

WMU-AAUP Bulletin

Western Michigan University
Chapter of American
Association of University Professors

WMU Faculty Salaries vs. the National Average *Galen Alessi, Psychology Department*

The accompanying three figures (with data from the recent March-April 2009 issue of *Academe*) illustrate the financial dilemma faced by Western Michigan University in general and by our faculty in particular. Figure 1. shows how far below the national averages our salaries fall, for each rank. Full Professors on average earned \$29,000 per year less than the national average. Associate Professors on average earned \$12,300 per year less than the national average. And Assistant Professors on average earned \$14,900 per year less than the national average. Figure 2. shows that average Full Professor salaries at WMU ranked at the 27th centile nationally. Average Associate Professor salaries ranked at the 33rd centile nationally. Average Assistant Professor salaries ranked at the 18th centile nationally. While WMU salaries for decades have fallen substantially below national average (or median) salary levels, these gaps may be expected to widen rather than narrow in the coming years. Raises at WMU over the past five years have been lagging behind raises at comparable universities (Figure 3). Salaries for other employee groups at WMU have fared even worse, and especially for those without the protection of a contract.

Faculty have been, in effect, helping Western cope with its financial burdens by working for lower wages and raises. Low faculty wages have allowed WMU to keep student tuition lower than that at most other Michigan public universities (e.g., CMU, GVSU).

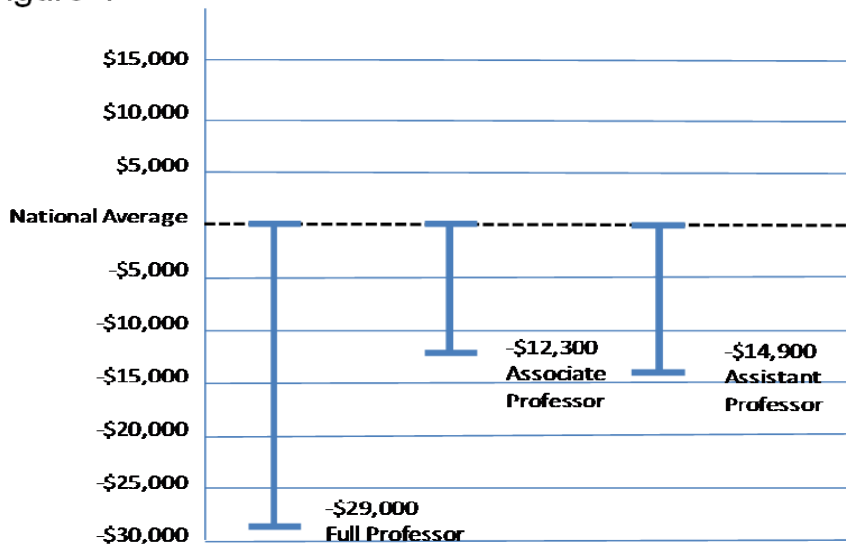
As a national doctoral Level I university, however, WMU must be able to recruit faculty from the national market, not locally. To compete in the national market, we need to pay competitive salaries, followed by competitive annual raises. Hiring and retaining a nationally ranked faculty has now become one of WMU's more serious challenges, threatening the quality of instructional programs. Other universities can hire away our faculty members by offering them raises of \$15-20,000 over their WMU salary, while still paying them only an average salary. The surest way to transform WMU from a national Doctoral Level I university back into a regional Level II Master's university is to continue paying these Level II salaries.

See charts on back.

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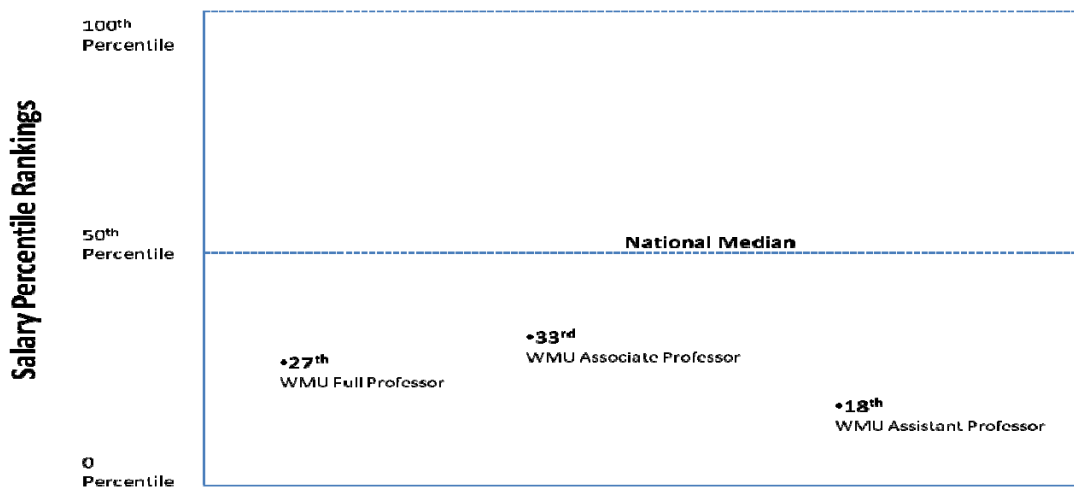


Figure 1



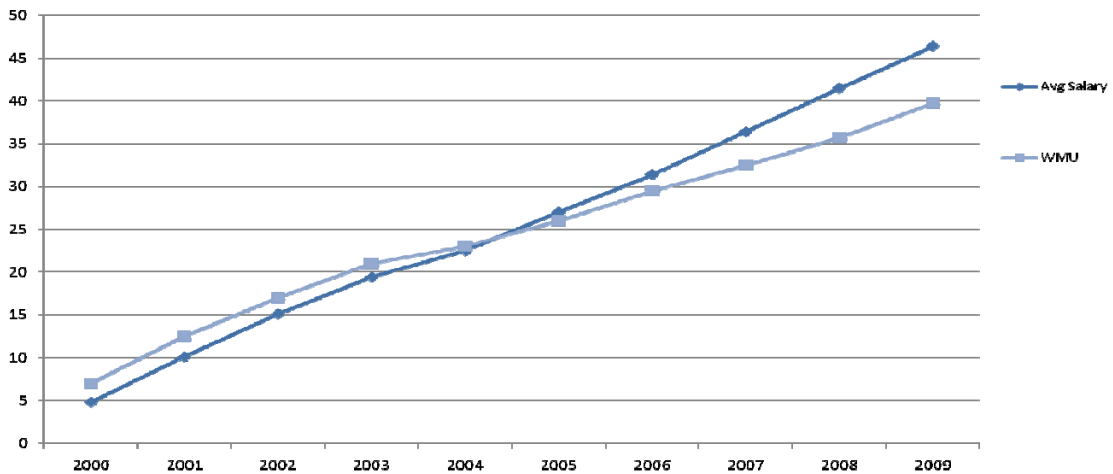
Compares the dollar differences between the average faculty salary by rank at WMU with the national average salary by rank for 270 of 295 reporting Doctoral Level I universities (*Academe*, March-April 2009).

Figure 2



Presents the percentile ranking (1-100-centile) of the WMU average faculty salary by rank among the 270-295 reporting Doctoral Level I universities (*Academe*, March-April 2009).

Figure 3



Depicts the annual percent raises over the past decade for faculty at WMU vs. the national average raises for all faculty at all ranks at all levels of the universities (@ 2.500). [*Academe*, March-April 2009].