

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Academic Staff Executive Committee (ASEC) charged the Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression "to gather and analyze information on compression of academic staff salaries within Category B," and to, "make recommendations to the Academic Staff Assembly concerning policies and procedures that can be used to minimize and mitigate this inequity." The committee convened in September 2016.

The committee sampled two Category B titles for its study: the Faculty Associate series and the Researcher series. For each title, the committee analyzed salaries both by prefix (i.e., rank) and by years in job. Better to understand the numbers, we also completed two case studies regarding Faculty Associate salary histories and histories of Researcher reviews (for job security and promotion). Our investigation indicates evidence of salary compression. We assume that similar patterns occur in other titles.

In the course of our investigation we identified three general causes of compression:

1. A lack of pay increases as established through the State of Wisconsin biennial budget over several biennia, coupled with increased fringe benefits costs and retirement costs.
2. Absence of campus-wide policies governing the timing and implementation of pay adjustments and, where policies exist, failure of individual units to apply the policies.
3. Market factors.

Most of the factors of compression are of long-standing. Given the deeply embedded institutional nature of the problem and the fact that compression affects employees in different way depending on individual unit practice, we see no simple solution to salary compression. Based on our research and deliberations, however, we make the following recommendations:

1. As part of the Titling and Total Compensation Study, the University of Wisconsin should conduct a pay equity study for all Category B academic staff employees. The study should identify and remedy existing instances of salary compression, as well as plan for future ways to identify and continually address new instances of salary compression.
2. The University of Wisconsin should ensure compliance to the new performance management policy, confirming that annual performance reviews are conducted for each employee as a critical component to employee development. Annual reviews should include, when appropriate, reviews for changes in duties (with corresponding pay adjustments), reviews for promotion, and reviews for increased job security.
3. The University of Wisconsin should confirm units follow existing policies and use existing tools to ensure opportunities for promotion and increased job security are not overlooked or bypassed. While there is no expectation that any individual employee will receive promotion or increase in job security, supervisors must perform those reviews and inform employees of their decisions. The University should also develop and implement a plan to address the stagnating compensation of late career employees who have reached the top of their series ladder.
4. The University of Wisconsin should establish uniform campus-wide guidelines that describe "who pays" for pay adjustments (e.g. established source of bridge-funding for academic staff employees paid with extramural funds).

INTRODUCTION

The 2012 HR Design Strategic Plan offered us the opportunity to enhance our employment model. In particular, HR Design identified many opportunities for improvements in areas related to compensation: compensation structure, job security, and talent management.¹ Implementation of the plan is ongoing, and we look forward to innovations on this front.

At the same time as we improve the University's human resources policies, we must also address the lingering cumulative effects of an antiquated system under which many employees have worked for many years. One of these effects of the University's approach to human resources policy is salary compression among Category B academic staff employees.

On July 7, 2016, the Academic Staff Executive Committee (ASEC) created the Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression. ASEC issued the following charge:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression will work with the Office of Human Resources to gather and analyze information on compression of academic staff salaries within Category B and will make recommendations to the Academic Staff Assembly concerning policies and procedures that can be used to minimize and mitigate this inequity. The report should be delivered to the Assembly no later than its December 2016 meeting.²

In our initial meeting, we noted that ASEC had not defined salary compression. During our study we arrived at a working definition of salary compression: **lack of salary advancement from initial base salary based on years of experience within a single discipline, after factoring in merit.** Or, as one academic staff employee we interviewed said, “The longer one stays here, the more one’s salary levels off.” In our study, we show that salary compression has many causes and can have many ramifications.

GATHERING AND ANALYZING INFORMATION

Unclassified Personnel Policies & Procedures provide the following definition of Category B academic staff positions:

Individuals performing at a level typical of faculty as either a) instructional, academic staff providing instruction or training to students in an academic discipline, or b) research academic staff participating in identifying research problems, designing methodology, conducting research, and other related activities.³

¹ A Strategic Plan for a New UW–Madison Human Resources System
<http://hrdesign.wisc.edu/content/uploads/2013/04/HRD-Plan-Revised-11-19-2012-.pdf>

² The charge document can be found in Appendix A.

³ <http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/UPPP/0102.html> Appendix B provides a complete list of current Category B titles.

For further context, Category B employees have no salary maxima, which could exacerbate salary compression. Moreover, Category B employees tend to have very little mobility to change jobs on campus. Most Category B positions situate themselves very narrowly within the boundaries of specific academic disciplines, limiting severely the ability to obtain competitive market salary through internal transfers. Nonetheless, the committee does not advocate for this “job-hopping,” but is merely pointing it out as a categorical distinction between Category A and Category B employees.

Given the large number of titles, we decided to focus our analyses on two title series, Faculty Associate and Researcher.⁴ We elected to study the Faculty Associate and Researcher series because we believe they best represent the two issues most important in identifying salary compression. Most employees who hold the Faculty Associate and Researcher titles are career employees, many with decades of service to the University of Wisconsin. Career employees are most likely to feel the cumulative effects of salary compression.⁵ While both titles represent career employees, each title is funded in a very different way. Whereas most employees in the Faculty Associate title are paid from general purpose revenue (GPR) and tuition, most employees in the Researcher title are paid from extramural funds. We wondered whether salary compression would differ according to source of funding.

⁴ The October 2010 payroll data included 3,371 distinct Category B appointments (2,725 FTE), in fifteen distinct title series. <https://apir.wisc.edu/compensation/Category.pdf> A current list of all Category B titles may be found in Appendix B.

⁵ In selecting the Faculty Associate series, for example, we avoid the challenges of distinguishing career and short-term employees. The Faculty Assistant series, by contrast, consists largely of short-term employees: of the 61 Faculty Assistants employed in October 2016, only 18 had more than two years of experience. The Lecturer series also includes large numbers of both career and short-term employees. While the mix of long-term and short-term employees ruled out analyzing those titles for the purposes of this study, we acknowledge that career employees in those titles are susceptible to the kinds of salary compression we identified in the Faculty Associate series. In conducting our study of the Faculty Associate series, we came to realize that Faculty Associates perform a wide variety of work assignments. The variation of duties within the series leads us to conclude that the best way to analyze positions is by job description, not by title. Such analysis is too broad for our limited study, whose purpose is to determine whether salary compression exists. Any larger, comprehensive study of compensation and salary compression ought to take as its base specific job duties, rather than title.

