

The Facts about Faculty and Spending at UVM

In its November 17 press release, UVM's administration vaguely and ominously claimed that any faculty salary increases beyond what they are proposing would lead to tuition hikes and "significant cuts to academic units and programs." This is short sighted nonsense. UVM has the money. Bottom line: the administration's salary proposal would provide trivial short-term savings, while hurting the long-term quality, reputation, and value of UVM.

At risk is UVM's standing in comparison with peer institutions and ability to attract and retain quality faculty. The administration's last offer does worse than tread water, threatening some faculty with sub-inflation raises, and could damage our university's capacity to draw and retain tuition-paying students and quality faculty over time, threatening its overall fiscal sustainability. This is not hyperbole: UVM in the 1990s, faced a "spiral of decline" in the context of flat wages, administrative misspending, and declining enrollments.

United Academics, formed in the early 2000s to reverse the spiral of decline, is dedicated to maintaining the quality of teaching and research at UVM, ensuring that UVM remains valuable to students and the larger community. Our proposal is fiscally sustainable and safeguards quality.

How much is really at stake? Faculty salaries in context

During the process of mediation, it looked like the distance between both sides might be less than a one percent salary increase. Our estimate of the cost of a one percent raise is about \$600,000. With 44.2% fringe added, that comes to \$853,200, similar to the administration's estimate of \$900,000. Whatever number you use, it is not a significant expense in the context of UVM's general fund revenue budget of \$350 million.

Compare \$853,200 to any of the following pursuits which UVM's administration has chosen to spend money:

- \$1.6 million on a branding consultant
- [\\$3 million](#) on an attention-grabbing but not essential enclosed bridge between the library and a student dorm
- the \$6 million strategic investment fund available to the Provost for discretionary special projects
- the \$10 million the administration is expecting to spend on a new basketball stadium
- the \$1 million annual cost of salary and fringe for three Vice Presidents

These are all discretionary expenses whose necessity is hardly iron clad, and they are just a few of the many expenses the University could take a look at before raising tuition and reducing faculty. Although the administration pleads that that \$1.6 million for a branding consultant or the \$6 million strategic investment fund are “one time” funds that should not be applied to ongoing expenses like faculty pay, in most cases those funds come from the same sources – largely tuition – that faculty pay comes from.

Quality teaching and research are the university’s primary mission. The administration can easily find the very modest amount necessary to support this mission.

The “deficit” in the College of Arts and Sciences is a policy choice: regarding the IBB budget model

Budget models do not make cuts, administrators do. The fiduciary responsibility for UVM’s budget rests with President Tom Sullivan and the Board of Trustees. If one college is forced to reduce faculty while others are hiring, that is because central administration has chosen to make it that way. In the long view, the administration’s claim that the “ultimate budget decisions and priorities are made at the individual local budget unit” is simply disingenuous.

This is not an abstract point. The hand of central administration is visible throughout the details of what they call their “decentralized” budget model, Incentive Based Budgeting, or IBB. To take just one of many examples, under IBB the College of Arts and Sciences gets less money per student than any of the other colleges. (Page four of the IBB manual assigns revenues to colleges by different multipliers: CALS: 1.10x per student; CAS: 1.00x; CEMS: 1.10x; CESS: 1.10x; CNHS: 1.30x; GSB: 1.10x; RSENR: 1.20x; CoM: 1.30x.) Given the thousands of students enrolled in CAS any given semester, this makes quite a difference in funding. Maybe it’s a good idea to do it that way, maybe not, but in any case, those multipliers represent a policy choice on the part of Provost Rosowsky and President Sullivan. The \$6 million subvention fund is another example, a case where tuition funds flow directly into the hands of Provost Rosowsky instead of the colleges. Claiming that “all tuition revenue flows directly to the academic units” is worse than an oversimplification.

The administration has the power to change the situation. Legally, President Sullivan has the power to reallocate funds tomorrow. During the development of the IBB model, central administration regularly promised that the model would not be not fixed in stone, that the model could and would be adjusted as needs arose. Discussions are underway for revisions of IBB for the coming year. The contract with UA will last years beyond whatever changes are made now.

When the administration claims, therefore, that CAS “is already facing a projected budget shortfall of between \$3.7 million and \$4 million this fiscal year,” and implies that a competitive salary increase might worsen the situation, they are engaging in a sleight of hand where their own short term policy choices are presented as if they were the product of some invisible force.

