

SALARY INEQUITIES

JUDY WISHNIA, ACADEMIC V.P.

Last month I attended the Representative Assembly of NYSUT (New York State United Teachers) and was delighted to meet a former neighbor I had not seen in several years. We reminisced about our old friendship, how we had both started teaching at the same time eighteen years ago, she in the second grade of a Nassau County elementary school and me at Stony Brook. We then began to talk about retirement plans. I told her that I had recently taken on an extra job at the university in order to raise my salary and hence my retirement money. When we discussed salary, she was shocked to learn that her salary was more than half again as large as mine. Several days later I had a similar discussion with another group of school teachers to discover the same story. I do not deny the hard work and importance of elementary and high school teaching; they deserve good salaries. But there is clearly something wrong with a society that undervalues higher education and research. Everyone talks about technological innovation and the need to prepare students for the 21st century but both the population-at-large and the politicians do not seem to be willing to pay the researchers and teachers who will be responsible for these intellectual achievements. We have to start making our case in the legislature, with Op-Ed columns in the newspapers, with our organizations, especially the union. Hey, we might even consider

bringing it to the attention of Geraldo or Oprah.

The discrepancies between university salaries and other teachers on Long Island are affected by SUNY and statewide politics as well as societal attitudes and changing that situation will take much effort. There is however another salary story that can be corrected right on this campus, the problem of salary compression. We have dozens of people on this campus who have done their jobs well, who have been promoted because of their achievements, who have given many years of devoted service to the university and who are earning well below the average for their position. Some were hired when starting salaries were low and now find that they are earning the same or only slightly more than new hires. Some have done their jobs well but have never threatened to take another job. (Read between the lines: if you are loyal to Stony Brook and don't want to leave, you don't get a raise!) Some are in poor departments and never had the opportunity to receive large 'merit' increases. And some are underpaid because they are women or African Americans. Last year, to distribute money from the 1988-91 contract which set aside funds to eliminate gender and race inequities, the union did a careful statistical analysis of salaries in the SUNY system. Stony Brook had the largest negative coefficient for women and one of the largest negative figures for African-Americans in the system. For academic women the average discrepancy was \$2550. Each academic woman got \$594. This was meant to be the start of eliminating inequities that have existed for many years; but so far, it has been the end. If you examine the list of all the Stony Brook salaries carefully (and they are available in the union office) you will find huge discrepancies between divisions, departments and most painful, even within departments where some full professors are

earning less than associate professors or only a few thousand dollars more than new assistant professors. Many professional women, especially Administrative Assistants, are also undervalued and underpaid.

This situation affects not only the standard of living for our low-paid colleagues, it also severely affects morale. Self-worth is undermined when the university undervalues hard work and achievements. No one wants to defend high salaries for people who are not performing well, but many of these low paid people are among the best we have. They are simply victims of salary compression. It is time to examine the salary structure and redress these grievous wrongs. It is one thing to be underpaid because one works at a university, it is another thing to be underpaid because one works at Stony Brook.

ANNUAL GIVING

Donna Vaccaro, who is a member and a graduate of Stony Brook is in charge of Annual Giving at the university. This time we have the option of assigning where our gift can go. We urge our members to consider this seriously. A letter will be going out in the near future signed by the President.

WORKLOAD WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

A workshop on workload has been scheduled for May 3, 12:00 - 2:00 P.M. in the Peace Center, Old Chemistry. Please call the UUP office at 2-6570 to register.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT WORKSHOP

UUP and Affirmative Action are jointly sponsoring a lunch workshop on Sexual Harassment on Thursday, April 28, 11:30 - 1 P.M. Please call the UUP office at 2-6570 for location and to register.

NEW DENTAL FORMS AVAILABLE

Effective April 1, 1994, Delta Dental is the new insurance carrier for UUP. New forms and participating dentist lists are available by calling the UUP office at 2-6570 or JWEITZNER on all-in-one. If you have any Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield dental forms, please dispose of them. Please call the UUP office if you have questions about the new plan.

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UUP Office	Jo Weltzner	2-6570

UUP Chapter Office • Old Chemistry 104 • 632-6570

Fax: 632-6571

Hours: 8:30 am - 3 pm

The Stony Brook Chapter Executive Board meets on alternate Thursdays at 1:00 pm. All Executive Board meetings are open to the membership. Please feel free to attend.

UUP is affiliated with NYSUT and AFT. (Local 2190)

All members are invited to contribute to the newsletter. It is possible that we may reply in print to your opinions and concerns.