

***Starting Salaries of New Assistant Professors:
An Analysis of the 1998-2008 Era***

By
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Sources of New Assistant Professors' Starting Salary Data

While there are multiple sources of data concerning the salaries of college professors, the data, while useful for some types of forensic economic analyses, is often highly aggregated.¹ The most reliable, comprehensive, and widely used data concerning the salaries in higher education are available from CUPA-HR.² After personally contacting officials at CUPA-HR about the goals of the research in this paper, CUPA-HR has generously allowed me to use their annually published data in preparing this paper.*

The analysis in this paper focuses on data concerning the salaries of “New Assistant Professors” (essentially the starting salaries of most tenure-track college professors) and data will be compared to the trends in the starting salaries of recent college graduates in the same academic fields as the “New Assistant Professors.”)

One of the purposes of this paper is to provide data concerning the starting salaries of a specific subset of the American labor force—new college professors who are just beginning their academic careers.

2. CUPA-HR provides leadership to the higher education human resources profession and the higher education community and provides services to more than 11,000 higher education HR professionals at more than 1,700 institutions. CUPA-HR is the leading source of higher education salary information through its College Faculty Salary Survey, which collects salary and rate structure data for full-time by level of education, by rank, by discipline and by discipline and rank.

For more information, see: <http://www.cupahr.org/index.asp>

(*CUPA-HR, of course bears no responsibility for the accuracy of the tables derived from their data by the author of this report.)

Starting Salaries Data

Tables I shows the starting salaries of assistant professors in 66 different academic fields in 1998 and 2008. The table also shows the average annual growth rates (1998-2008) in the starting salaries.

TABLE I NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS--STARTING SALARIES AND SALARY GROWTH RATES: 1998-1999--2008-2009			
	PROFESSOR NEW ASSISTANT	PROFESSOR NEW ASSISTANT	SALARY GROWTH AVERAGE ANNUAL %
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	1998-1999	2008-2009	
FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES	\$67,021	\$112,064	5.28%
ACCOUNTING AND RELATED SERVICES	\$62,855	\$107,400	5.50%
BUSINESS/GENERAL	\$66,696	\$98,827	4.01%
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SERVICES	\$57,423	\$96,737	5.97%
MARKETING	\$57,909	\$95,093	5.08%
LAW (LL.B., J.D.)	\$62,300	\$91,550	3.92%
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS	\$55,183	\$90,057	5.02%
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES	\$43,083	\$85,679	7.12%
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS	\$52,306	\$85,501	5.04%
INFORMATION SCIENCE/STUDIES	\$56,996	\$84,404	4.00%
ECONOMICS	\$48,259	\$77,632	4.87%
ELECTRICAL, ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING	\$54,884	\$76,602	3.39%
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES--GENERAL	\$56,996	\$74,559	2.72%
COMPUTER SCIENCE	\$54,259	\$74,458	3.22%
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	\$53,301	\$73,671	3.29%
CIVIL ENGINEERING	\$51,280	\$71,832	3.43%
ENGINEERING--GENERAL	\$54,230	\$70,387	2.64%
REHABILITATION AND THERAPEUTIC PROFESSIONS	\$49,359	\$61,441	2.21%
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES/TECHNICIANS--GENERAL	\$44,087	\$61,291	3.35%
NURSING	\$41,660	\$59,707	3.66%
PHYSICS	\$41,277	\$58,641	3.57%
ARCHITECTURE	\$43,258	\$58,599	3.08%
GEOLOGICAL AND EARTH SCIENCES/GEOSCIENCES	\$40,110	\$58,401	3.83%
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	\$41,781	\$58,055	3.34%
LIBRARY SCIENCE/LIBRARIANSHIP	\$39,508	\$57,800	3.88%
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION	\$41,330	\$56,941	3.26%

