

Rec. #2017-05-09 UNIVERSITY SENATE RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT
University Senate Resolution (endorsed unanimously on May 11, 2017): ***Salaries Resolution***

The University Senate strongly encourages the President to endorse this resolution and requests a response to the Senate on this matter by its next meeting.

Resolution:

The administration should prioritize the increase of full-time faculty and full time staff salaries *ahead* of any new renovation and construction projects in any upcoming budgetary decisions.

Rationale:

WKU’s *Challenging the Spirit Action Plan* (2012-18) states as objectives:

1.2: “Attract and support excellent faculty and staff” with these target objectives:

1.2.1: “Increase salaries of full-time faculty by 15% to better align with benchmark medians by ranks.”

1.2.2. “Increase salaries of full-time staff by 15% to better align with market salary rates.”

Despite these admirable goals, WKU University Senate observes that faculty salaries have in fact lost significant ground with respect to our benchmarks.

WKU has a cohort of 19 bench-mark universities. In terms of average salaries vis-à-vis the bench marks, WKU’s rankings have dropped significantly in every category between 2014 and 2016:

	2014 Ranking	2016 Ranking
Professor:	15 th	↓ 17 th
Associate Professor:	14 th	↓ 19 th
Assistant Professor:	14 th	↓ 17 th
Instructor	10 th	↓ 14 th

Clearly, WKU faculty salaries are not only losing ground vis-à-vis the other bench marks, they are currently in a race to the bottom (especially at the rank of Associate Professor, which is now just one notch above rock bottom). Over this same period WKU’s administrative leadership has repeatedly justified the construction of new buildings that are paid for (in part) by the imposition of new fees and by the diversion of revenue streams from academic programs toward paying construction bonds. In short, WKU continues to create long-term debt obligations that restrict the university’s fiscal flexibility *and* severely limit the availability of funds necessary to increase salaries and/or benefits.