By the Averages: Average Salaries of Faculty Associates and Researchers

Stagnant Salaries for Older Workers I: A Study of All Faculty Associates

We studied the mean salaries of all employees in the Faculty Associate title, both by rank and by years in job (Tables 1 and 1A)⁶. We made several observations.

Employees higher in rank had higher salaries on average than those lower in rank, which is to be expected. The mean salary of Faculty Associates at the no-prefix level is greater than the mean salary of Associate Faculty Associates, which in turn is higher than the salary of the single Assistant Faculty Associate. This pattern is to be expected. The pattern suggests that the annual review process for promotion in series is effective in generating raises for those employees who are reviewed.

Table 1 – Campus Faculty Associates by Rank

Title	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis
Distinguished Faculty Associate	15	\$85,811	\$13,257
Faculty Associate	185	\$82,398	\$28,368
Associate Faculty Associate	93	\$66,636	\$21,009
Assistant Faculty Associate	77	\$53,032	\$14,054
	370		

Table 1A – Comparison of L&S and Non-L&S Faculty Associates by Rank

Title	L&S			Non L&S		
	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis
Distinguished Faculty Associate	8	\$86,565	\$23,960	7	\$84,949	\$11,746
Faculty Associate	105	\$77,343	\$25,577	80	\$89,032	\$30,572
Associate Faculty Associate	44	\$56,604	\$9,365	49	\$75,645	\$24,337
Assistant Faculty Associate	43	\$47,065	\$10,580	34	\$60,580	\$14,399
	200			170		

When comparing employees by years of service, however, a surprising trend appears. Please refer to Table 2. The mean salary for new hires is greater than the mean salary for employees with both 1-5 and 6-10 years of service. Likewise, the mean salary for employees with 11-15 years of experience is greater than the mean salary for employees with both 15-20 and 20-25 years of experience. While this odd pattern might have many causes, it is indicative of salary compression. We suspect that one of the causes of this compression is the lack of ladder

⁶ Unless otherwise noted salary information was taken from the “Current Classified, Unclassified and Student Jobs” query in Interactive Reporting Workspace. The queries were made variously in November and December 2016.

promotions in a title series. Most title series have three rungs (e.g., assistant, associate, no-prefix), which provide for two pay adjustments. Table 2 suggests that most employees receive those adjustments before the fifteenth year in job. In the last ten-to-twenty years of employment, no further pay adjustments are available, leading to a stagnation of salary among older workers.⁷

Table 2 – Campus Faculty Associates by Years in Job

Years in Job	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis
First Year New Hire	64	\$69,909	\$34,327
1-5 Years	114	\$69,293	\$24,598
6-10 Years	60	\$65,802	\$19,331
11-15 Years	58	\$80,916	\$24,556
15-20 Years	35	\$75,725	\$28,203
20-25 Years	19	\$68,085	\$14,594
25+ Years	20	\$92,630	\$25,309
	370		

Table 2A – Comparison of L&S and Non-L&S Faculty Associates by Years in Job

Title	L&S			Non L&S		
	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis
First Year New Hire	34	\$64,392	\$23,960	30	\$76,161	\$27,768
1-5 Years	60	\$63,517	\$25,840	54	\$75,712	\$21,611
6-10 Years	35	\$61,318	\$15,827	25	\$72,079	\$22,213
11-15 Years	32	\$70,152	\$16,226	26	\$94,164	\$26,787
15-20 Years	17	\$74,257	\$28,381	18	\$77,112	\$28,783
20-25 Years	11	\$71,978	\$15,908	8	\$62,732	\$11,384
25+ Years	11	\$80,224	\$12,846	9	\$107,793	\$29,064
	200			170		

The pattern intrigued us, and we wondered whether the pattern was attributable to the employment practices of a single college or unit. When we broke out the Faculty Associates from the College of Letters and Science (the employing unit of just over half of all Faculty Associates), we found that the pattern held for both L&S and non-L&S employees.

⁷ Our suspicion was largely confirmed by the case study in which we compiled and analyzed the salary histories of two long-term Faculty Associates. For long-term employees such information is difficult to compile, since the information is found most readily in the personnel file, almost always maintained *in situ*. Such information can be found more readily in HRS, but HRS only includes information since 2011. We recommend that the Office of Human Resources start to maintain records on reviews, both for individual employees and for classes of employees.

Stagnant Salaries for Older Workers II: A Study of All Researchers

When we studied the mean salaries of all employees in the Researcher title, both by rank and by years in job we found a similar pattern to that of the Faculty Associates. Please refer to Table 3. We made several observations.

Employees higher in rank had higher salaries on average than those lower in rank, which is to be expected. The mean salary of Researchers at the no-prefix level is greater than the mean salary of Associate Researchers, which in turn is higher than the salary of the single assistant Researcher. This pattern is to be expected. The pattern suggests that the annual review process for promotion in series is effective in generating raises for those employees who are reviewed.

Table 3 – Campus Researchers by Rank

Title	Count	Mean A Basis	Std Dev
Distinguished Researcher	10	\$99,064	\$26,518
Researcher	201	\$80,849	\$17,141
Associate Researcher	188	\$70,300	\$18,477
Assistant Researcher	172	\$56,790	\$13,201
	571		

When comparing employees by years of service, however, the surprising trend reappears among older employees. Please refer to Table 4. The mean salary for employees with 11-15 years of experience is greater than the mean salary for employees with both 15-20 and 20-25 years of experience. Unlike the Faculty Associate title, we did not find this pattern among more recent Researcher hires. While this odd pattern might have many causes, it is indicative of salary compression. We suspect that one of the causes of this compression is the lack of ladder promotions in a title series. Most title series have three rungs (e.g., assistant, associate, no-prefix), which provide for two pay adjustments.⁸ Table 4 suggests that most employees receive those adjustments before the fifteenth year in job. In the last ten-to-twenty years of employment, no further pay adjustments are available, leading to a stagnation of salary among older workers.⁹

⁸ The 2016 Ad Hoc Committee on Titling and Compensation describes several solutions to the problem in its report. See especially pp 13-14, Mechanisms for Stabilizing Compensation.

<https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group171/62470/597A-AdHocCommitteeonTitlingandCompensationReport.pdf>

⁹ We also analyzed the Scientist series, but did not find this trend. See Appendix C for salary comparison for the Scientist series.

