

# Compensation and Benefits Issues and Motion

## **Compensation and Benefits Committee**

Erik Grimmer-Solem (chair), Jeff Rider (vice-chair),

Joe Coolon, Amy Grillo, Khalil Johnson, Amanda Nelson, Helen Poulos, Phil Resor

December 7, 2021

## CBC motion:

The faculty requests the President and administration take steps to address the erosion of faculty salaries from the pay freeze and accelerating inflation precipitated by the current Covid-related crises. These steps include measures to address the negative impact of the recent pay freeze and inflation and the problem of severely underpaid continuing faculty, visitors, and per-course instructors. In order to strengthen the quality of instruction and the ranking and reputation of the university, the faculty recommends returning to the compensation target agreed with the faculty in 2001 to place Wesleyan average faculty salaries at all ranks in the top third of our fifteen school comparison group.

# Permanent austerity

- Cost-cutting and belt-tightening during the financial crisis and its aftermath (2007-10) became permanent policies. The mutually agreed peer group salary target was redefined lower without faculty advice or consent. Even that lower benchmark was often missed
- New initiatives and programs have been expanded by relying heavily on severely underpaid continuing faculty, visitors, and per course instructors and by shifting administrative burdens to the faculty
- Some of the highest tuition rates in the country and an expanded student body, yet comparatively low spending per student
- New crises become opportunities to cut costs and bank the savings. Faculty salaries were frozen in 2020-21 and the 4% average pay increase for 2021-22 was below the rate of inflation, which is currently running at annualized rate of 6.2%

