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Lagging faculty salaries threaten academics

Budget limitations have left the University increasingly unable to compete for prospective faculty

BY MORIAH BALINGIT
NEWS REPORTER

Maintaining top-notch faculty at the University is like running a professional baseball team, Associate Professor of Physics Stephen Hsu said.

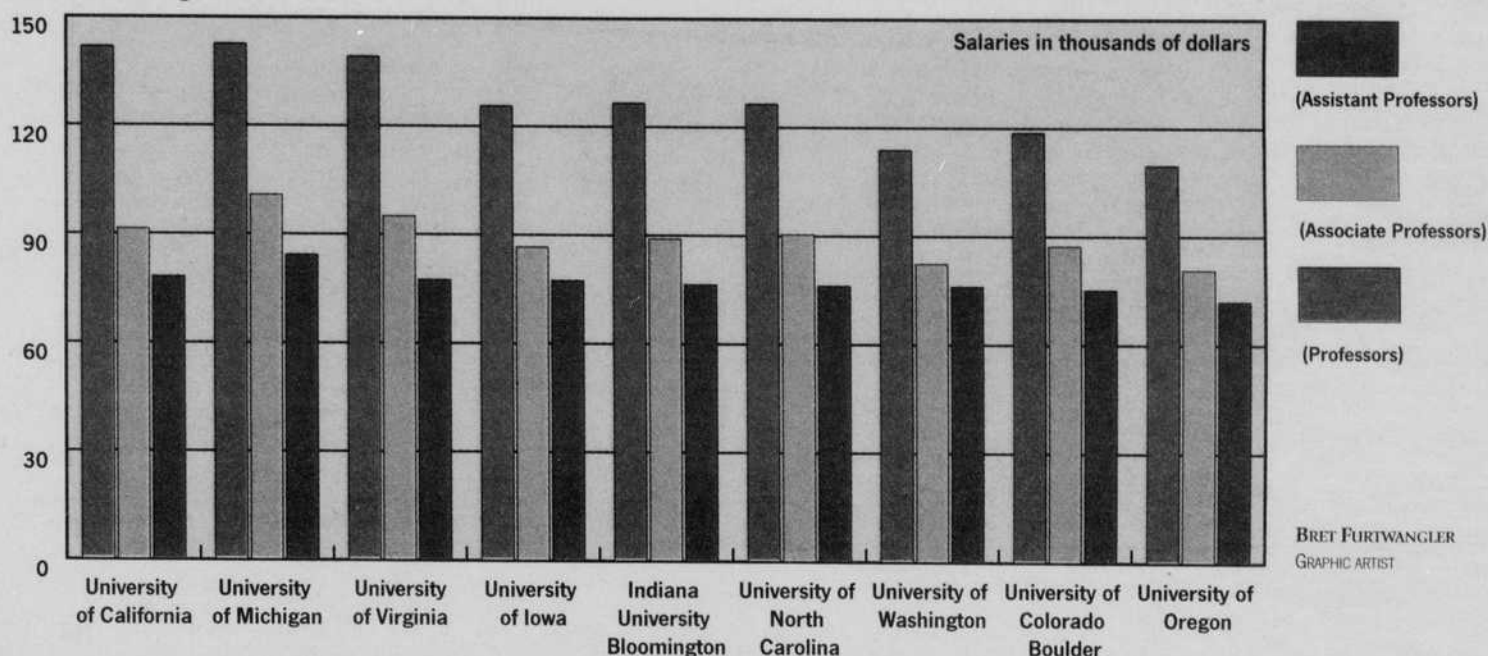
"If you're trying to run a baseball team and you can't pay your free agents what other teams are paying, you're going to lose your top players," Hsu said.

Average faculty salaries at the University have long lagged behind those of comparable institutions, but in recent years, the gap has been exacerbated.

"Lately we've found that all of our comparators, and even schools we would consider lower in prestige, are paying more (than the University)," Hsu said.

Some faculty members said the lagging average salary has impacted far more than the professors' pockets. It has created challenges in recruiting new faculty who often get better offers elsewhere. And it has led to what Hsu described as a "steady attrition of top people" from the University.

Other factors that used to keep faculty here,



BRET FURTWANGLER
GRAPHIC ARTIST

such as a top-rate pension program and a low cost of living, continue to erode, some faculty said, making it even more challenging to recruit and retain faculty.

Chemistry Professor Michael Kellman suggested that the University's priorities are out of order.

"The University community is working toward a world-class arena — and that's fine — but does almost nothing about the fact that faculty salaries are at the bottom of the heap," he said. "Isn't there something grotesque about the sense of priorities?"

University Senior Vice President and

Provost John Moseley said faculty compensation is a top priority for the University, but it's only one of many.

"The top priority ... will be to provide a high quality education for our students," he said.

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IN BRIEF

University student drowns at Lake Shasta annual party

A University student drowned Sunday at Lake Shasta after hitting his head on the side of a boat moored near Slaughterhouse Island.

Joel Nathan Meyer, a 21-year-old journalism student from Sisters, Ore., hit his head on the rail of a houseboat at about 4:40 p.m. Sunday and fell into the lake, according to a Shasta County Sheriff's Office news release. He was taken by helicopter to Shasta Regional Medical Center in Redding and pronounced dead.