Table 4 – Campus Researchers by Years in Job

Years in Job	Count	Mean A Basis	Std Dev
First Year	121	\$62,910	\$17,110
1-5 Years	196	\$68,701	\$20,757
6-10 Years	113	\$69,948	\$15,803
11-15 Years	50	\$84,601	\$23,039
15-20 Years	45	\$78,107	\$19,136
20-25 Years	21	\$74,057	\$13,073
25+ Years	25	\$77,757	\$15,812
	571		

Stagnant Salaries for Older Workers III: A Study of Faculty Associates in One Department

The Faculty Associate series includes a wide range of duties, in a wide varieties of academic disciplines, which makes it difficult to generalize about the series as a class.¹⁰ To adjust for differences in discipline and also variations of the use of the Faculty Associate title across campus, we studied the mean salaries of Faculty Associates in the English department. In choosing to study a single department, we were able to focus on a single discipline and (we assume) a consistent application of the series title. We studied the mean salaries of Faculty Associates in English both by rank and by years in job. In recent years, the English department has regularly reviewed academic staff employees for promotion in rank and for increased job security. We made several observations.

The mean salary of Faculty Associates at the no-prefix level is greater than the mean salary of Associate Faculty Associates, which in turn is higher than the salary of the single Assistant Faculty Associate. This pattern is to be expected. The pattern also holds among Faculty employees in the department.

¹⁰ Per UW policy, “Compensation Structure and Pay upon Appointment” regarding Category B appointments: “Employees in these titles do some of the work of faculty members and their jobs are defined in terms of specific academic disciplines. Due to the nature of the work assigned to these titles, title evaluation is not appropriate for Category B. Titles in this compensation category cover a gamut of disciplines. In the academic job market, they command widely varying levels of compensation. Attempting to cover such a wide range of salaries within minimum and maximum levels would create ranges too large to be useful.” <https://kb.wisc.edu/ohr/policies/page.php?id=53238>

Table 5 – Faculty Associates in English, by Rank

Title	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis	Range	Range
Faculty Associate	13	\$60,248	\$7,997	\$52,031	\$76,281
Associate Faculty Associate	3	\$49,499	\$2,199	\$47,300	\$51,697
Assistant Faculty Associate	1	\$43,000			
	17				

When comparing employees by years of in job, we find that the employees with more years of service have average salaries higher than those with fewer years of service. We take this as a sign that the department performs reviews for promotion on a regular basis for all employees.¹¹

Table 6 – Faculty Associates in English, by Years in Job

Years in Job	Count	Mean C Basis	Std Dev C Basis	Range	Range
First Year New Hire	1	\$52,031			
1-5 Years	3	\$46,600	\$3,306	\$43,000	\$49,500
6-10 Years	4	\$54,117	\$1,745	\$52,253	\$56,470
11-15 Years	3	\$58,189	\$7,853	\$51,697	\$66,918
15-20 Years	1	\$63,457			
20+ Years	5	\$65,680	\$8,938	\$57,604	\$76,281
	17				

We note, however, that there seems to be little difference in pay after employees reach the 16th year of service. This suggests that pay is stagnant after about year fifteen. We assume that employees with more than fifteen years of service have attained the no-prefix rank, which means that no further regular promotions in rank are possible. At the same time, we assume that the senior employees have taken on additional leadership responsibilities and duties, responsibilities and duties which are not reflected in the title definition. In a spot check we found no recent reviews for change of duties for senior Faculty Associates in the department, nor can anyone recall such a review. Academic staff employees should be reviewed for substantive change in duties each year, as part of the annual review process. A record of cumulative changes should be maintained and should be considered as part of the review. Academic Staff Post-Progression Series Review Guidelines stipulate this review for all academic staff five years after promotion or appointment to the highest rank of a title series in the same position, but we feel that each employee should be reviewed each year of employment.¹²

¹¹ The most recently hired Faculty Associate was hired at the no-prefix rank, which accounts for the fact that new hire earns more than other recent hires, most of whom were hired at the assistant prefix.

¹² See Academic Staff Post-Progression Series Review Guidelines, <http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/pol/proced/uppp/Post%20Progression%20Series%20Review.doc>

Market Factors I: Assistant Faculty Associates in One Department

To gauge whether market forces play a role in salary compression we evaluated Assistant Faculty Associates in a single department. Please refer to Table 7. We chose Social Work for several reasons. We assume that the School of Social Work pays competitive market rates to new hires, particularly since many of the newer Faculty Associates are part-time employees. In addition, the School hired 14 Assistant Faculty Associates over the last two years, 7 who began in 2015 and 7 who began in 2016. The fairly large number of new hires allows us to see trends. In most cases the salaries of the more recently hired Assistant Faculty Associates exceeds the salaries of those hired one year previously. We take this discrepancy as an indicator of how market factors can contribute to salary compression.¹³

Table 7—Faculty Associates in Social Work

Title	Years in Job	Dept ID	Annualized Rate***
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$48,889
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$56,533
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$48,333
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$48,889
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.2	A488200	\$43,732
Assistant Faculty Associate	0.2	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.1	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.1	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.1	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.1	A488200	\$44,936
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.2	A488200	\$48,889
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.2	A488200	\$46,403
Assistant Faculty Associate	1.2	A488200	\$44,936
Associate Faculty Associate	0.1	A488200	\$56,421
Associate Faculty Associate	1.1	A488200	\$51,742
Associate Faculty Associate	2.1	A488200	\$51,742
Associate Faculty Associate	7.7	A488200	\$57,684
Associate Faculty Associate	8.1	A488200	\$57,684
Associate Faculty Associate	10.1	A488200	\$58,060
Faculty Associate	2.1	A488200	\$70,329
Faculty Associate	4.8	A488200	\$84,159

¹³ Most of the Faculty Associates in the department are employed part-time, so we did not study the department further. We simply wanted to determine whether market factors played a role in salary compression.

Market Factors II: Faculty Associates Compared to Professors in One Department

Compared to their faculty counterparts, academic staff employees appear not to have not fared well against the job market. Given that the State of Wisconsin pay plan generally links academic staff increases to faculty increases, we would expect some level of parity between equivalent positions over the entire career span. When we compare academic staff salaries to their equivalent faculty positions, however, we note that the level of parity diminishes over the career span. The diminishing level of parity indicates salary compression. Our sample is from a single academic department, English. Please refer to Table 8, an analysis of mean salaries of Faculty Associates and Professors by prefix. Mean salaries of Faculty Associates at the assistant and associate levels are 60-62% of the equivalent Professor titles. Mean salaries of Faculty Associates at the no-prefix level, however, drops to 52% of the mean average of no-prefix Professors. This trend suggests salary compression, because the salaries of long-term academic staff do not keep up with the corresponding faculty salaries. This compression might be compounded if, as we suspect, faculty salaries are themselves compressed.