SOCIAL SCIENCES, GENERAL	\$40,795	\$56,827	3.37%
PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE STUDIES	\$39,142	\$56,164	3.68%
PSYCHOLOGY--CLINICAL	\$38,200	\$56,109	3.92%
ETHNIC, CULTURAL MINORITY, AND GENDER STUDIES	\$41,266	\$55,862	3.07%
MATHEMATICS	\$39,774	\$55,837	3.45%
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, GENERAL STUDIES AND HUMANITIES	\$42,949	\$55,520	2.60%
SOCIAL WORK	\$40,818	\$55,137	3.05%
GEOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY	\$39,405	\$54,921	3.38%
CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS	\$39,523	\$54,823	3.33%
PSYCHOLOGY--GENERAL	\$39,511	\$54,798	3.32%
CHEMISTRY	\$39,986	\$54,765	3.20%
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	\$39,277	\$54,694	3.37%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND RELATED CLINICAL SCIENCES--GENERAL	\$43,374	\$54,559	2.58%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS	\$41,973	\$54,540	2.65%
RELIGION/RELIGIOUS STUDIES	\$36,649	\$54,461	4.04%
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT	\$38,741	\$54,451	3.46%
BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES--GENERAL	\$41,264	\$54,052	3.04%
BIOLOGY, GENERAL	\$39,358	\$54,052	3.22%
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS SCIENCES AND SERVICES	\$42,783	\$53,918	2.34%
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FITNESS	\$37,632	\$53,879	3.65%
ANTHROPOLOGY	\$38,204	\$53,394	3.40%
STUDENT COUNSELING AND PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$39,258	\$53,389	3.12%
AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURE OPERATIONS, AND RELATED SCIENCES	\$43,258	\$53,311	2.11%
EDUCATION--GENERAL	\$39,164	\$53,226	3.12%
PHILOSOPHY	\$37,591	\$52,941	3.48%
SPECIAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING	\$39,338	\$52,824	2.99%
FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES/HUMAN SCIENCES--GENERAL	\$39,291	\$52,689	2.98%
TEACHER ED. AND PROF. DEV.-SUBJECTS	\$39,258	\$52,593	2.97%
SOCIOLOGY	\$38,308	\$52,510	3.20%
COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES	\$38,299	\$52,095	3.12%
CLASSICS AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES	\$40,610	\$51,826	2.47%
ROMANCE LANGUAGES	\$37,500	\$51,146	3.15%
SPEECH AND RHETORICAL STUDIES	\$40,822	\$50,260	2.10%
HISTORY--GENERAL	\$36,788	\$49,895	3.09%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, GENERAL	\$36,428	\$49,565	3.13%
MUSIC	\$36,255	\$49,052	3.07%
ENGLISH COMPOSITION	\$35,165	\$48,351	3.24%
FINE AND STUDIO ART	\$37,026	\$48,248	2.68%
DRAMATIC/THEATRE ARTS AND STAGECRAFT	\$35,557	\$48,198	3.09%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS--GENERAL	\$39,104	\$46,332	1.71%

Base Data Source: National Faculty Survey for the 2008-2009 Academic Year by Discipline and Rank in Four Year Colleges and Universities; CUPA-HR.

Starting Salaries Adjusted for Inflation

For most Americans, in the race between higher wages and higher prices, inflation has won. However, unlike the purchasing power of the wages of millions (perhaps the majority) of Americans the starting salaries of “New Assistant Professors” in most of the academic fields have grown both in dollar terms and in “real” (inflation adjusted) terms during the 10 period of 1998-2008.

Table II shows that the dollar value of the starting salaries of “New Assistant Professors” in all academic fields increased during the 1998-2008 decade. And, when adjusted for inflation, starting salaries for “New Assistant Professors” in 60 of the 66 academic fields shown also experienced positive growth in their “real” salaries.

TABLE II		
NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS--MONEY AND REAL*		
STARTING SALARY GROWTH RATES: 1998-1999--2008-2009		
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES	AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH IN MONEY INCOME	AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH IN REAL INCOME
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS		
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES	7.12%	4.60%
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SERVICES	5.97%	3.45%
ACCOUNTING AND RELATED SERVICES	5.50%	2.98%
FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES	5.28%	2.76%
MARKETING	5.08%	2.56%
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS	5.04%	2.52%
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS	5.02%	2.50%
ECONOMICS	4.87%	2.35%
RELIGION/RELIGIOUS STUDIES	4.04%	1.52%
BUSINESS/GENERAL	4.01%	1.49%
INFORMATION SCIENCE/STUDIES	4.00%	1.48%

