

## Summary of CUPA comparisons Spring 2017

- Why use CUPA?
  - For 50 years, CUPA-HR (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources) has worked with campus HR leaders to create salary and benefits reporting tools and resources. Its research team collects, analyzes and reports on compensation data for faculty and other staff on an annual basis. More than 1,300 institutions participate each year; 93% of all U.S. doctoral institutions are members of CUPA-HR.
  - Very reliable data: CUPA-HR data not only undergoes strict system validation checks but also is subjected to rigorous checks by the research team and is routinely cross-validated with other compensation surveys
  - Uses a consistent survey for all disciplines by rank and tenure status (rather than relying on surveys conducted by discipline-specific professional organizations that may use a variety of methodologies)
  - Ensures that all salaries are based on a 9-month basis
- Lots of confusion about CUPA comparisons
  - Two different comparison groups are used
    - NCHEMS: used for assessing institution-wide salaries against a group of peer institutions
    - Doctoral All: used for assessing individual salaries against the entire sample of doctoral granting universities
  - [NCHEMS](#) (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems)
    - Quite a few years ago, the state of Colorado began using peer groups identified by NCHEMS for all public institutions
    - NCHEMS identified 10 peer institutions for UNC based on a variety of indicators
    - NCHEMS is not used to determine individuals' parity levels because of its small sample size
      - There are many faculty positions at UNC that have no good match (in terms of position, rank, discipline) in the NCHEMS group
      - The NCHEMS sample is very volatile. For example, when a highly paid professor at a single institution retires, there is often a huge impact on the median salaries in that discipline. In addition, all 10 NCHEMS peers do not always participate in the annual CUPA surveys.
    - The institutional comparison using this sample is about 90%
  - Doctoral All
    - A sample of 160 (2016) institutions, all of which grant doctorate degrees
      - Includes institutions such as U of Michigan, U of Virginia, U of Oregon and many more

- Allows for a match for almost everyone
  - Is a good peer group for evaluating parity for individual salaries because it captures the salaries of the competition
- UNC has been using this as the individual comparison group for the last 3 years
- The institutional comparison using this sample is about 86%
- Calculating individual comparisons
  - In all cases, the comparison is the CUPA median
  - Reported medians are adjusted for years in rank (YIR) based on the following assumptions about the Doctoral All group
    - the median YIR for assistant professors is 3 years
    - the median YIR for associate professors is 5 years
    - the median YIR for full professors is 10 years
  - The YIR adjustment subtracts one percentage point from the CUPA median for each individual's YIR under the assumed median above, adds one percentage point for each YIR above the median, currently subject to a cap of 14 total YIR for associate professors and 6 total YIR for assistant professors
    - Example: Suppose the median salary in the Doctoral All group for an associate professor in a given discipline is \$75,773 (this is the actual number for one of the HSS discipline for 2016)
      - The comparison salary for a person with 3 YIR as an associate professor would be 98% of this amount: \$74,258.
        - Let's say this professor's UNC salary is \$63,000. His/her CUPA comparison would be 84.8% (i.e., \$63,000/\$74,258)
      - The CUPA comparison for an associate professor in the same discipline with 7 YIR would be 102% of \$75,773: \$77,288
        - A salary of \$70,000 would be at 90.6% of CUPA
  - In all cases, everyone is considered to have one year in rank to start because the data are generally a year old. Each extra YIR is incremented from there.
- The compensation identity plan is designed to identify target levels for the salary pools. Distribution of the pool is a separate issue
  - The Salary Equity Committee reviews data and makes recommendations regarding the method of distribution to the Faculty Senate each year
  - Salary Equity consists of [representatives from both faculty and staff](#)