We suspect that the yawning gap in parity is the result of market-based pay adjustments given to individual faculty employees, but not to individual academic staff employees. Market-based pay adjustments given to an individual Faculty employee then trigger a series of subsequent market adjustments to bring a department's compensation structure into a new equilibrium. Absent such market-based pay adjustments to academic staff employees, there is no subsequent readjustment of the compensation structure. We are uncertain whether the gap in parity indicates salary compression. After all, the University of Wisconsin sets salary on an individual, employee-by-employee basis, with no target levels of parity between equivalent groups of titles. At the same time, we find the general trend troubling and recommend further investigation as to its causes.

Table 8 – English Positions by Rank

Positions Compared by Rank			
Rank	Faculty	Academic Staff	AS/F
No Prefix	\$115,238	\$60,248	52%
Associate	\$79,398	\$49,499	62%
Assistant	\$71,712	\$43,000	60%

Case Studies in Salary Compression

Cumulative Effects of Salary Compression: A Study of Two Faculty Associates

We reviewed the career salary histories of two employees in the Faculty Associate title, better to understand the processes, mechanisms, and consequences of salary compression over the span of a career.¹⁴ Please refer to Table 9. Each has been in rank for over 20 years, and each received promotion to no-prefix at least ten years ago. While the English department now reviews

¹⁴ The two Faculty Associates were employed in the English department (one recently retired). Each employee readily gave consent to our study and helped gather information. We note that salary histories are available, even if they cannot easily be found in HRS. Rather the information exists in an individual personnel file, usually housed *in situ*.

employees regularly for promotion in rank and for increased job security, such has not always been the case.

Table 9 - Salary History of Two Faculty Associates in One Department

Faculty Associate A Increases due to state pay plan unless noted otherwise. C basis. (Figures in parentheses are 2017 dollars, i.e. figures adjusted for inflation)

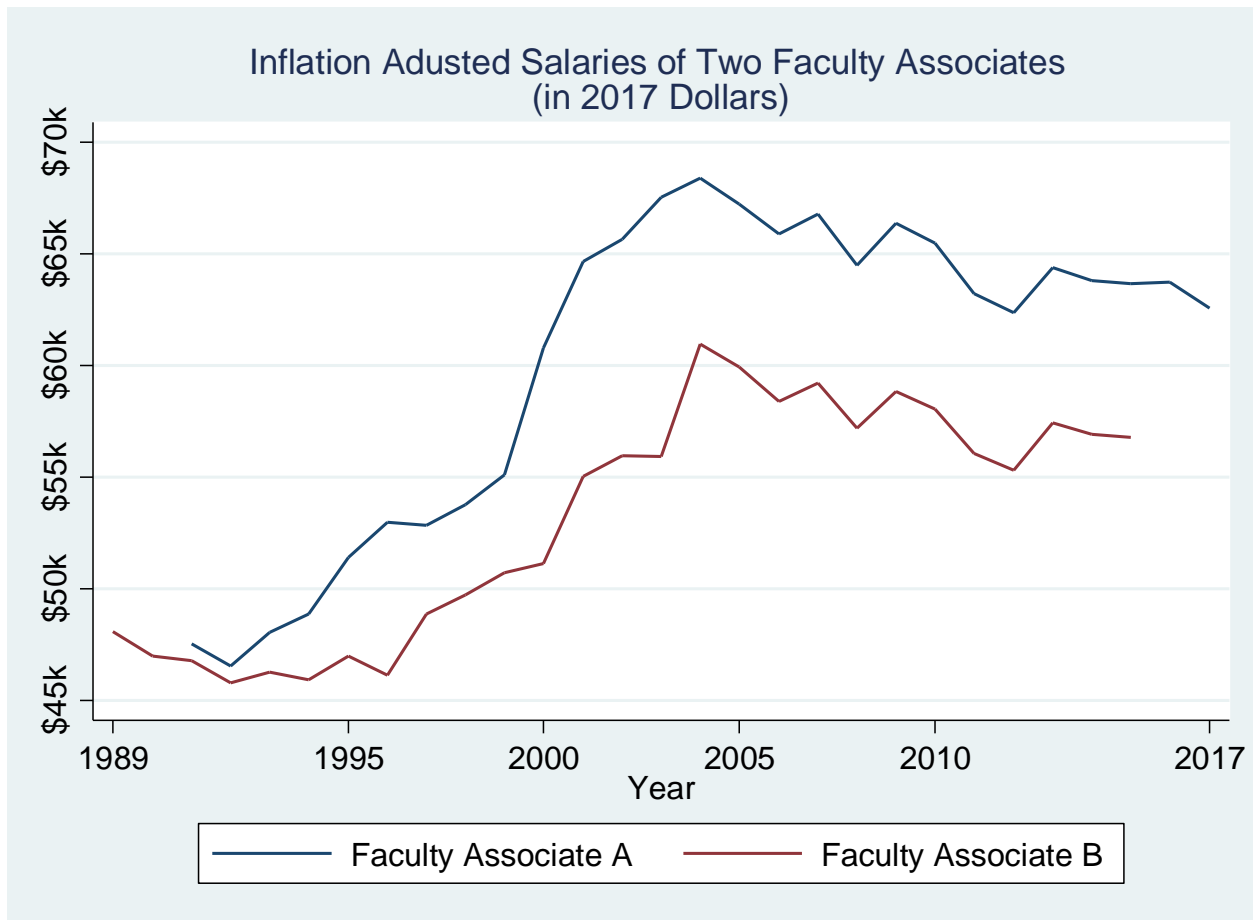
1990-1991	\$26,500 (\$47,532)	Initial appointment as Assistant Faculty Associate, C basis
1991-1992	\$26,754 (\$46,519)	
1992-1993	\$28,419 (\$48,047)	
1993-1994	\$29,679 (\$48,858)	Includes \$400 merit pay
1994-1995	\$32,098 (\$51,386)	
1995-1996	\$34,040 (\$52,968)	Promotion to Associate Faculty Associate, increase of \$1,605 (5%)
1996-1997	\$34,690 (\$52,835)	
1997-1998	\$35,904 (\$57,345)	
1998-1999	\$37,591 (\$55,090)	
1999-2000	\$42,977 (\$60,795)	3-year rolling horizon appointment effective 3/10/2000
2000-2001	\$46,966 (\$64,677)	
2001-2002	\$48,375 (\$65,655)	Promotion file sent 5/31/2001; denied due to 3/1/01 deadline per College
2002-2003	\$50,794 (\$67,550)	Promotion to Faculty Associate
2003-2004	\$52,948 (\$68,404)	
2004-2005	\$53,648 (\$67,245)	Indefinite appointment, effective June 29, 2005
2005-2006	\$54,721 (\$65,886)	
2006-2007	\$56,747 (\$66,778)	
2007-2008	\$57,825 (\$64,500)	
2008-2009	\$58,342 (\$66,377)	
2009-2010	\$58,342 (\$65,499)	Pay plan rescinded May 27, 2009
2010-2011	\$58,342 (\$63,235)	
2011-2012	\$58,342 (\$62,383)	
2012-2013	\$61,342 (\$64,386)	CCF \$3,000 (5%)
2013-2014	\$61,955 (\$63,793)	
2014-2015	\$61,955 (\$63,666)	
2015-2016	\$62,575 (\$63,746)	
2016-2017	\$62,575 (\$62,575)	

