

UNITED FACULTY

EMBARGOED until 1 p.m. CT, Friday, Jan. 13, 2023

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UNI-United Faculty union presents initial bargaining proposal

Proposal seeks to improve lagging faculty compensation for 2023-2025 contract

(CEDAR FALLS, Iowa) – United Faculty, UNI’s faculty labor union, met with representatives of the Board of Regents, State of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa on Friday, Jan. 13 to present its initial bargaining proposal for the upcoming negotiations for the 2023-2025 collective bargaining agreement.

United Faculty, which represents about 500 faculty members on UNI’s campus, calls for increases in UNI faculty salaries as those salaries have not kept pace with inflation, and as UNI faculty compensation has lost ground with its peer institutions.

The salary proposal calls for a 9.96% increase in the first year of the contract, and a 5.3% increase in the second year. The 9.96% increase reflects the compounded shortfall from January 2014 to January 2023 – the rate at which UNI faculty salaries have not kept up with inflation (reflected in historic CPI-U Consumer Price Index for the Midwest Region, as reported by the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov)). The request of 5.3% increase in year two reflects the government’s projected Consumer Price Index level for the following year.

“These salary requests aren’t arbitrary or far-fetched,” said Dr. Becky Hawbaker, United Faculty president. “These reflect the very real compensation shortfalls UNI faculty have been experiencing in the last decade, and especially in last year.”

“Because of these shortfalls, UNI is now next-to-last in its level of salary increases in the past decade in its group of peer institutions,” Dr. Christopher Martin, United Faculty vice-president, said. UNI maintains a list of [10 peer institutions](#), including James Madison University and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, which are selected by the university for comparison to evaluate its performance. UNI lags behind all but one in salary gains since 2013, and also lags far behind the average increases of the other 165 public Division IIA (master’s-level) universities in the U.S., according to data from the AAUP. The lower compensation makes recruiting and retaining quality faculty increasingly difficult.

The proposal also seeks to protect previously bargained rights by putting them in the contract.

“Fundamental things like procedures for sick leave, discipline, and grievances deserve the protection of a collectively bargained contract,” Hawbaker said. Those rights and procedures are currently in the UNI Faculty Handbook, which doesn’t have the protective power of a contract.

At the same time faculty salaries have lagged, the compensation of UNI’s top three academic administrators—its president, provost, and chief financial officer—is far ahead of national peers at public master’s level universities.

“UNI’s faculty are integral to the core mission of UNI,” Hawbaker said. “We sustained the university through the Covid-19 pandemic, we implemented UNIFI – an innovative new university general education curriculum, and are launching the new nursing program and school of health on the faculty accomplishments of existing programs.”

The expiring 2021-2023 contract included only a 1.3% increase to salaries at time when the U.S. Consumer Price Index rose at alarming rates. As UNI faculty salaries lag, healthcare premiums and prescription drug costs also continue to rise.

“UNI faculty are highly educated, but often not highly paid. There are faculty members who are adjuncts, term, renewable term, or early on the tenure track have children who literally qualify for free or reduced-price lunches in Iowa’s public schools,” Hawbaker said.

After UNI makes its opening proposal, the Board of Regents and UNI make their counterproposal. Then, the parties bargain for a new two-year contract that will become effective on July 1, 2023.

In 2017, the state legislature and governor of Iowa gutted Chapter 20 – Iowa’s public collective bargaining law – and excluded nearly all topics that were subject to collective bargaining for more than four decades. The proposed prohibited topics include health insurance, evaluation procedures, procedures for staff reduction, release time, grievance procedures, seniority, union dues payroll deduction, and supplemental pay. UNI’s faculty compensation shortfalls have accelerated since that time.

Chapter 20 was enacted in 1974 with bipartisan support, and signed by Republican Gov. Robert Ray. The original law led to collaborative contracts and labor peace at Iowa's schools, universities, and other public workplaces for more than 40 years.