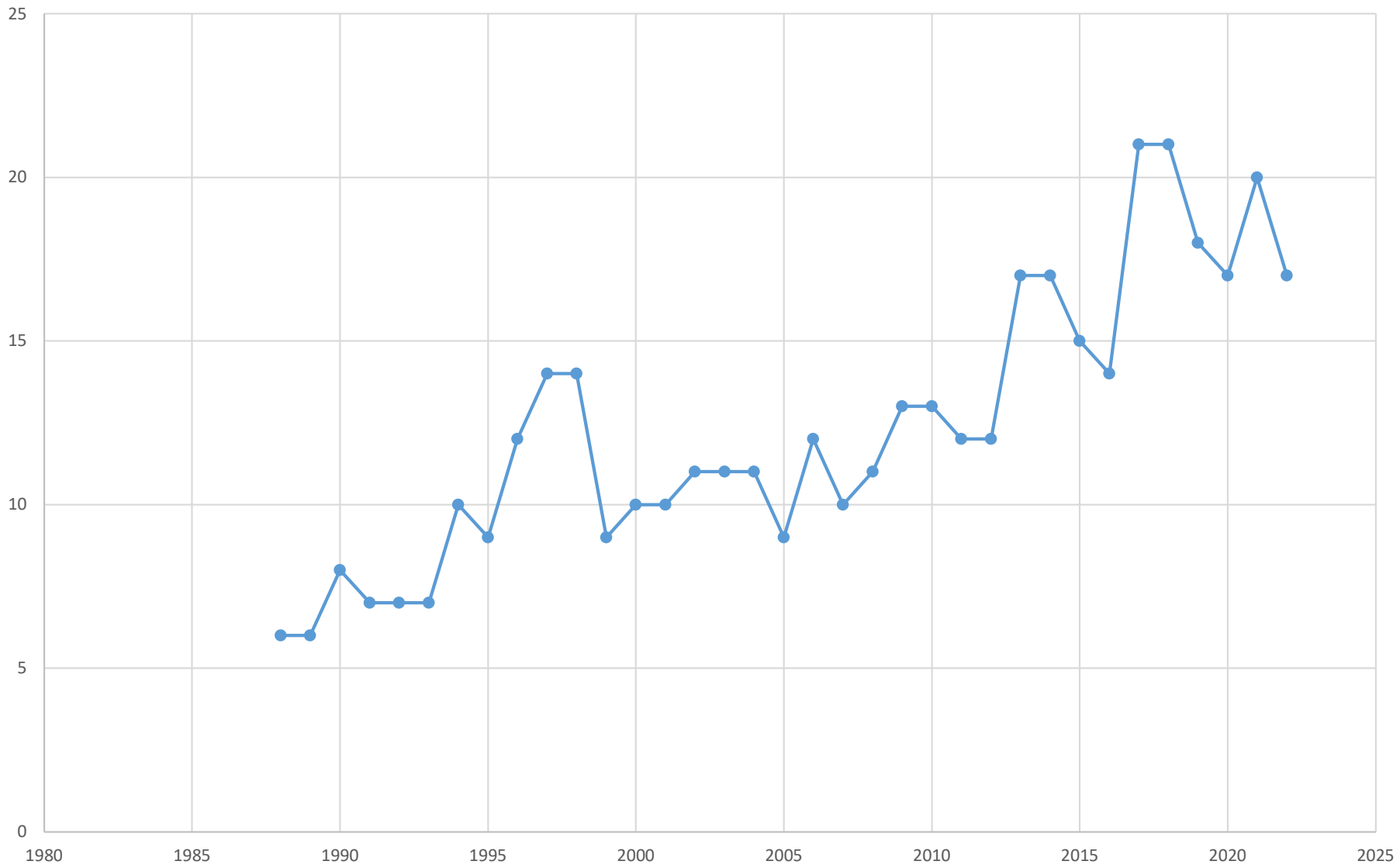
# Consequences

- Inability to hire and retain the best faculty due to uncompetitive salaries
- Immense cost and wasted faculty effort running searches year after year and mentoring faculty. Cumulative negative reputational toll on the university
- Already low faculty morale from chronic underpayment taxed to the breaking point by the demands of Covid, the pay freeze, and accelerating inflation. Deteriorating campus climate
- Perception among faculty that they have not benefitted from the financial success of the university. Growing pay and status gulf between the faculty and senior administration; eroded faculty governance
- Decline in the reputation of our teaching
- Alumni dissatisfaction with their Wesleyan education
- Decline in the main university ranking
- Threats to our status as a premier small university/liberal arts college

# US News and World Report ranking among national liberal arts colleges for 2021-22. Wesleyan ranks

- # 17 among national liberal arts colleges (tied with Barnard, Colby, Colgate, and Smith). Overall score 84/100
- # 18 in student excellence
- # 42 in financial resources (based on average spending per student on instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, and institutional support)
- # 45 in alumni giving
- # 48 in best undergraduate teaching (based on a 2021 survey of college presidents, provosts, and admissions deans asked to nominate 15 schools with strong undergraduate teaching. 7 nominations were needed to be ranked)
- # 23 in faculty resources (based on class size, faculty salary, # of faculty with highest degree in field, student to faculty ratio, and proportion of full-time faculty)
- # 15 in faculty compensation
- # 3 in tuition costs (compared with the 15 schools in our peer group)

## Wesleyan US News Ranking Over Time



# Wesleyan's compensation peer group: 15 schools

- 12 colleges: **Amherst, Bryn Mawr, Carelton, Dartmouth, Mt. Holyoke, Oberlin, Pomona, Smith, Swarthmore, Trinity, Wellesley, Williams**; 3 small universities: **Brandeis, Brown, Tufts**
- This peer group was agreed between the faculty and administration in 2001. The agreed compensation target was that Wesleyan salaries would fall into the top third of this group



Nov 13, 2006

To the Trustees of Wesleyan University

The Faculty of Wesleyan University has long supported institutional goals of excellence in teaching and scholarship. In national surveys, the academic reputation of the University is ranked consistently among the top ten liberal arts institutions in the country. Today we see this excellence threatened by inadequate support for the Faculty and their work. In the same national surveys, Wesleyan ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in faculty resources, including faculty compensation.

We note:

- In 2001 the Faculty and the Administration reached agreement on a group of 15 comparison schools and set the goal that Wesleyan faculty salaries would fall within the top third of this group. The Faculty has always agreed that this goal represents fair compensation.
- This goal has never been met by the Administration. Moreover, recent sub-inflationary salary increases have resulted in Wesleyan faculty salaries falling further in rank within the comparison group.
- In addition, institutional contributions to faculty retirement plans have been cut in half over the past 25 years. As a result, the Wesleyan Faculty can expect accumulated retirement savings at a level 30% lower than for faculty in the comparison group. This deficiency imperils the University's ability to recruit and retain excellent young faculty.
- We applaud the recent successful capital campaign, the record-breaking levels of fund raising, the substantial enhancements to the physical campus, and continued support for need-blind admissions. At the same time, the Faculty have been told year after year that there are insufficient funds for their compensation to meet the agreed goal.