Table 9 (Continued)

Faculty Associate B Increases due to state pay plan unless noted otherwise. C basis. (Figures in parentheses are 2017 dollars, i.e. figures adjusted for inflation)

1988-1989	\$24,500 (\$48,075)	Initial appointment as associate Faculty Associate, C basis
1989-1990	\$25,100 (\$46,988)	
1990-1991	\$26,070 (\$46,761)	
1991-1992	\$26,324 (\$45,772)	
1992-1993	\$27,349 (\$46,238)	
1993-1994	\$27,888 (\$45,910)	
1994-1995	\$29,338 (\$46,967)	
1995-1996	\$29,632 (\$46,109)	2-year rolling horizon appointment 6/14/1995
1996-1997	\$32,088 (\$48,872)	
1997-1998	\$33,211 (\$49,714)	
1998-1999	\$34,606 (\$50,715)	
1999-2000	\$36,136 (\$51,117)	
2000-2001	\$39,960 (\$55,029)	Promotion to Faculty Associate, 8/28/2000: C \$37,971 before merit
2001-2002	\$41,239 (\$55,970)	
2002-2003	\$42,056 (\$55,929)	3-year rolling horizon appointment (undated document)
2003-2004	\$47,178 (\$60,949)	Equity adjustment, eff. 8/25/2003: \$4,289 (10%)
2004-2005	\$47,821 (\$59,942)	
2005-2006	\$48,490 (\$58,384)	
2006-2007	\$50,305 (\$59,197)	
2007-2008	\$51,261 (\$57,178)	
2008-2009	\$51,719 (\$58,842)	
2009-2010	\$51,719 (\$58,063)	Pay plan rescinded 5/27/2009
2010-2011	\$51,719 (\$56,057)	
2011-2012	\$51,719 (\$55,301)	
2012-2013	\$54,719 (\$57,434)	CCF \$3,000 (5.8%)
2013-2014	\$55,266 (\$56,096)	
2014-2015	\$55,266 (\$56,792)	Retired from UW in January 2015

Here is a graph plotting the trajectory of these two careers and their respective salaries over time.



Our study of two careers revealed several areas of salary compression that appear to be common among Category B academic staff, each contributing toward a substantial decrease in lifetime earnings:

1. *Setting of initial salary.* Although the two employees were hired about the same time, Faculty Associate A consistently had a higher salary across the career. We note that in real terms, Faculty Associate B actually had a higher starting salary in 1988, but the value of that salary had eroded due to unadjusted inflation. By the time Faculty Associate A was hired in 1990, B's real salary trailed that of A (a classic definition of salary compression) and continued to do so for their entire careers. Moreover, Faculty Associate B's starting salary was intentionally set lower than peer salaries, as part of the College's hiring strategy (per note in personnel file); in 2003-4 the employee received an equity adjustment of \$4,289, but the effect of the initial salary was to decrease lifetime earnings by approximately \$30,000.¹⁵

¹⁵ Faculty Associate B was among the first employees hired to that series. She applied for a position advertised in the Lecturer series, but was appointed to the Faculty Associate series.

2. *Real dollars and inflation.* In terms of real dollars, each employee's salary peaked in 2003-4, which is to say at mid-career, right about the time of promotion to no-prefix Faculty Associate. Since 2004, inflation compounded by inadequate or absent state pay plans have eroded the value of the employees' salaries by about nine percent, despite boosts from the Critical Compensation Fund exercises. If not for CCF, the erosion would be closer to fifteen percent. In the case of Faculty Associate B, almost all of the growth in real dollars comes from a salary equity adjustment in 2003 and the CCF in 2012; absent those two targeted raises, the real value of B's salary at retirement would have been virtually identical to her salary upon hire, nearly 27 years earlier. After accounting for increased benefits costs, the real value of her take-home pay was actually lower upon retirement than upon hire.

3. *Effects of late or missed reviews for promotion in rank.* Each employee suffered from late or missed reviews. In 2001, Faculty Associate A's department failed to submit promotion forms in a timely manner, causing a delay of one year in promotion. The delay cost the employee approximately \$2500 of salary in 2001-2, which caused lowering of life-time earnings; no one else in the department suffered any consequence for the late filing. Faculty Associate B was not reviewed for promotion until the eleventh year of service, approximately six years after first eligibility. The delay of review cost the employee approximately \$1800 for six years, for a lowering of lifetime earnings of nearly \$11,000.

4. *Effects of failure to review position descriptions for changes of duties and corresponding rate change.* It does not appear that either of the two employees ever received a review of job duties during their 27 years of service in the Faculty Associate rank. It seems incredible that their position descriptions remained constant over that period of time, given the tremendous changes in higher education. If the employee's job evolved or changed over time, particularly vis-à-vis their peers, it seems likely that the failure to review created pay inequities, resulting in a significant lowering of lifetime earnings. This sort of invisible salary compression seems especially prevalent among late career employees who received their last ladder promotion more than ten years ago. Reviews for change in duty should occur annually among late career employees.