If the College of Arts and Sciences faces cuts, it is because Tom Sullivan is making them necessary. The contract with faculty has nothing to do with it.

United Academics supports faculty and students in all colleges. It does not try to dictate specific policy choices beyond advocating that faculty as a whole play a significant role in making those choices. Perhaps it is a good idea to downsize the liberal arts at UVM, perhaps it is not. But it is a policy choice, not an act of nature, and reasonable raises for faculty, in the larger picture, have no substantial direct impact on it. The administration is stalling on salary because they can, not because they have to.

How UVM Faculty Salaries compare

Thanks to the formation of United Academics in 2001, UVM average faculty salaries have risen from where they had fallen to in the previous decade -- the bottom quintile of public research universities -- to somewhere closer to the middle. The administration's salary proposals threaten to reverse the trend, pushing UVM down in national averages, hurting our national standing, our ability to hire and retain excellent faculty, and risk putting us on a path towards declining reputation and declining enrollments.

No serious analysis of the place of UVM's wage structure can rely on a single point of comparison. Using the AAUP's database of average salaries in the Doctoral 1 category, between 2004 and 2011, UVM's average salaries rose from 84% of average in 2004, to 95% of average in 2011, and fell to 92% in 2016. UVM's own [2017 Sourcebook](#) (p. 27; see below) compares salaries with twenty "track institutions" with whom UVM compares itself, some wealthier and some poorer. On that chart, UVM full professors are 19% below average, associate professors 11% below average, assistants 14% below average. The Oklahoma State Faculty Salary Survey is principally valuable because it allows comparison by discipline. That is why on the following page of UVM's *Sourcebook* (below), the administration uses OSU to compare UVM average salaries within colleges: there it is revealed that full professors are below average in all colleges, associates are below average in most colleges, and assistants are slightly above average in most colleges.

When, in its press release, the administration opportunistically chose to use the overall OSU average, which shows UVM average faculty salaries at 104% of national average, it is clear they deliberately looked for and used one isolated case in which UVM could be said to come out slightly above average. This is rhetorical cherry picking, not analysis. (This higher number is likely due to the inclusion of many smaller and poorer schools around the country, and perhaps because the OSU survey includes lecturers, who, thanks to United Academics, are better paid at UVM than at many schools around the country.)

The larger picture is that UVM serves Vermont by being a world class institution, and that requires competitive salaries for faculty. UVM's first few contracts involved annual raises of 4.5% or better, and in 2008-2011 contract the annual raises were 5% per year. Those raises did not cause calamity. On the contrary, UVM's national standing and financial health generally

improved. UA's current proposals are smaller, taking into account plateaued enrollments and the need to provide substantial financial aid to many students. But it is in the long term interest of UVM to not return to the spiral of decline of the 1990s. We do not apologize for wanting to remain average.

Faculty Raises do not Necessitate Tuition Hikes

Over the last decade, as the charts below show, both tuition and administrative salaries have increased at a much faster rate (4.73% and 7.08% annually) than faculty salaries (4.46% annually, this increase largely owed not to gains in faculty pay but an increase in the number of faculty needed for rising numbers of students). As the charts also show, UVM has also been spending ever more money in areas outside the core academic mission: only \$1 out of every \$3 spent from the operating budget funding faculty engaged in instruction and research.

Our proposals aim to move the administration to re-prioritize education; if UVM were to devote the same share of its operating budget to the educational mission as our peers do, we would net nearly \$12 million annually--to improve lecturer conditions, replace retiring senior professors with a new generation of assistant professors, fund the entire curriculum and not just administrative pet projects, AND give students some tuition relief. Students and lecturers--plus departments trying to deliver academic programs with too few professors--have been paying for this administrative party. Our proposals aim simply to get the priorities straight.

Conclusion: It's about more than wages

In a commentary in 2014, during our last contract negotiations, UVM Prof. of History Felicia Kornbluh wrote:

What is on the table here is far more than salaries and other monetary benefits. The most significant points of disagreement between United Academics and senior UVM administrators are philosophical and moral: How do we understand what a university is, and is for? Who does it serve? How will it preserve, and even strengthen, its educational mission? How can it better serve the state of Vermont, and the world beyond Vermont as well? And how can the University of Vermont serve as a model to the state and the nation of a workplace that really works – a humane and welcoming environment for students, staff members, faculty, and community members?