We expect the University to work with the Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee:

- 1) to honor its commitments and raise faculty salaries up to the previously agreed level before the end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year,
- 2) to maintain faculty salaries at least within the top third among the comparison group going forward, and
- 3) to provide retirement benefits for faculty comparable to those provided within the comparison group.

The Faculty is deeply committed to Wesleyan University. It is time for the University to show the same commitment to its Faculty.

Signed by 156 faculty members and professional librarians (attached)

Henry Ablove, Professor of English  
Richard Adelstein, Professor of Economics  
Helen Aiello, Serials Librarian  
Stephen Angle, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Michael Armstrong-Roche, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures  
Allan Berlind, Professor of Biology, Emeritus  
Jonathan Best, Professor of Art History  
Michaëlle Biddle, Head of Preservation Services  
Steven Bischof, Science Librarian  
Reinhold Blümel, Charlotte Augusta Ayres Professor of Physics  
Petra Bonfert-Taylor, Associate Professor of Mathematics  
John Bonin, Professor of Economics  
Ann Burke, Associate Professor of Biology  
John Carr, Professor of Theater  
Douglas Charles, Professor of Anthropology  
Barry Chernoff, Professor of Biology  
Mary Ann Clawson, Professor of Sociology  
Fred Cohan, Professor of Biology  
Karen Collins, Professor of Mathematics  
Wistar Comfort, Edward Burr van Vleck Professor of Mathematics  
Christina Crosby, Professor of English and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
Andrew Curran, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures  
Jonathan Cutler, Associate Professor of Sociology  
Stephen Devoto, Associate Professor of Biology  
Lisa Dierker, Associate Professor of Psychology  
Alex Dupuy, Professor of Sociology  
Fred Ellis, Professor of Physics  
Nina Felshin, Curator of Exhibitions, Zilkha Gallery and Adjunct Lecturer in Art History  
Adam Fieldsteel, Professor of Mathematics  
John Finn, Professor of Government  
William Firshein, Professor of Biology, Emeritus  
Douglas Foyle, Associate Professor of Government  
Albert Fry, Professor of Chemistry  
Susanne Fusso, Professor of Russian Language and Literature  
Valerie Gillispie, Assistant University Archivist  
Antonio Gonzalez, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures  
Peter Gottschalk, Associate Professor of Religion  
Laura Grabel, Professor of Biology  
Lori Gruen, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Patricia Hill, Professor of History and American Studies  
Manju Hingorani, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
Kendall Hobbs, Reference Librarian  
Scott Holmes, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
Steven Horst, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Mark Hovey, Associate Professor of Mathematics  
Joyce Jacobsen, Andrews Professor of Economics



Susanne Javorski, Art and Reference Librarian  
Ron Jenkins, Professor of Theater  
William Johnston, Professor of History  
Indira Karamcheti, Associate Professor of English  
Marilyn A. Katz, Professor of Classical Studies  
Michael Keane, Professor of Mathematics  
Peter Kilby, Professor of Economics  
John Kim, Associate Professor of Biology  
Joseph Knee, Professor of Chemistry  
Ronald Kuivila, Adjunct Professor of Music  
EunJoo Lee, Head of Access Services, Olin Library  
Leo Lensing, Professor of German Studies and Film Studies  
Alvin Lucier, John Spencer Camp Professor of Music  
Lewis Lukens, Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Emeritus  
Peter Mark, Professor of Art History  
Bruce Masters, Professor of History  
Michael McAlear, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
Elizabeth McAlister, Associate Professor of Religion  
Sean McCann, Associate Professor of English  
Priscilla Meyer, Professor of Russian Language and Literature  
Jill Morawski, Professor of Psychology  
Ishita Mukerji, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
Russell Murphy, Professor of Government  
Janice Naegele, Professor of Biology  
Alan Nathanson, Bibliographer/Reference Librarian  
Howard Needler, Professor of Letters  
David Nelson, Artist in Residence, Music  
Ellen Nerenberg, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures  
Stewart Novick, Professor of Chemistry  
Laurie Nussdorfer, Professor of History and Letters  
Suzanne O'Connell, Associate Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences  
Donald Oliver, Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
John Paoletti, Professor of Art History  
Christopher Parslow, Professor of Classical Studies  
William Pinch, Professor of History  
Catherine Poisson, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures  
Philip Pomper, Professor of History  
Claire Potter, Professor of History  
Rex Pratt, Professor of Chemistry  
Wendy Rayack, Associate Professor of Economics  
Michael Roberts, Professor of Classical Studies  
Renee Romano, Associate Professor of History  
Rob Rosenthal, Professor of Sociology  
Ashraf Rushdy, Professor of English  
Irina Russu, Professor of Chemistry  
John Salzer, Professor of Astronomy