5. *Job security.* Although not monetary, job security is a form of employee compensation, and as such has value. If employees are not reviewed for increased job security, then they are being undervalued (i.e., undercompensated) by the University. While both employees received increases in job security (Faculty Associate A holds an indefinite appointment, Faculty Associate B retired with a three-year rolling horizon appointment), it is not clear whether they were reviewed for increased job security in a timely manner or scheduled manner, given that their first increases came after nine and seven years of service.

Reviews for Promotion in Rank: A Study of Two Researchers

We reviewed the history of reviews of two Researchers, better to understand the experiences of employees paid from grants. What we heard astounded us. Whether employees are reviewed for promotion in rank (i.e., pay adjustments) seems to depend on the custom of each lab and even on the whim of the supervisor. Absent a clear policy on the timing of reviews and accountability of hiring units to ensure that reviews are performed in a timely manner, many academic staff

employees simply carry on with no hope of promotion in rank or pay adjustment. Such is not the hallmark of an equitable workplace.

We interviewed A and B, who hold appointments in the Researcher title. A and B are a married couple, and they consider themselves to be professional peers in every respect. They are employed in the same academic department at the University of Wisconsin and were in the same lab from 2002-2015. Each took the Ph.D. in the same natural science—Researcher A in 2000 and Researcher B in 2002. During their time at Wisconsin they co-published an article in *Nature*, the most prestigious journal in their field. Each held a similar post-doc before coming to Wisconsin as an Assistant Researcher in 2004, at which point their careers took different paths. Since 2004, A (a male) has been promoted in rank twice, to Associate Researcher in 2010, and to no-prefix Researcher in 2014. A's current salary is approximately \$80,000 per year. To their knowledge, B (a female) has never been reviewed for promotion in rank. Despite recently changing lab groups, B remains at the level of Assistant Researcher, with a salary of approximately \$50,000 per year. She does not believe that the new lab reviewed her for promotion to Associate Researcher or considered appointing her at the Associate level. Moreover, when B reviewed the prefix definitions for the Researcher title, she identified her work as a mix between the Associate and no-prefix definitions. She felt confident that she could perform the duties of a no-prefix Researcher.¹⁶

To their knowledge, neither A nor B has ever been reviewed for increased job security. Each holds a fixed-term renewable appointment, despite having worked on multiple year grants that would have fixed-term, multiple-year appointment for the life of the grant.

We did not investigate several aspects of A's and B's careers. While these aspects might help to explain the disparities between A's and B's careers, they seemed outside the study of salary compression. At the same time, these are issues to be addressed at the campus level.

While both A and B are paid on extramural funds (144 - Federal grants and contract funding.), we did not investigate or study the relative funding of their respective labs. A study of the funding of individual laboratories was outside the scope of our mission. At the same time, funding of individual labs seems to have some bearing on when and whether employees in the Researcher title receive reviews for promotion in rank. It is not clear why employees in the Researcher title at the University of Wisconsin-Madison should be treated differently as employees on account of which laboratory group they happen to work. A modern research university should have uniform employment policies that extend equally to all employees.

Neither did we investigate the effects of gender and gender discrimination. We note that Researcher A is male and Researcher B is female. Researcher B took extended family leave when their child was born (as allowed under UW policy, state law, and federal law), while Researcher A did not. We have no way of knowing whether gender discrimination played a part in the different ways that A and B have experienced employment reviews at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

¹⁶Unclassified Title Guideline: Criteria for prefixes, scope, and levels
<http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/UTG/CritPrefixScopLevl.html>

To say the least, A and B are puzzled by their very different experiences with the UW's review process. So is our committee puzzled.

FINDINGS

In the course of our investigation we identified three general causes of compression:

1. A lack of pay increases as established through the State of Wisconsin biennial budget over several biennia, coupled with increased fringe benefits costs and retirement costs.
2. Absence of campus-wide policies governing the timing and implementation of pay adjustments and, where policies exist, failure of individual units to apply the policies.
3. Market factors.

State of Wisconsin pay plan created salary compression

A lack of pay increases as established through the State of Wisconsin biennial budget over several biennia, coupled with temporary pay cuts via a furlough program and increased fringe benefits costs, has created salary compression among more senior employees. The Academic Staff Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Titling and Compensation identified the problem in its report of April 2016:

Before 2003, state budgets almost always included "pay plans" (small percentage-based pay increases for almost all employees) which over the long run compensated for inflation. Since 2003, pay plans have been too small to compensate for inflation. In 2009-11, mandatory furloughs were implemented, reducing take home pay. Since that time, pay plans have been both rare and very small. This has left UW-Madison without a mechanism for dealing with inflation, so the real values of employee salaries decline steadily over time. Compensation has also declined due to benefit changes that directly reduce take-home-pay, including increased contributions for health insurance and retirement benefits. 2011's Act 10 alone reduced take-home pay by 8.2% for an academic staff member at the median salary with family health insurance. In addition, health insurance co-pays, deductibles and coinsurance have greatly increased since 2011.¹⁷

Campus policies and their implementation created salary compression

The absence of clear policies, coupled with the failure to follow existing policies, created salary compression. Quite simply we do not have an effective campus policy on when reviews should occur, what things should be reviewed (promotion in rank, review of duties, review for job security, etc.), and we do not have any way to hold employing units accountable for performing the reviews in a timely manner. Absent accountability for reviews, we have no data on whether reviews are performed in a timely manner, nor the outcomes of such reviews, nor do we have any mechanism to identify and correct problem areas. If the review is part of an ongoing

¹⁷ In the report by the Academic Staff Ad Hoc Committee on Titling and Compensation (2016; Academic Staff Document #597A), Appendix 1: Historical Pay Plans, provides a history of State Pay plans since the creation of the University of Wisconsin System in 1974.

<https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group171/62470/597A-AdHocCommitteeonTitlingandCompensationReport.pdf>

conversation between the supervisor and the employee, then many academic staff employees work within a culture of silence.

Time intervals for review. An absence of uniform campus-wide policies governing the timing and implementation of pay adjustments and, where policies exist, failure of individual units to apply the policies, has created salary compression. We are unable to identify any University policy that defines the intervals (recommended or required) between promotions in title, increases in job security, or review of duties. Until recently the UW had no specific campus-wide policy requiring even annual reviews of academic staff employees. Presumably hiring units follow their own local practices.

