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STUDY FINDS FEMALE-MALE FACULTY SALARY GAP SMALL OR NONEXISTENT AT UCLA; WOMEN MAY TRAIL MEN IN ADVANCEMENT

First-ever gender equity study also shows UCLA lagged in hiring women in 1990s

Salary disparities between female and male faculty at UCLA are “small or nonexistent,” according to the findings of a first-ever campus gender equity study conducted by a team of UCLA researchers. However, the study also suggests that women may take longer than men to reach higher steps of the academic ladder, such as full professor status, an important mark of prestige and success in academia.

The landmark study, entitled “Gender Equity Issues Affecting Senate Faculty at UCLA,” generally dispels perceptions that women faculty are paid less than men for similar positions at UCLA. However, the research team noted its salary finding “does not mean that there are no disparities between employment conditions for men and women at UCLA.”

In a report to UCLA administration, a committee of 12 faculty members (nine women and three men) recommended that UCLA develop a new method of gathering payroll data to facilitate further study of the overall gender climate on the campus. Other recommendations addressed concerns of female faculty about possible retaliation by colleagues for requesting salary information, being unduly burdened with low-visibility committee assignments, the shortage of affordable and available campus child care, and inconsistent implementation of maternity policies.

Chancellor Albert Carnesale announced that he would immediately accept the committee’s recommendation to create three joint Administration-Academic Senate committees to examine additional gender issues at UCLA that the committee was not able to address as part of the study.

“This landmark report provides the UCLA academic community with a blueprint to develop a long-range strategic study of gender equity at the university,” Carnesale said. “I am heartened that this research shows no patterns of gender-related salary discrimination, but clearly we must seek out and hire greater numbers of qualified women while we improve our campus environment for female faculty.”

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An analysis of 1999–2000 payroll data showed that female faculty earn 2.4 percent less than male faculty when comparing individuals within the same rank and department, and who have similar year of hire or highest degree, “suggesting that most of the overall difference in compensation between men and women at UCLA results from the fact that women tend to be concentrated in lower-paying departments,” according to the study.

The data also show that the majority of female assistant professors are paid more than their male colleagues of equal rank in most campus academic units. At the associate professor level, salaries appear to be relatively balanced, with about half the women earning more than men and the other half earning less. However, male full professors earn more than their female counterparts across all academic units, with the exception of the physical sciences.

The report was issued following a six-month study conducted by the committee appointed by Norman Abrams, UCLA’s vice chancellor of academic personnel. Unavailability of data prevented the committee from studying gender issues in the School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry.

Because of the lack of historical data, the report analyzed only a “snapshot” of 1999–2000 UCLA payroll data and recommended improved data collection to support studies of what happens to faculty careers in the academic-personnel system over a longer period of time.

“I’m reassured by the basic finding concerning salary disparities, but a number of issues that flow from other findings in the report require attention and action,” Abrams said. “We want to eliminate inequities based on gender in any form on this campus.”

“The discrepancies in pay between men and women are surprisingly small once you correct for department, years of service or years from a degree,” said Margaret Kivelson, professor of space physics and co-chair of the UCLA Gender Equity Committee. “However, across the board, women are in the areas of campus where nationally the pay scales are lower. We need women in all fields within the academy. I think this is a national issue.”

“What you see at UCLA is a microcosm of society,” said Janet Currie, professor of economics and also co-chair of the committee. “Most differentials in the salaries of men and women are the result of occupation.”

Although the data necessary to investigate advancement and promotion through the ranks were not available, the committee was able to draw some preliminary conclusions based on the snapshot data. What they observed “showed different patterns for men and women,” the study reported.

“There are still very low numbers of women faculty in many departments, and men are far more likely to be found at the senior end of the ladder than women,” the report states. “Given the close link between rank, step and salary at UCLA, gender differences in salary ... in some academic units suggest that there may be differences in the rates at which men and

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women progress up the faculty ladder.”

The report revealed that women are 4 percent less likely than men to have reached the rank of full professor conditional on having achieved tenure, and 6.7 percent less likely than men to reach the higher Step VI level after they have been promoted to full professor. Within the UC system, Step VI carries considerable prestige.

Another major finding of the report suggested that UCLA’s hiring of women in the 1990s leveled off while male hiring rates rose through the same decade.

“I am gravely concerned about this trend,” Kivelson said. “It is very discouraging to students to go into classes every day and never be taught by a woman. Hiring more women takes a strong, positive effort and I think we’ve stopped making that effort over the last decade.

Kivelson noted that UCLA took a more active role in hiring women in the 1970s and 1980s. “This means we kept our eyes on the women coming through the system who were looking really outstanding,” she said.

Abrams said he supports a detailed look at UCLA’s hiring and promotion patterns within departments and an exploration of what accounts for the apparent slow progress of female faculty up the academic ladder. He expressed hope that a more detailed study of the overall gender climate on campus will yield information that could be used as a basis for making changes.

“While many women are happy in their employment at UCLA, we were also struck by the number of women who seemed very unhappy because they felt that their contributions were not being properly valued,” said Currie, who noted that additional information is needed because the committee did not conduct extensive hearings.

For a copy of the study, contact the UCLA Office of Media Relations, (310) 825-2585. The study is also available at the UCLA Gender Equity Committee Web site: (<http://www.apo.ucla.edu/apoweb/GEC/index.html>).