“Elite administrators,” she continued, “have repeatedly expressed their sense that students are a source of financial resources for the institution. The administrative rhetoric at UVM has become one of ‘entrepreneurship,’ in which the focus of the university should be revenue maximization, not civic responsibility.”

The administration's current policies continue to reflect that blinkered and short term way of thinking: maximize revenue by squeezing faculty salaries and replacing tenure line research

faculty with easily disposable lecturers, while hoping that marketing tricks can replace educational quality as a way to attract tuition paying students.

United Academics' proposals are modest, fiscally sustainable, and in the long term interests of the university, its students, and the citizens of the State of Vermont. We call upon UVM's administration to negotiate accordingly.

FY 2016 Average Faculty Salary by Unit by Tenure Track Rank

The University of Vermont and Participants in the Oklahoma State University Faculty Salary Survey

	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>Associate Professor</u>	<u>Assistant Professor</u>
UVM	Agriculture & Life Sciences	\$117,763	\$86,200	\$72,115
	Arts & Sciences	\$113,635	\$83,374	\$67,489
	Business Administration	\$188,793	\$157,312	\$134,924
	Education & Social Services	\$115,332	\$83,297	\$70,772
	Engineering & Mathematical Sciences	\$133,948	\$107,576	\$86,503
	Environment & Natural Resources	\$111,302	\$89,887	\$64,791
	Nursing & Health Sciences	\$112,692	\$88,620	\$71,801
OSU Survey	Agriculture & Life Sciences	\$128,776	\$90,376	\$78,127
	Arts & Sciences	\$122,433	\$84,350	\$71,720
	Business Administration	\$207,349	\$154,194	\$150,713
	Education & Social Services	\$114,425	\$82,701	\$68,314
	Engineering & Mathematical Sciences	\$138,500	\$99,287	\$87,072
	Environment & Natural Resources	\$111,776	\$85,090	\$67,891
	Nursing & Health Sciences	\$127,949	\$90,021	\$73,463

The AAUP multiplier of 0.818 was used to convert twelve-month salaries to nine-month salaries.

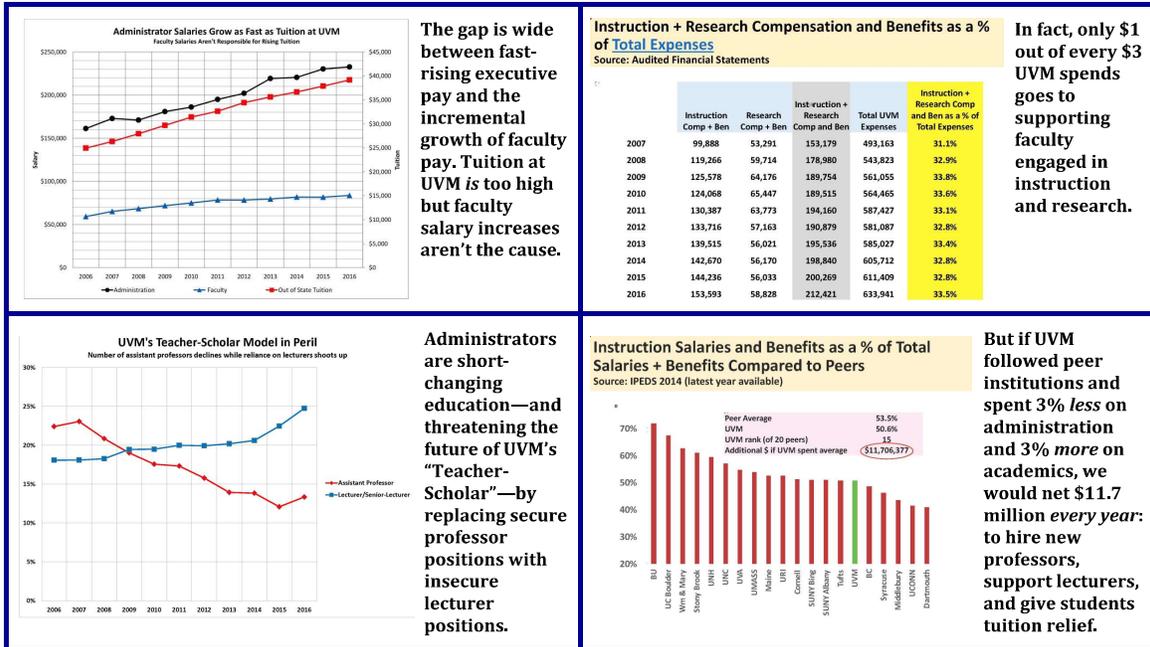
Source: 2015-2016 Faculty Salary Survey of Institutions Belonging to Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. Oklahoma State University: April 2016.