LAW (LL.B., J.D.)	3.92%	1.40%
PSYCHOLOGY--CLINICAL	3.92%	1.40%
LIBRARY SCIENCE/LIBRARIANSHIP	3.88%	1.36%
GEOLOGICAL AND EARTH SCIENCES/GEOSCIENCES	3.83%	1.31%
PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE STUDIES	3.68%	1.16%
NURSING	3.66%	1.14%
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FITNESS	3.65%	1.13%
PHYSICS	3.57%	1.05%
PHILOSOPHY	3.48%	0.96%
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT	3.46%	0.94%
MATHEMATICS	3.45%	0.93%
CIVIL ENGINEERING	3.43%	0.91%
ANTHROPOLOGY	3.40%	0.88%
ELECTRICAL, ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING	3.39%	0.87%
GEOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY	3.38%	0.86%
SOCIAL SCIENCES, GENERAL	3.37%	0.85%
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	3.37%	0.85%
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES/TECHNICIANS--GENERAL	3.35%	0.83%
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	3.34%	0.82%
CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS	3.33%	0.81%
PSYCHOLOGY--GENERAL	3.32%	0.80%
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	3.29%	0.77%
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION	3.26%	0.74%
ENGLISH COMPOSITION	3.24%	0.72%
BIOLOGY, GENERAL	3.22%	0.70%
COMPUTER SCIENCE	3.22%	0.70%
SOCIOLOGY	3.20%	0.68%
CHEMISTRY	3.20%	0.68%
ROMANCE LANGUAGES	3.15%	0.63%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, GENERAL	3.13%	0.61%
COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES	3.12%	0.60%
STUDENT COUNSELING AND PERSONNEL SERVICES	3.12%	0.60%
EDUCATION--GENERAL	3.12%	0.60%
HISTORY--GENERAL	3.09%	0.57%
DRAMATIC/THEATRE ARTS AND STAGECRAFT	3.09%	0.57%
ARCHITECTURE	3.08%	0.56%
ETHNIC, CULTURAL MINORITY, AND GENDER STUDIES	3.07%	0.55%
MUSIC	3.07%	0.55%
SOCIAL WORK	3.05%	0.53%
BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES--GENERAL	3.04%	0.52%

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING	2.99%	0.47%
FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES/HUMAN SCIENCES--GENERAL	2.98%	0.46%
TEACHER ED. AND PROF. DEV.-SUBJECTS	2.97%	0.45%
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES--GENERAL	2.72%	0.20%
FINE AND STUDIO ART	2.68%	0.16%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS--GENERAL	2.65%	0.13%
ENGINEERING--GENERAL	2.64%	0.12%
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES, GENERAL STUDIES AND HUMANITIES	2.60%	0.08%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND RELATED CLINICAL SCI.--GENERAL	2.58%	0.06%
CLASSICS AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES	2.47%	-0.05%
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS SCIENCES AND SERVICES	2.34%	-0.18%
REHABILITATION AND THERAPEUTIC PROFESSIONS	2.21%	-0.31%
AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURE OPERATIONS, AND RELATED SCIENCES	2.11%	-0.41%
SPEECH AND RHETORICAL STUDIES	2.10%	-0.42%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS--GENERAL	1.71%	-0.81%

Base Data Source: National Faculty Survey for the 2008-2009 Academic Year by Discipline and Rank in Four Year Colleges and Universities; CUPA-HR.

* "Real" income is money income adjusted for inflation--average annual growth in inflation 1998-2008: 2.52%

Despite this positive growth in “dollar” and “real” income for “New Assistant Professors” in most of the academic fields, only 19 of the 66 fields experienced annual real growth rate of over 1%. Still, in light of the little-or-no growth in the real weekly earnings of the majority of American workers during recent years, it did pay to begin your career as a college professor.

Comparing Salaries by Professorial Rank

For most “New Assistant Professors” in most of the academic field, the salary news has been positive. However, while it is beyond the scope of this study to examine trends in the salaries of professors at the different academic ranks (Assistant Professor, Associate

Professor, and Professor) a brief look at salaries by academic rank reveals some salary trends that are bound to cause concern and, perhaps, a bit of anguish in the minds of faculty in academic salary categories other than that of “New Assistant Professor.”