Cumulative effects of salary compression caused by policies. Our study of the salary histories of two Faculty Associates showed some of the cumulative effects of salary compression caused by the University's own policies and their implementation. Faculty Associate A was reviewed for promotion, yet the promotion was denied because the file had been submitted after the College's internal deadline. The one-year delay in promotion cost the employee approximately \$2500 in academic year 2001-2, which has the effect of reducing his lifetime earnings by at least that amount. Faculty Associate B was not reviewed for promotion until her eleventh year of service. Assuming that current L&S guidelines were in place, the employee would have been eligible for review in year five. The delay of review cost the employee approximately \$1800 per year for six years, resulting in a lowered lifetime earning in excess of \$11,000. These cumulative losses of income will carry over into retirement, when the employees will receive lowered pension benefits. Neither of the Faculty Associates we studied seems to have been reviewed for increased job security in any systematic way. Although not monetary, job security is a form of employee compensation, so has value. If employees are not reviewed for increased job security, then they are being undervalued (i.e., undercompensated) by the University.

Review for substantive change in duties. We can also see traces of compression caused by University policies when we review the salaries of Faculty Associates in terms of years in job. Whether we look at Faculty Associates across campus or in one department, we see that average salaries level out after about fifteen years in job. Salaries for Faculty Associates stagnate after year fifteen. We assume that the employees in this groups are in the highest rank of the title series, hence ineligible for further promotion. At the same time, it is ridiculous to assume that job duties remain remained constant over the entire course of an academic career, given the tremendous changes in higher education. If the employee's job evolved or changed over time, particularly vis-à-vis their peers, it seems likely that the failure to review for changes in duties created pay inequities, resulting in a significant lowering of lifetime earnings. This sort of invisible compression seems especially prevalent among late career employees who received their last ladder promotion more than ten years ago. Review for substantive change in duties should be part of the annual review for all employees, but especially for late career employees. In addition to the review of duties, the UW should allow an employee more easily to shift from one title series to another, as defined by the current duties.

Special concern about employees paid with extramural funds. While our study focused on the Faculty Associate title, we are also concerned about the cumulative effects of university policies on research employees, particularly those whose positions are paid with extramural funds.

Anecdotally we hear that reviews for promotion in rank, for increased job security, and for changes in duty depend more on grant cycles than on an individual employee's career progression. If so, individual academic staff employees effectively subsidize the University of Wisconsin's research enterprise, hardly the model of the 21st century research university.

No uniform of campus policy on "who pays" for pay adjustments. Adjustments for promotion in rank and for permanent-change-in-duties call for raises of 5%-10%, but no campus policy defines how the pay adjustment will be funded.¹⁸ Some units pay for the entire pay adjustment, some units share the pay adjustment with the department, while other units require the department to pay for the entire adjustment. Anecdotally we hear that pay adjustments are minimal or absent in units where the departments must pay. If true, this ad hoc system of funding pay adjustments means that the raise for individual receives owes as much to the practices of individual departments as it does to an employee's merit or value to the unit. We are especially concerned about the implications of pay adjustments for academic staff employees who are paid with extramural funds. It is our understanding that the UW provides no bridge funding for promotions in rank or permanent-changes-in-duties that occur during a grant cycle. Hence, the career progression of research employees is tied to the grant cycle, rather than to their individual career progressions. The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education should provide a mechanism to pay for mid-grant pay adjustments for academic staff employees paid via this mechanism.

Market factors created salary compression

Our analysis identified several different ways in which market factors created salary compression. The clearest example of salary compression was in the case of the Faculty Associates in the School of Social Work. Due to market factors, newly-hired Faculty Associates were paid, on average, higher salaries than the Faculty Associates hired one year previous. We also saw this trend when we compared all Faculty Associates on campus by years of service. On average those hired in 2016 were paid more than those employees with 1-5 years of service.

When we compared Faculty Associate salaries in the English department to salaries in their equivalent faculty series, we identified a disturbing trend that appears to be attributable to market factors: the level of parity between the two groups diminished over the career span. Newer academic staff employees earn 60-62% of their Faculty equivalents, while more senior academic staff employees earn 52% of their Faculty equivalents. The yawning gap cannot be explained by the state pay plan. Every compensation plan in recent memory (be it the state pay plan or an internal play plan) has applied almost equally to both faculty and academic staff. We suspect that the increasing gap in parity is a consequence of a series of recent pay adjustments in the faculty ranks, pay adjustments that attempt to rectify the very kinds of compensation problems our report addresses. Faculty members who receive outside offers regularly receive market-based pay adjustments, bringing an individual faculty member up to market rate of pay. Other faculty members, who then find themselves paid significantly less than a peer, apply for pay adjustments for reason of retention or competition, perhaps even for equity.¹⁹ Faculty Associates, who work

¹⁸Amounts for Pay Adjustment Tools & Mechanisms Matrix

<http://ohr.wisc.edu/docs/PayAdjustmentToolsMechanismsAmountMatrix.pdf>

¹⁹ See policy on Pay Adjustments <https://kb.wisc.edu/ohr/policies/page.php?id=53379>

in the same disciplines, perform similar work, and typically hold similar qualifications, generally do not receive pay adjustments on the basis of outside offers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the factors of compression are of long-standing. Given the deeply embedded institutional nature of the problem and the fact that compression affects employees in different way depending on individual unit practice, we see no simple solution to salary compression. Based on our research and deliberations, however, we make the following recommendations:

As part of the Titling and Total Compensation Study, the University of Wisconsin should conduct a pay equity study for all Category B academic staff employees. The study should identify and remedy existing instances of salary compression, as well as plan for future ways to identify and continually address new instances of salary compression.

The UW should conduct a pay equity study for all Category B academic staff employees. Currently the UW has no such data for academic staff employees, so has no rational basis upon which to make decisions about pay equity. Each academic staff Category B appointment should be evaluated using a mathematical regression analysis which, when executed for an individual employee, would provide a predicted salary. Variables in the regression might include peer group (external data gathered from the College and University Professional Association-CUPA-HR); academic discipline (discipline specific comparisons from the CUPA-HR group code); title; rank in title (Assistant, Associate, no-prefix, Senior, Distinguished); year started at UW; year promoted to current rank; and average merit rating for the last five years. The regression should be completed twice for each employee. The first regression should use CUPA-HR average salary data for peer universities by corresponding discipline, rank, duties, etc.; the second should use internal University salary data by those same factors, to produce a predicted salary. The Titling and Total Compensation Study should identify places where salary compression exists and recommend remedies to those instances of salary compression. In addition to identifying the problem, the Titling and Total Compensation Study should determine how to address the issue continually in future years, to avoid recreating the current situation.