**The University of Vermont and Its Track Institutions:
2015-2016 Average Salaries for Tenure Track Ranks** *(in thousand \$s)*

Professor			Associate Professor			Assistant Professor		
Institution	Average Salary	Rank	Institution	Average Salary	Rank	Institution	Average Salary	Rank
Dartmouth Coll	\$184.4	1	Cornell U-Endowed Colleges	\$123.7	1	Cornell U-Endowed Colleges	\$113.0	1
Cornell U-Endowed Colleges	\$175.1	2	Boston U	\$117.1	2	Dartmouth Coll	\$101.6	2
Boston Coll	\$174.0	3	Dartmouth Coll	\$116.5	3	Boston U	\$99.1	3
Boston U	\$171.7	4	Boston Coll	\$111.6	4	Boston Coll	\$97.9	4
U Virginia	\$164.9	5	U Virginia	\$111.3	5	U Virginia	\$94.9	5
U Connecticut	\$155.8	6	U Connecticut	\$105.7	6	U Connecticut	\$88.5	6
Tufts U	\$150.7	7	Tufts U	\$104.8	7	Tufts U	\$88.3	7
U North Carolina-Chapel Hill	\$150.6	8	U Massachusetts-Amherst	\$104.0	8	U Colorado-Boulder	\$87.5	8
Weighted Average	\$148.4		Weighted Average	\$102.3		Weighted Average	\$87.1	
Ohio St U-Main	\$145.5	9	U North Carolina-Chapel Hill	\$101.8	9	U North Carolina-Chapel Hill	\$87.1	9
U Massachusetts-Amherst	\$145.2	10	Ohio St U-Main	\$98.0	10	Ohio St U-Main	\$86.0	10
Middlebury Coll	\$134.7	11	Clarkson U	\$96.9	11	U Massachusetts-Amherst	\$85.6	11
U Colorado-Boulder	\$134.4	12	Middlebury Coll	\$96.7	12	Middlebury Coll	\$82.4	12
SUNY-Binghamton	\$132.0	13	U Colorado-Boulder	\$96.4	13	Clarkson U	\$78.5	13
Syracuse U	\$131.0	14	Syracuse U	\$95.7	14	U Rhode Island	\$77.8	14
SUNY-Albany	\$127.1	15	SUNY-Binghamton	\$95.4	15	SUNY-Binghamton	\$77.7	15
U Vermont	\$120.2	16	SUNY-Albany	\$94.4	16	Syracuse U	\$77.6	16
Clarkson U	\$119.4	17	Coll William and Mary	\$94.4	16	U North Dakota-Main	\$76.2	17
Coll William and Mary	\$117.8	18	U Vermont	\$91.0	18	SUNY-Albany	\$75.7	18
U Rhode Island	\$115.2	19	U North Dakota-Main	\$89.9	19	U Vermont	\$75.2	19
U North Dakota-Main	\$112.7	20	U Maine-Orono	\$83.7	20	Coll William and Mary	\$68.7	20
U Maine-Orono	\$108.3	21	U Rhode Island	\$83.7	20	U Maine-Orono	\$65.5	21
U New Hampshire	NA		U New Hampshire	NA		U New Hampshire	NA	
SUNY-Buffalo	NA		SUNY-Buffalo	NA		SUNY-Buffalo	NA	
SUNY-Stony Brook	NA		SUNY-Stony Brook	NA		SUNY-Stony Brook	NA	

Source: "The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession: 2015-2016". AAUP: Academe.

How UVM Shortchanges Education: The Story in Four Graphs



UVM United Academics AFT/AAUP is the union of full-time and part-time faculty at the University of Vermont. Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VermontUnitedAcademics/>