true that the average affluent professor of the 1960's is likely to see some narrowing of his spacious horizon. And the AAUP report is probably on target in suggesting that it is time to reexamine the assumption that public institutions of higher education were likely to escape the economic problems visited on private colleges and universities because public colleges and universities have a special claim on the public purse.—JOHN WALSH