Ronald Schatz, Professor of History  
Jeffrey Schiff, Professor of Art  
David Schorr, Professor of Art  
Paul Schwaber, Professor of Letters  
Nancy Schwartz, Professor of Government  
Philip Scowcroft, Professor of Mathematics  
John Seamon, Professor of Psychology  
Gil Skillman, Professor of Economics  
Mark Slobin, Professor of Music  
Richard Slotkin, Professor of English  
Gay Smith, Professor of Theater  
Brian Stewart, Associate Professor of Physics  
William Stowe, Professor of English  
Ruth Striegel-Moore, Professor of Psychology  
Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Professor of Classical Studies  
Suzy Taraba, University Archivist  
Edward Taylor, Associate Professor of Mathematics  
Khachig Tololyan, Professor of English  
Elizabeth Traube, Professor of Anthropology  
Jennifer Tucker, Associate Professor of History  
Patricia Tully, Associate University Librarian  
Alfred Turco, Professor of English  
Phillip Wagoner, Professor of Art History  
T. David Westmoreland, Associate Professor of Chemistry  
Duffield White, Associate Professor of Russian Language and Literature  
Ellen Widmer, Professor of Asian Languages and Literatures  
Ann Wightman, Professor of History  
Jan Willis, Professor of Religion  
Krishna Winston, Professor of German Studies  
Carol Wood, Professor of Mathematics  
Su Zheng, Associate Professor of Music  
Jeremy Zwelling, Associate Professor of Religion

and 36 untenured faculty members

Comparison of Average Salaries by Rank Among 16 Institutions

Rank	Academic year	Wesleyan average salary (\$)	Wesleyan's rank (out of 16)	Peer Group				
				Median (\$)	Std. Dev. (\$)	Min (\$)	Max (\$)	Mean (\$)
Full Professors	20-21	158,500	6th	156,000	20,000	123,000	203,000	154,000
	19-20	160,200	7th	155,600	22,005	128,600	216,300	156,869
	18-19	155,800	6th	154,200	20,431	128,400	207,800	153,588
	17-18	152,633	8th	151,833	18,699	125,263	196,600	150,472
	16-17	149,445	6th	148,760	14,755	122,369	178,698	146,635
	15-16	145,835	8th	144,175	15,492	115,734	173,543	142,137
	14-15	141,500	7th	141,315	13,903	118,706	168,820	140,031
	13-14	136,300	9th	138,133	14,042	115,545	164,833	136,926
	12-13	133,800	9th	135,409	13,983	112,670	161,378	133,813
	11-12	129,200	11th	130,987	13,327	112,685	157,249	130,919
	10-11	130,200	8th	130,143	11,946	111,866	151,121	128,989
	09-10	129,400	7th	128,739	10,999	111,604	146,002	127,259
	08-09	130,300	8th	129,945	11,411	111,435	146,285	127,779
	07-08	124,500	8th	124,459	11,386	105,866	139,998	122,598
	06-07	120,300	8th	119,752	10,699	100,031	134,853	117,488
Associate Professors	20-21	111,000	8th	109,500	10,683	95,000	134,800	109,619
	19-20	111,200	7th	109,000	10,792	95,200	137,000	110,406
	18-19	108,700	8th	108,150	10,577	94,400	135,800	108,456
	17-18	106,504	8th	105,765	8,968	95,284	128,400	106,147
	16-17	103,410	8th	103,267	6,306	92,988	112,374	102,661
	15-16	100,435	9th	100,504	6,855	90,684	114,905	100,635
	14-15	97,700	9th	98,127	7,065	88,818	110,937	98,499
	13-14	93,300	9th	94,938	6,368	87,763	106,568	96,361
	12-13	90,200	10th	92,492	6,526	84,349	103,611	93,742
	11-12	86,200	11th	90,574	6,413	82,817	100,470	91,038
	10-11	85,200	11th	88,624	6,107	81,490	99,123	89,328
	09-10	84,300	11th	88,159	5,807	80,122	97,229	88,044
	08-09	85,100	11th	88,746	5,703	81,219	98,552	88,885
	07-08	82,100	12th	85,233	6,010	76,848	97,364	85,700
	06-07	78,000	11th	81,129	5,801	72,800	94,706	81,860
Assistant Professors	20-21	91,200	8th	90,900	9,654	72,100	113,600	91,031
	19-20	93,000	8th	92,000	9,586	71,700	113,300	91,331
	18-19	91,500	7th	89,650	8,471	69,400	104,700	88,844
	17-18	89,916	6th	86,555	7,886	71,615	103,900	86,732
	16-17	86,874	6th	85,175	6,778	70,047	96,332	84,082
	15-16	85,012	5th	83,140	6,320	70,583	95,039	82,226
	14-15	81,900	8th	80,973	6,354	69,077	91,810	80,503
	13-14	79,200	8th	78,908	6,290	65,672	88,435	78,413
	12-13	76,800	9th	76,452	5,243	67,897	85,433	76,755
	11-12	72,400	11th	76,035	5,820	64,434	83,803	75,051
	10-11	71,200	11th	74,712	5,248	63,134	80,955	73,666
	09-10	69,200	12th	71,773	4,490	65,070	78,531	72,160
	08-09	70,700	10th	73,233	4,947	63,491	78,386	72,546
	07-08	68,400	10th	70,533	5,015	59,424	76,563	69,792
	06-07	65,700	11th	67,041	4,753	58,680	74,287	67,126