University junior Tanner Messner traveled with Meyer to Lake Shasta for the annual Memorial Day weekend party and said many people were around when the accident occurred.

"Before we knew it, we were helpless," Messner said.

Messner said he was on a boat near the one Meyer was on when the accident occurred and that a person experienced in scuba diving had scuba gear on the boat and jumped in after Meyer.

"He must have went in as soon as he saw it happen," Messner said. "He pulled him up pretty quick, but it was still a good 15 minutes from what I remember."

Messner said most everyone on the island and around the lake knew what had happened within minutes.

"I'm pretty sure the word spread fast around the whole island," Messner said. "The boats were all around; I'm sure everyone knew it was happening."

Messner said Meyer will be remembered for being an energetic and fun-loving guy.

Meyer was crowned Mr. SHS at Sisters High School in 2002, and his uncle said he interned for the local paper in Sisters, the Nugget Newspaper.

His profile on the social networking Web site Thefacebook.com listed his concentration in school as electronic media and news-editorial journalism.

As of press time more than 20 friends had posted messages telling Meyer how much he meant to them and how much he would be missed.

"Everyone loves him," Messner said.

— Meghann M. Cuniff

Senators Speak out

The outgoing Student Senators recalled accomplishments, such as the library's 24/7 finals schedule and changing the stipend model

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

As new ASUO Student Senators took the reins from their predecessors last week, former members told the Emerald their opinions on the Senate's greatest achievement this year, what the Senate could have done differently and what Senators should do next year.

Although at least 24 students sat on the 18-member Senate over the course of this year, the Emerald contacted those still on the Senate as of May 24. Of those students, only two will return next year.

Mike Sherman, Seat 3

Sherman wrote in an e-mail that the Senate's most important decision was approving the incidental fee budgets for the Athletic Department Finance Committee, the EMU Board of Directors and the Programs Finance Committee.

"No other decision made by student government this year will affect every student as much as the approval of these budgets," he wrote.

Sherman also said the budget decision should have been made differently.

"The Senate and the Executive once again substantially increased the incidental fee. (It) is hypocrisy at its finest — student leaders voting to increase their own fees while lobbying the state legislature for a tuition freeze," he wrote. "Unfortunately, this hypocrisy is not unique to this Senate, but rather has dominated student government for at least the three years I have been a senator and likely even longer than this."

He wrote that the Senate also needs to address these "exponential increases in the incidental fee."

"A general lack of vision and inability to make tough decisions have prevented student

leaders from addressing this issue," he wrote. "If it is not addressed, the incidental fee will continue to rise and eventually the general student body, the President of the University, or the OUS Board will relinquish the power given to student government to allocate the incidental fee."

Sherman said he will be attending University of California Hastings College of Law next year.

Stephanie Erickson, Seat 5

The Senate's work with the ASUO Programs Finance Committee on changing the stipend model was the most important decision because it affected a lot of programs, Erickson said. She said the issue will "definitely come up next year" because the final decision to fund some stipends using over-realized funds was "just a one-year thing."

"You can't just take money out like that every year," she said.

She also said she wished more Senators hadn't dropped out of the Senate early, which prevented the Senate from passing changes to its rules because it could not meet quorum requirements.

"That definitely affected quorum," she said. "That's definitely a thing I hope we'll do better next year."

Erickson will return to the Senate next year.

James George, Seat 6

George said the Senate's important decisions centered on this year's budget season. He said it was good that the Senate could act as a voice for student groups and was able to give some stipends back. He called the final solution to use over-realized funds a "drastic measure," saying a resolution is needed that is "more than a quick fix on an Excel spreadsheet."

"This was the year to set the stage for Senate

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Today: Senators reflect on successes and failures.

Wednesday: Remaining representatives consider their terms in office.

to be more than just people who sit in the board room on Wednesday night," he said.

George said the Senate should make sure all groups know the Senate can support them, citing help the Senate gave groups through resolution outside of the normal budget process.

He said academic senators have done a better job of defining their roles this year, but said Senators should continue being visible to students to ensure they are representing the student body.

George said he will be moving to Los Angeles to work at a marketing agency.

Lisa Lam, Seat 8

One of the Senate's most important actions was working on securing funding for 24/7 library access, Lam said in an e-mail.

"The senators, especially the academic senators (Sarah Wells and Stephanie Stoll) worked extremely hard to bring awareness of this issue and speak to higher administration regarding the importance of this service," she wrote.

She wrote that the stipend issue was an "extremely difficult one to make."

"Because of the injunctions earlier this year, everyone was pushed for time, and as a result no one was happy with the decision," she wrote. "This is definitely an issue that next year's Senate will have to address."

Lam wrote she is thinking about going to graduate school in the next few years, but will move back to Portland for now.

Kevin Day, Seat 9

Day said the most critical decision had to do with the stipend model.

"Not many decisions in Senate will affect that many people at once and change their programming and how they do things," he said.

He said he would change how the fall finance retreat and its aftermath were handled.

"I think there was a better way of doing it," he said. "I think individuals escaped personal punishment and owning up to their wrong decisions, such as the letter writing, carrying the alcohol in the van and smoking the weed. I think those are the three biggest things that stood out to me with what happened at the finance retreat that should never happen at any retreat."

Day said he didn't do anything illegal at the retreat.

"I don't think it was fair that I had a burden on my shoulders as a punishment of mainly a

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