

Comparison of Union vs. Non-Union Washington Public Higher Education Faculty Salary Increases

Executive Summary

- Comparatively lower salaries make recruitment and retention a challenge at the UW.
- Unionized faculty at Washington's four-year universities have consistently won better base-rate and merit raises than UW's non-union faculty.
- Promotion raises for unionized tenure and non-tenured faculty is generally better than at UW.
- Unionized faculty have negotiated salary compression payments to compensate for losses from the Great Recession. UW still has no official compression adjustment system.
- Unlike the UW Faculty Code, union-negotiated raises cannot be overruled by the administration.

Comparatively Lower Salaries Make Recruitment and Retention a Challenge at the UW
Many UW departments face challenges in recruiting and retaining top-tier faculty due to uncompetitive salaries compared to peer research universities.

As of 2013, “the average salary of UW professors (all ranks combined) was lower than all but one of the top ten public research universities with medical schools.”¹ The average, across-the-board UW salary would need to increase almost 12% to reach parity with peer institutions. The average full UW professor salary would need to increase 16%.²

One response to uncompetitive salaries has been to resort to outside offers and retention packages, but this individualized approach can have an unbalancing impact on department budgets and increase inequality among colleagues.

There is a better way with a proven track record – collective bargaining. Regional four-year universities in Washington State have stronger track records on raises, promotion increases and salary compression management. Not coincidentally, they all have faculty unions. While UW, as a research-intensive university, has generally higher salaries than public regional universities and colleges in the state, our history of weak salary growth means that UW lags behind comparable research institutions. Our Washington state peers, even though they are regional and undergraduate institutions, have shown that collective bargaining can be effective in addressing salary compression.

Unionized Faculty Achieve Better Salary Increases

Since unionizing in the mid-2000s, unionized faculty at Washington's four-year universities have won better base-rate and merit increases than faculty at the University of Washington. In 2008, Western Washington University won raises of 10.5% in their first union contract.³ WWU salaries have gone up close to 30% since then.

¹ See Washington Futures Report at http://www.washington.edu/provost/files/2013/08/WAFUTURES_082813.pdf

² See # 13

³ See <https://www.wvu.edu/upb/FactsandComparisons/salinchist/facsalhist.pdf>

For 2015 alone, faculty at the unionized Washington State schools are receiving greater total raises than at UW. At Western, raises are potentially up to 7.25% per year for meritorious faculty.⁴ At Central, they are potentially up to 9% per year.⁵ At UW, they are up to 4%.⁶ Promotion for tenured and non-tenured faculty is also generally better at other schools, with both tenured and non-tenured faculty at WWU getting 10% between steps.⁷

2015-16 UW Faculty Raises vs. Raises at Unionized Washington 4-Year Schools						
School	Year	Base Rate Increase	Merit Increase	Equity / Compression	Tenure Promotion	Non-Tenure Promotion
WWU	2015-16	3.75%	3% at tenure review	0.50%	10%	10%
CWU	2015-16	4%	3-5%	NA	10%	5%
EWU	2015-16	2%	UP TO \$2,550 Per metric	100% of CUPA Mean	7.5-10%	5%
UW	2015-16	2%	1%	NA	7.50%	7.50%

Source: Collective Bargaining Agreements and University of Washington Office of Planning and Budgeting (OPB)

Unionized Faculty Emerged More Quickly From the Recession

Most Washington universities experienced their best post-recession raises in the 2012-13 or 2013-14 academic year. Faculty at the unionized schools negotiated salary compression payments in those years (among others) to compensate for recession losses. In 2012, WWU had raises up to 8.25% for some faculty,⁸ and CWU had up to 10%.⁹ EWU went through a market readjustment, committing to getting faculty to 90% of the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) mean by 2013-14 and 100% by 2014-15.¹⁰ Some faculty received raises of up to \$20,000. UW still has no official compression management system.

The Best Post-Recession Base Rate and Merit-Based Faculty Raises at UW vs. Unionized WA 4-Year Schools

⁴ See <http://www.ufww.org/> for pending 2015-18 agreement and previous agreements

⁵ See https://www.cwu.edu/hr/sites/cts.cwu.edu.hr/files/documents/CWU-UFC_Agreement_9-1-13-8-31-17.pdf

⁶ See <https://opb.washington.edu/sites/default/files/opb/Budget/2015-16SalaryAdjustments.pdf>

⁷ See <http://www.ufww.org/> for pending 2015-18 agreement and previous agreements

⁸ See <http://www.ufww.org/aaaafww/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Collective-Bargaining-Agreement-2012-2015-2-2-13-S8-MOU.pdf>

⁹ See https://www.cwu.edu/hr/sites/cts.cwu.edu.hr/files/documents/CWU-UFC_Agreement_9-1-13-8-31-17.pdf

¹⁰ See http://access.ewu.edu/Documents/HRRR/Labor%20Relations/EWU-UFE_Agreement_2013-2016.pdf

School	Year Given	Base Rate Increase	Merit Increase	Compression / Equity
WWU	2012-13	5.25%	3% at tenure review	.75%-1% per year, over contract
CWU	2013-14	5%	3-5%	Based on committee, large pool
EWU	2013-14	2%	Potentially up to \$10,000	Market adjustment, to 90% of CUPA mean
UW	2013-14	2%	2%	None, although merit increase often used

Source: Collective Bargaining Agreements and University of Washington Office of Planning and Budgeting (OPB)

During the Great Recession, faculty with collective bargaining agreements not only won state funding for their union contracts, but also negotiated equity and compression payments to compensate for recession-induced losses. Most gave up base-wage raises, but kept merit pay. This came at a time when UW faculty faced four years of wage freezes. Throughout this period, departments at each school also maintained their ability to offer market rates in their fields.

UW Compared to Unionized WA 4-Year Schools During the Recession			
School	Examples of Recession raises	Makeup for Recession Losses / Compression	Years Makeup for Compression Given
WWU	10.5% in 2008, 3% at tenure review every year	.75-1% per year, every year	2012-15
CWU	\$1,500-\$3,500 per person in 2009-2012	By joint faculty / management committee	2011-12
EWU	Potentially up to \$10,000 by merit	Market adjustment, to 90% of CUPA mean	2013-15
UW	None	None	None

Source: Collective Bargaining Agreements and University of Washington Office of Planning and Budgeting (OPB)

Union-negotiated raises cannot be overruled by the administration

The current UW faculty code is technically legally binding, but it also has a number of weaknesses, not the least of which being that it is written in a way that allows the administration to freeze faculty wages (see [Storti v UW](#)). By comparison, a legally-binding union contract cannot be revised by management without collective bargaining between the parties.