Below peer group median in 3 of the last 15 years

Below peer group median in 10 of the last 15 years

Below peer group median in 6 of the last 15 years

# Paying at the median

- A peer group salary target should be aspirational, not serve as a justification for the status quo. Aiming at the “median salary” has resulted in us landing in the bottom third far more than in the top third of our peer group over the last 15 years
- We don’t expect “median” of peer group performance in teaching, research, and collegueship as a standard for tenure and promotion, rather we expect nothing less than excellence in all three categories
- Paying at the median has lost us many exceptional faculty members who took countless hours to recruit and mentor

# Compounding from the one-year pay freeze

For a 35 year old tenure-track Assistant Professor making \$ 90,000 per year, a one year pay freeze (not receiving a 4% raise of \$3,600) has knock-on effects:

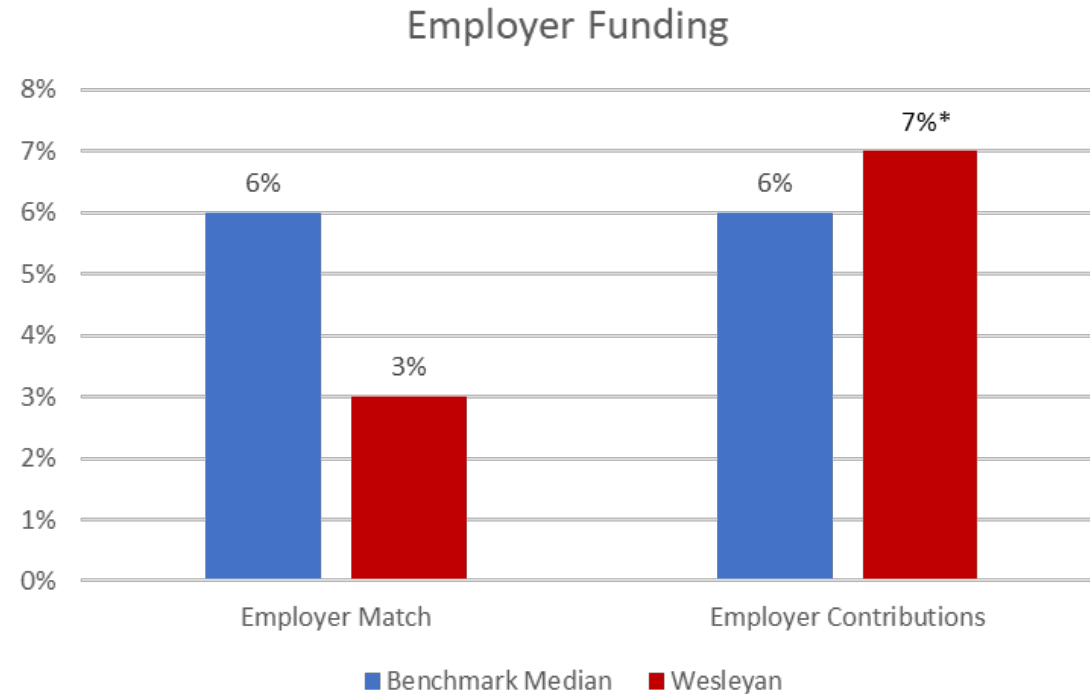
- Year 1: \$3,600 not received
- Year 2: \$3,600 not received
- Year 3: again not received and so on... Until the year of retirement

