

UNITED FACULTY

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UNI's Faculty Seek 9.89% Increase in Salaries over 2 Years

Faculty salaries have fallen dramatically behind the cost of living and peer institutions

(CEDAR FALLS, Iowa) – United Faculty, UNI's faculty labor union, announced today that it is requesting a 9.89% increase in base wages and salaries over the next two-year contract to address real wage losses to inflation over the past 10 years.

United Faculty met with representatives of the Iowa Board of Regents and the University of Northern Iowa this morning to present its initial bargaining proposal for the 2025-2027 collective bargaining agreement.

A decade of meager or no salary increases from the Board of Regents have left UNI faculty salaries not keeping pace with inflation and lagging significantly behind its peer universities.

“UNI faculty literally have seen the real value of their salaries decline nearly 10% over the past decade,” said Dr. Christopher Martin, president of United Faculty and a professor of digital media and journalism. “That’s not sustainable, and does real harm to the faculty, who are central to maintaining excellence at UNI.”

The United Faculty proposal made three requests to address the state of UNI faculty salaries:

- A 4.95% increase in base wages (the minimum salary guidelines) for full-time and adjunct faculty for each of the two years of the 2025-2027 contract. (Each year is half of the 9.89%.)
- A 4.95% increase in the salary fund for each of the two years of the 2025-2027 contract.
- Increases in promotional raises (e.g., from Assistant to Associate Professor) for tenure-track faculty, term and renewable term faculty, and adjunct faculty. The current promotional salary increases for UNI tenure-track faculty have not changed since 2014.

There are already harms to UNI due to the low salaries. The [UNI Campus Climate Survey](#) (2023) found that 63 percent (n = 188) of faculty responded they had seriously considered leaving UNI. Of that group, 55 percent (n = 104) of faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of low salary/pay rate. Low pay is the No. 1 issue for the high percentage of faculty who are seriously considering leaving UNI.

Background on UNI faculty salaries

UNI maintains a list of [10 peer institutions](#), including Central Connecticut State University, Western Washington University, and Indiana State University, which are selected by the university for comparison to evaluate its performance.¹

¹ Salary data is for 2023-2024. UNI's peer universities are Central Connecticut State University, College of Charleston, Eastern Illinois University, Indiana State University, Minnesota State University, The College of New Jersey, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, and Western Washington University. AAUP data for Eastern Illinois University and Minnesota State University is not available. Calculations used “lecturer” instead of “instructor” category for TCNJ and UW-Whitewater, because instructor category data is not used for those two institutions. Source: <https://www.aaup.org/report/annual-report-economic-status-profession-2023-24>.

Table 1: UNI Faculty salaries compared to peer institutions

UNI Peers				
2023-2024	Peer Avg	UNI	Diff	% of Peer
AllRanks	90.9	79.4	-11.5	87.30%
Prof	111.1	93.9	-17.2	84.50%
Asc Prof	90.3	79.6	-10.7	88.20%
AsstProf	78.8	72.1	-6.7	91.50%
Instrct	65.3	60.7	-4.6	93%

* numbers in thousands

As Table 1 illustrates, UNI trails behind its peer institution salaries in every rank (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor) and all ranks combined, according to data from the AAUP (American Association of University Professors). UNI faculty salaries at all ranks combined are only 87.3% of their peer institutions' average. As recently as 2016, UNI faculty salaries kept up with its peer institutions.

UNI also trails significantly when comparing UNI faculty salaries to its peers at all 165 public Division IIA (master's-level) universities in the U.S. (see Table 2). Across all ranks, UNI faculty earn only 89.2% of their national peers. Only at the level of instructor is UNI's pay just narrowly above the national average for public Division IIA (master's-level) universities in the U.S. UNI faculty salaries at every other rank trail the national average by about 10 percent or more.

Table 2: UNI Faculty salaries compared to all public Div. IIA universities

Nat'l Peers				
2023-2024	ALL IIA Publics	UNI	Diff	% of Nat'l Peer
AllRanks	89.0	79.4	-9.6	89.20%
Prof	111.1	93.9	-17.2	84.50%
Asc Prof	91.9	79.6	-12.3	86.60%
AsstProf	79.7	72.1	-7.6	90.50%
Instrct	60.3	60.7	0.4	100.70%

* numbers in thousands

Meanwhile (see Table 3), annual salaries for the top three administrative positions at UNI (president, chief academic officer/provost, and chief financial officer) all outpace their peers at the 165 public Division IIA (master's-level) universities in the U.S. from 6% to 21% more. (This does not include deferred salaries; UNI president Mark Nook has received deferred compensation since 2018, and [will receive \\$100,000 annually](#) in deferred compensation in the upcoming two years.)

Table 3: UNI top administrator salaries compared to all public Div. IIA universities

Nat'l Peers				
2023-2024	ALL IIA Publics	UNI	Diff	% of Nat'l Peers
President	350,000	372,110	22,110	106%
CAO/Prov	241,972	290,331	48,359	120%
CFO	210,000	254,408	44,408	121%

* median salary data for IIA public institutions

UNI faculty salaries have not only fallen behind their peers, but also have not even kept pace with inflation. Over the past 10 years, UNI faculty salaries have fallen dramatically behind the cost of living, as Table 4 illustrates, using a sample salary of \$50,000 as the base.

Table 4: UNI Faculty Cost-of-Living Shortfall, 2014-2024

10-year calculations

Base number \$ 50,000

Year	CPI - U		UNI COST OF LIVING (COL)		
	YEAR %	CUMULATIVE	UNI		UNI COL %
	CHANGE	CPI CHANGE	COL %	Change	ANNUAL SURPLUS (SHORTFALL)
2014	1.0%	\$ 50,500	1.0%	\$ 50,500	0.00%
2015	0.0%	\$ 50,500	1.0%	\$ 51,005	1.00%
2016	1.8%	\$ 51,409	0.8%	\$ 51,413	-1.00%
2017	1.7%	\$ 52,283	0.8%	\$ 51,824	-0.90%
2018	1.3%	\$ 52,963	0.8%	\$ 52,239	-0.50%
2019	2.3%	\$ 54,181	0.8%	\$ 52,657	-1.50%
2020	1.1%	\$ 54,777	2.1%	\$ 53,763	1.00%
2021	2.5%	\$ 56,146	2.1%	\$ 54,892	-0.40%
2022	1.2%	\$ 56,820	1.3%	\$ 55,605	0.10%
2023	7.9%	\$ 61,309	1.3%	\$ 56,328	-6.60%
2024*	2.7%	\$ 62,964	3.0%	\$ 58,018	0.30%
					8.50%

Compounded Shortfall (Jan 2014-July 2024)

2024 9.89%

Historic CPI-U for the Midwest Region, reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

https://www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains/news-release/consumerpriceindex_midwest.htm

* Average CPI to July 2024

UNI's compounded shortfall from 2014 to 2024 is 9.89% -- 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/regions/mountain-plains/news-release/consumerpriceindex_midwest.htm)). In other words, to merely align with inflationary trends over the past decade, faculty would need a 9.89% salary increase.

After United Faculty made its opening proposal, the Board of Regents and UNI made their counterproposal. Then, the parties bargain for a new two-year contract that will become effective on July 1, 2025.

The labor union represents more than 500 faculty members on UNI's campus.

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) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Visit <https://ufaculty.uni.edu/bargaining-information/> to see the complete proposal and United Faculty's presentation slides.

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