Table III		
DISCIPLINES WHERE <u>NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS'</u> AVERAGE SALARIES ARE GREATER THAN <u>ASSISTANT PROFESSORS'</u> AVERAGE SALARIES		
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2008-2009 NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR	2008-2009 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES	\$112,064	\$103,828
ACCOUNTING AND RELATED SERVICES	\$107,400	\$96,856
BUSINESS/GENERAL	\$98,827	\$79,221
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SERVICES	\$96,737	\$90,957
MARKETING	\$95,093	\$91,109
LAW (LL.B., J.D.)	\$91,550	\$87,884
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MGT. AND OPERATIONS	\$90,057	\$84,950
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS	\$85,501	\$76,149
ENGINEERING--CHEMICAL	\$78,433	\$78,412
ECONOMICS	\$77,632	\$72,655
ENGINEERING--AGRI/BIOLOGICAL & BIOENGINEERING	\$74,008	\$71,703
BIMATHEMATICS 7 BIOINFORMATICS	\$69,773	\$67,459
ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE & METEROLOGY	\$69,040	\$64,479
PHARMACOLOGY & TOXICOLOGY	\$68,190	\$65,996
HEALTH & MED ADMIN SERVICES	\$64,608	\$62,832
MICRO SCI & IMMUNOLOGY	\$64,446	\$62,312
STATIISTICS	\$64,309	\$64,148
FOODS, NUTRITION & RELATED SERVICES	\$64,148	\$60,424
APPLIED MATHEMATICS	\$64,000	\$57,424
PUBLIC HEALTH	\$63,746	\$62,705
CELL/CELLULAR & ANATOMICAL SCIENCES	\$63,054	\$62,062
ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION & POPULATION	\$62,618	\$30,168
PHYSICS	\$58,641	\$57,580
GEOLOGICAL AND EARTH SCIENCES/GEOSCIENCES	\$58,401	\$57,595
BOTANY	\$58,328	\$57,128
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	\$58,055	\$55,533
LIBRARY SCIENCE/LIBRARIANSHIP	\$57,800	\$54,535
ENGLISH: CREATIVE WRITING	\$57,359	\$55,705
SOCIAL SCIENCES, GENERAL	\$56,827	\$53,689
PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE STUDIES	\$56,164	\$53,134
MATHEMATICS	\$55,837	\$55,760
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, GENERAL STUDIES AND HUMANITIES	\$55,520	\$51,638
CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS	\$54,823	\$54,139
RELIGION/RELIGIOUS STUDIES	\$54,461	\$54,267

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT	\$54,451	\$53,493
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FITNESS	\$53,879	\$53,855
DESIGN & APPLIED ARTS	\$53,598	\$53,214
FILM/VIDEO & PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS	\$53,340	\$52,443
PHILOSOPHY	\$52,941	\$52,332

Source: National Faculty Survey for the 2008-2009 Academic Year by Discipline and Rank in Four Year Colleges and Universities; CUPA-HR.

Table III shows that the starting salaries of “New Assistant Professors,” in 39 of the 66 academic fields shown in this study, exceed the average salaries of those already employed as “Assistant Professors” in the colleges and universities.

There are, no doubt, many reasons for this reversal of the historical salary pattern (the pattern wherein the less-experienced new assistant professors received lower salaries than the more experienced assistant professors); however, the most obvious explanation is simply a market-based explanation. The supply and demand forces in many academic fields and the competition to recruit new professors have, for the moment, provided a bonus for those fortunate to have timed their entry into the professorial market at just the right time.

The potential impact of this phenomenon on harmony in the ranks of the professorship community should be interesting to observe in the coming years. Perhaps making the sociological implications of the data shown in Table III even more interesting in schools of business is the data shown in Table IV (next page.)

Table IV

**DISCIPLINES WHERE NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS' AVERAGE SALARIES
ARE GREATER THAN ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS' AVERAGE SALARIES**

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2008-2009 NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR	2008-2009 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES	\$112,064	\$105,557
ACCOUNTING AND RELATED SERVICES	\$107,400	\$99,660
BUSINESS/GENERAL	\$98,827	\$86,308
MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS	\$85,501	\$81,081

Source: National Faculty Survey for the 2008-2009 Academic Year by Discipline and Rank in Four Year Colleges and Universities; CUPA-HR.