If the 35 year old AP wants to retire at age 67: \$ 115,200 lost

- ➔ This is an underestimate. What it does not include is that merit and promotion increases are a percentage of existing salary and so will be lower
- ➔ The opportunity to invest this money is also lost
- ➔ The percentage of retirement contributions will also be lower

So this loss would be much larger

# Wesleyan retirement plan 2019-20 compared with the CUPA median\*



\*7% under \$80,500 in eligible earnings, 10% for eligible earnings over \$80,500.

Employer match is contribution given to those employees who make elective contributions to the plan.

Employer contribution is made even if employee chooses not to make election contributions.

\*CUPA=College and University Professional Association, an association of human resource professionals in higher education, which collects data on retirement plans via surveys. This median was derived from New England private college retirement plans.

# Inflation

- The one-year Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers in July 2021 was 5.4% <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2021/consumer-prices-up-5-4-percent-in-12-months-ended-july-2021.htm>. During the year of the pay freeze, Wesleyan salaries fell by 5.4% in real terms.
- In October 2021 the CPI was up 0.9 % for an annualized rate of 6.2% <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm> That is the highest rate in 30 years. The average salary increase paid in July 2021 was 4%, so if this trend continues, Wesleyan salaries will fall by 2.2% in real terms this academic year.

# Continuing faculty

- Professors of the Practice (PoP) and Artists-in-Residence are docked twice for not being expected to produce scholarship: heavier teaching load and much lower pay. In most cases, PoPs are severely underpaid despite being critical to new program initiatives
- Since a 2019 policy change, Continuing Faculty have not been eligible for regular sabbaticals by accrual of teaching. The CBC recommended a return to the accrual system for all Continuing Faculty (Adjunct Professors, PoPs, Artists-in-Residence) in January 2020, whereby eligibility for a sabbatical accrues after 10 semesters of teaching (the old policy for Adjunct Professors).

# Visiting faculty, visiting assistant professors, and librarians

- Wesleyan's pay for visiting faculty is unusually low. Institutions like Middlebury College and Yale University pay approximately \$11,000 per course compared to Wesleyan's starting pay of \$ 5,600 per course. Very hard to recruit quality visitors with such low pay
- Visiting assistant professors are currently paid about \$ 55,000 for two semesters. The average salary in the state of Connecticut is just over \$70,000 per year
- Professional librarians have received lower average percentage pay increases than faculty



# CBC recommendations

1. A 4 % raise, a 4% quality retention investment, and a 4% cost of living adjustment paid to all faculty in 2022-23 (a **12% total salary increase**)
  - The quality retention investment works toward correcting multiple years of below peer group target salary increases and helps assure that the university can hire and retain the best faculty in 2022-23
  - The cost of living adjustment recognizes that inflation is at a 30 year high. The CPI in July 2021 was 5.4 % and is currently running at an annualized rate of 6.2%

2. As agreed between the faculty and administration in 2001, Wesleyan should aim to pay average faculty salaries at all ranks to place us in the top third of our 15 school peer group (i.e., # 5 or higher).
3. Bring the retirement plan employer match above the CUPA median to at least 7%
4. Continuing Faculty and visiting assistant professor salaries should be raised so that they reach the top third of our peer group
5. Per-course instructor pay should be raised so that it reaches the top third of our peer group
6. All Continuing Faculty should accrue eligibility for a sabbatical according to a regular schedule of ten semesters of teaching. Visiting professors turned into Professors of the Practice should have their teaching service as visitors accrue toward such a sabbatical. The sabbatical clock going forward should be set from the time of appointment or from the date of the last sabbatical
7. Bring professional librarian pay increase percentages to levels received by faculty

## CBC motion:

The faculty requests the President and administration take steps to address the erosion of faculty salaries from the pay freeze and accelerating inflation precipitated by the current Covid-related crises. These steps include measures to address the negative impact of the recent pay freeze and inflation and the problem of severely underpaid continuing faculty, visitors, and per-course instructors. In order to strengthen the quality of instruction and the ranking and reputation of the university, the faculty recommends returning to the compensation target agreed with the faculty in 2001 to place Wesleyan average faculty salaries at all ranks in the top third of our fifteen school comparison group.