The University of Wisconsin should ensure compliance to the new performance management policy, confirming that annual performance reviews are conducted for each employee as a critical component to employee development. Annual reviews should include, when appropriate, reviews for changes in duties (with corresponding pay adjustments), reviews for promotion, and reviews for increased job security.

In addition to performance, the annual review should include a review for changes in duties (with corresponding pay adjustment when appropriate), a review for promotion in rank (when appropriate), and a review for increased job security (when appropriate). The onus for performing the review ought to be on the University, both the employing unit and the Office of Human Resources, not on individual employees. To that end, the Office of Human Resources should create uniform, standard campus-wide guidelines for annual reviews. The annual review package for each employee should provide for performance review, for change of duty review, for promotion in rank (when applicable), and for increase in job security (when applicable). In addition to the review of duties, the UW should allow an employee more easily to shift from one

title series to another, as defined by the current duties. While the specific review will depend on many factors, each employee's annual review package should contain each required element. Review for change of duties should become part of the required annual performance review; a cumulative list of changes should be maintained as part of the review. The University needs to develop a mechanism to enforce reviews of duties. In addition, employing units must report to Human Resources that reviews have been performed and the results of those reviews. Only by making employing units accountable for performing reviews can we identify and address areas of concern.

The University of Wisconsin should confirm units follow existing policies and use existing tools to ensure opportunities for promotion and increased job security are not overlooked or bypassed. While there is no expectation that any individual employee will receive promotion or increase in job security, supervisors must perform those reviews and inform employees of their decisions. The University should also develop and implement a plan to address the stagnating compensation of late career employees who have reached the top of their series ladder.

Employees should know what to expect from each review each year. Reviews for promotion in rank and for increased job security should occur at predictable intervals. While there is no expectation that any individual employee will receive promotion or increase in job security, supervisors must perform reviews and must inform employees of their decisions. Recent data from the required annual review for promotion exercise suggests that newer and younger employees receive regular reviews, which our analysis of the Faculty Associate and Researcher titles seems to confirm. The solution for addressing late career salary stagnation might include increasing the number of ladders in a series, specifying career milestones that trigger a review for pay adjustment, increased reviews for changes of duties, or some combination thereof.

The University of Wisconsin should establish uniform campus-wide guidelines that describe "who pays" for pay adjustments (e.g. established source of bridge-funding for academic staff employees paid with extramural funds).

While current policy describes the target pay adjustments for promotion in rank and for permanent-change-in-duties, no campus policy defines how the pay adjustment will be funded. The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education should provide a mechanism to fund for mid-grant pay adjustments for academic staff employees paid with extramural funds. If the University maintained a uniform schedule of reviews for promotion and pay adjustment, VCRGE could quite easily create a tool to analyze, account for, and predict mid-grant pay adjustments, allowing Principal Investigators to write the adjustments into the grant.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Charge to the Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary, with Timeline of Study

The Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression will work with the Office of Human Resources to gather and analyze information on compression of academic staff salaries within Category B and will make recommendations to the Academic Staff Assembly concerning policies and procedures that can be used to minimize and mitigate this inequity. The report should be delivered to the Assembly no later than its December 2016 meeting.

Timeline of Study

July 7, 2016: The Academic Staff Executive Committee created an Ad Hoc Committee to study Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression. Creating the ad hoc committee, ASEC issued the following charge:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Academic Staff Salary Compression will work with the Office of Human Resources to gather and analyze information on compression of academic staff salaries within Category B and will make recommendations to the Academic Staff Assembly concerning policies and procedures that can be used to minimize and mitigate this inequity. The report should be delivered to the Assembly no later than its December 2016 meeting.

August 25, 2016: ASEC appointed the following members to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee on Category B Salary Compression: Gabriel Cornilescu, Iliia Guzei (nominated by the Compensation and Economic Benefits Committee), Heather Hardin, Ron Harris, Peggy Hatfield, and Jeannine Nicolai-Heckmann. Dana Denny and Jake Smith serve as consultants to the committee.

September 29, 2016: The committee met for the first time and elected Iliia Guzei and Jeannine Nicolai-Heckmann as co-chairs.

February 2017: The Compensation and Economic Benefits Committee reviewed the report and recommended revisions.

March 2, 2017: The committee approved its final report.

Appendix B— Current List of Category B Titles

Instructional Functional Area

- Adjunct Professor (Instructor, Assistant, Associate, No Prefix)
- Clinical Professor (Instructor, Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Faculty Assistant (No prefix, Senior)
- Faculty Associate (Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Instrumentation Innovator – Instruction (Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Lecturer (Associate, No Prefix, Senior, Distinguished)
- Professor (CHS) (Instructor, Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Professor L/I (Instructor, Assistant, Associate, No Prefix)

Research Functional Area

- Instrumentation Innovator – Research (Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Research Animal Veterinarian (Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Researcher (Assistant, Associate, No Prefix, Distinguished)
- Scientist (Assistant, Associate, Senior, Distinguished)

Visiting Titles

- Visiting Lecturer (Associate, No Prefix, Senior)
- Visiting Professor (Instructor, Assistant, Associate, No Prefix)
- Visiting Scientist (Assistant, Associate, Senior)

Appendix C— Salary Comparison for the Scientist Series**Campus Scientists by Rank**

Title	Count	Mean A Basis	Std Dev A Basis
Distinguished Scientist	21	\$110,505	\$22,419
Senior Scientist	159	\$96,583	\$28,282
Associate Scientist	173	\$77,030	\$18,576
Assistant Scientist	235	\$62,746	\$14,240
	588		

Campus Scientists by Years in Job

Years in Job	Count	Mean A Basis	Std Dev A Basis
First Year New Hire	73	\$65,542	\$21,492
1-5 Years	200	\$68,166	\$20,379
6-10 Years	123	\$79,434	\$22,386
11-15 Years	82	\$86,392	\$26,147
15-20 Years	62	\$90,211	\$24,510
20-25 Years	23	\$99,508	\$26,408
25+ Years	25	\$103,786	\$27,052
	588		