United Faculty, established in 1976, is the chief negotiating agent for the University of Northern Iowa's faculty, and is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

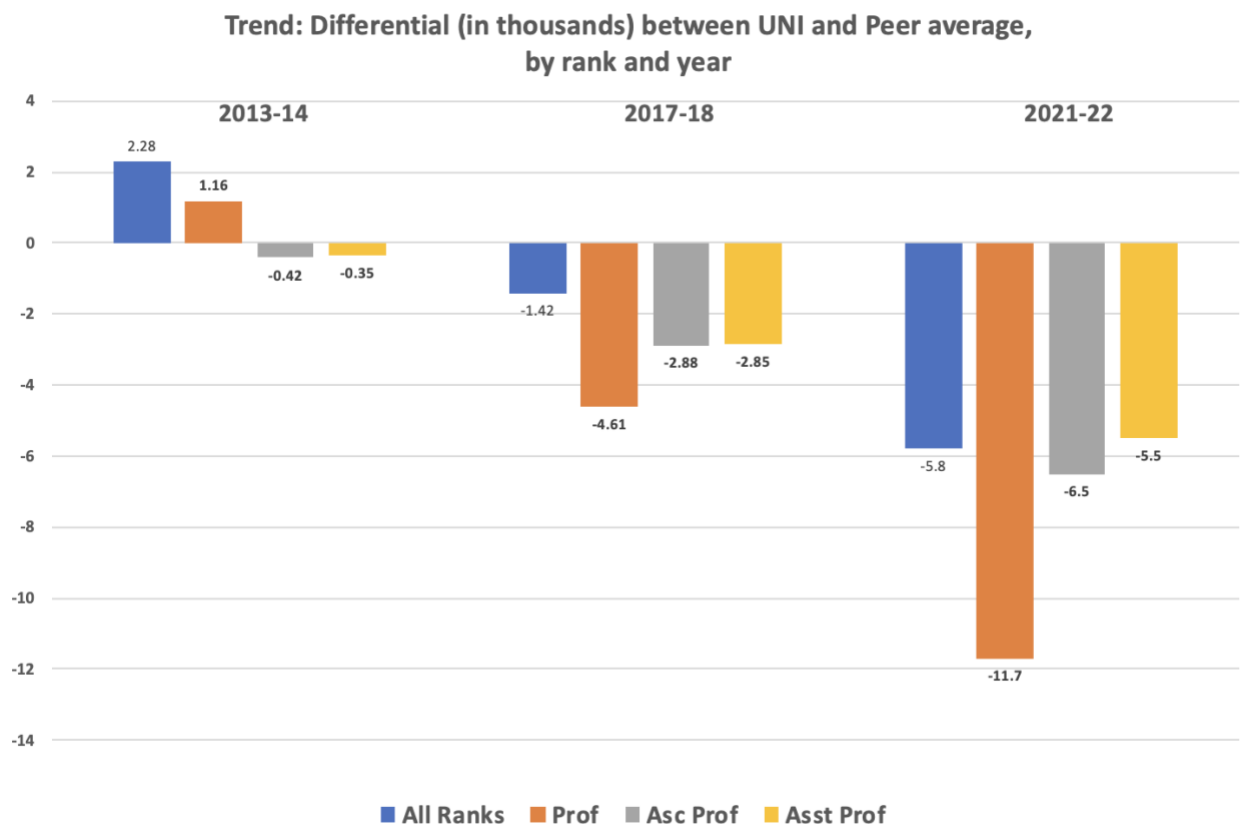
Additional materials (data from BLS, AAUP, Iowa Legislature State Employee Salary Book):

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Faculty Salary Trends, All Ranks Avg.

UNI Peer Institutions & All IIA (MA-level) Publics (\$ thousands)

	2013-14	2017-2018	2021-2022	% change 2013-14 to 2021-22
Truman State	63.54	63.6	64.2	1
UNI	74.34	76	77.3	4
So. Illinois-Edwardsville	71.19	69.2	78.2	9.8
U of Mass.-Dartmouth	93.65	97.6	103.1	10.1
U of Minnesota-Duluth	67.3	74.5	76.9	14.2
College of Charleston	69.72	77.3	82.4	18.2
Marshall	61.65	64.6	72.9	18.2
Ferris State	75.88	86.1	90.1	18.7
James Madison	72.67	79.6	86.3	18.8
ALL IIA Publics (165)	70.683	74.31	84.50	19.6
Western Washington	72.37	84.3	93.8	28.2



UNI Top Administrator Salaries and All IIA Public Top Admin, 2013-14 to 2021-22

	2013-14	2017-2018	2021-2022	% change 2013-14 to 2021- 2022		
President-UNI	348,879	357,110	357,110	2.36		
President-ALL IIA	273,255	287,143	316,419			
CAO/Provost-UNI	239,643	274,487	281,875	17.6		
CAO/Provost-ALL IIA	NA	208,176	226,935			
CFO-UNI	209,490	232,530	246,998	17.9		
CFO-All IIA	NA	189,257	200,941			

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