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Salary Catch Up: If Not Now, When?

How Big Is the Salary Gap?

Each year, Canadian universities report salaries of all full-time faculty to Stat Can. CAUT and OCUFA obtain these data and make them available to their member faculty associations. Here we report some analysis of the 2004-05 and recently released 2005-06 data. Part-time salaries will be considered in an upcoming Bargaining Bulletin.

In the past, UWOFA has compared salaries at Western with those at similar universities—especially the "Bovey Six" (Guelph, McMaster, Queen's, Toronto, Waterloo, and Western). The 2004-05 numbers for these universities are shown below. In 2004-05, Western had the *second-lowest* mean salary in this group at \$94,218. Only Guelph had a lower average salary (\$93,340). The gap between Western's mean salary and the (unweighted) average at the other five schools was \$6,101. Eliminating this gap through catch-up provisions is a central goal in the current bargaining round.

Average salary of faculty by age group and university, all ranks combined 2004-05

	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+	TOTAL
GUELPH	72,406	76,789	81,585	90,498	100,175	107,203	113,795	93,340
MCMASTER	72,249	80,251	86,727	99,287	106,960	113,288	114,762	96,297
QUEEN'S	82,894	84,243	94,789	101,201	107,388	113,551	118,436	100,407
TORONTO	90,455	94,552	102,949	113,016	115,444	120,696	131,175	111,513
WATERLOO	76,252	82,539	91,072	101,276	107,994	115,065	126,017	100,038
WESTERN	77,135	84,066	86,844	89,206	99,733	105,015	115,871	94,218
Oth Bov 5	78,851	83,675	91,424	101,056	107,592	113,961	120,837	100,319
Gap	1,716	-391	4,580	11,850	7,859	8,946	4,966	6,101
Oth Bov 4	75,950	80,956	88,543	98,066	105,629	112,277	118,253	97,521
Gap	-1,185	-3,111	1,699	8,860	5,896	7,262	2,382	3,303
Bov Mid 3	77,132	82,344	90,863	100,588	107,447	113,968	119,738	98,914
Gap	-3	-1,722	4,019	11,382	7,714	8,953	3,867	4,696

Oth Bov 5 = Bovey Six universities omitting Western

Oth Bov 4 = Other Bovey Five minus Toronto

Bov Mid 3 = McMaster, Queen's, Waterloo

But it's not just the overall gap that is of concern. Salary gaps are not uniformly distributed. Recent hires appear to have come in at competitive salaries, but Career Progress pay (including merit pay) lags at Western by more than \$500 per year compared to the other Bovey universities. With each passing year, then, we fall further behind. The situation is even worse for those hired in the lean days of the early and mid 1990s. They started off low *and* fall further behind with each passing year. The result is an alarming "mid-career gap." For example, in 2004-05 the gap for faculty aged 45-49 was almost \$12,000. Addressing these structural salary problems is also a central goal in the current negotiations.

What Is the Right Comparison Group?

The Administration's bargaining team acknowledges the salary gap for people aged 45-54, but it dismisses the gap for anyone else. Why this different conclusion? First, the Administration omits about 150 of our full-time members from its

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analysis on the grounds that they are Lecturers or hold “senior administrative” positions. Lecturers are bona fide full-time faculty members and should be included. And most of those with "senior administrative duties" are actually members of the bargaining unit—chairs and assistant deans. (People above the level of dean are not in the data.) We therefore include both these groups.

Second, the Administration believes Toronto should not be included in the comparison. We would suggest that if Western sees itself as playing in the big league of top research-intensive universities, it should not reject comparisons with other members of that club. But even if Toronto *is* excluded, the gap remains substantial, at \$3,303. (See the row in the table labeled “Other Bovey Four.”) Moreover, if Toronto is excluded, one could just as convincingly argue for excluding Guelph. Guelph is not in the G10 group of research-intensive Canadian universities; it has a very different faculty composition than Western; and dissatisfaction at Guelph regarding salary levels is so great that faculty there have recently unionized. Eliminating Guelph, we can compare Western with the “Bovey Mid Three”—McMaster, Waterloo, and Queen’s. In this case the 2004-05 gap was \$4,696, and the mid-career gap at its largest was \$11,382.

The Gap Is Widening

Going into negotiations we believed that the gaps were likely worsening. While the 2005-06 salary data are not complete (the University of Toronto data are not yet available), they provide support for this conclusion. Indeed, they suggest that the gap has been rising, from \$6,101 in 2004-05 to well over \$7,000 in 2005-06.

As shown in the next table, in 2005-06 the gap vis-à-vis the “Other Bovey Four” grew 27.1%, to \$4,199. The gap with the “Bovey Mid Three” increased 27.6%, to \$5,991. Thus, the overall gap between Western and its longstanding comparator institutions in Ontario has rapidly widened. If the gap between Western and all the “Other Bovey Five” universities (including Toronto) has expanded at a similar rate, it would be about \$7,700 in 2005-06.

Average salary of faculty by age group and university, all ranks combined 2005-06

	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+	TOTAL
GUELPH	74,475	79,739	86,174	92,504	104,482	113,095	113,066	96,069
MCMASTER	75,521	83,381	90,961	102,008	109,775	116,638	120,883	100,324
QUEEN'S	89,668	87,375	99,734	107,872	110,100	119,063	123,004	105,241
WATERLOO	80,781	84,543	95,899	105,646	112,564	120,446	129,783	104,143
WESTERN	77,184	85,042	91,957	94,611	100,832	110,500	118,386	97,245
Oth Bov 4	80,111	83,760	93,192	102,008	109,230	117,311	121,684	101,444
Gap	2,927	-1,283	1,235	7,397	8,398	6,811	3,298	4,199
Bov Mid 3	81,990	85,100	95,531	105,175	110,813	118,716	124,557	103,236
Gap	4,806	58	3,574	10,564	9,981	8,216	6,171	5,991

Oth Bov 4 = Other Bovey Five, minus Toronto

Bov Mid 3 = McMaster, Queen's, Waterloo

The Bottom Line

While full-time salaries at UWO have improved, the salary gap relative to comparator universities remains large. Even more worrisome, recent data indicate that the salary gap is widening.

Recent financial data for UWO show that the university has enjoyed generous surpluses. In 2005-06 the University’s overall excess of revenues over spending was \$39.7 million. Surpluses over the last three years have totaled \$139.3 million. One reason for these large surpluses is our low salaries. While financial prudence is appropriate, Western cannot maintain excellence by being cheap on salaries. It’s time to catch up.

Comments on these issues? Please let us know: UWOFA, Elborn College, Room 2120. (519) 661-3016 Fax 661-3946 uwofa@uwo.ca
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