



CSU Newsletter

December 2022

Monthly General Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 1st, 4-5pm

(1st Thursday of the month)

Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason Street

Come meet your colleagues and organize for a better CSU. We encourage all tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members to attend, regardless of whether you are a member of our national organization. If you are interested in getting involved but cannot attend this meeting, please email us at aaupcsu@gmail.com.

Fair Wages for Faculty at CSU: 70k base pay and 7.7% cost of living adjustment

By AAUP-CSU Executive Committee

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the Denver metro area experienced a 7.7% rate of inflation over the last year. Inflation, of course, affects everyone, but it hits the lowest paid workers the hardest. Faculty members are concerned about the low pay of CSU's janitors, groundskeepers, advisers, office workers, and undergraduate and graduate student employees. Faculty members are also in dire need of a raise. A [survey of CSU faculty](#) conducted in the spring of 2022 by AAUP-CSU revealed enormous discontent among faculty regarding the

compensation offered by the University and the failure to keep pace with the cost of living.

Last year, undergraduate and graduate students paid \$449 million in tuition at CSU. Overall, faculty received \$168 million in compensation, or 37% of those tuition dollars. Although tuition is the largest source of revenue for the University, many faculty are woefully underpaid. Non-tenure-track faculty teach about $\frac{2}{3}$ of student credit hours. According to a recent analysis, non-tenure track faculty receive just 12% of the tuition revenue they generate.

CSU faculty members do not receive regular cost of living adjustments. Some years, they receive modest "merit raises" based on their annual evaluations. When cost of living increases far outpace these "merit" raises, faculty members lose ground.

During the Faculty Council meeting on November 1, Interim President Rick Miranda indicated that addressing compensation is one of the Administration's top priorities. He then presented a number of models that included a tuition increase from 0 to 3% and a "merit" raise of either 3% or 5%. President Miranda then described in detail the model involving a 3% "merit" increase, a 3% rise in tuition, and \$8 million earmarked for addressing "equity" in salaries. While the

Administration's commitment to improving compensation is laudable, the plan for accomplishing this task is not.

1. Neither a 3% nor a 5% increase keeps pace with inflation; both represent a net loss of spending power. Either one would represent a very modest salary increase for those at the lower end of the wage scale. For example, a 5% raise on a salary of \$175,000 would be a raise of \$8,750; on a salary of \$50,000, it would be \$2,500. The person with the higher salary, who is less impacted by inflation, would get 3.5x more money. To avoid hardship, the AAUP-CSU recommends a cost of living adjustment of 7.7% for faculty making less than \$150,000 this year.
2. The \$8 million set aside by President Miranda for equity issues would go to faculty whose salaries are below "market value" – as determined by comparisons with compensation at other R1 universities. The University insists that this is the only kind of "equity" that should be addressed, ignoring gross inequalities between NTTF and TTF and enormous differences between salaries across colleges. Most universities in Europe and Canada, as well as a number in the United States, do not differentiate salaries on the basis of academic discipline. AAUP-CSU recommends that the University provide a multi-year plan to address these glaring inequities and raise base pay for all full-time faculty to \$70,000 annually, while addressing issues of salary compression.
3. Increasing tuition is not the only way to improve the salaries of people who teach Colorado's youth. Internal

reallocation, particularly of the substantial subsidy provided by the University to the Athletics program and of the very large salaries enjoyed by an increasing number of administrators, should be the first strategy.

Colorado State University's Principles of Community include Respect and Social Justice. Surely, these can be used to guide the Administration's efforts to provide adequate compensation to its employees.

My Life as an NTTF

Non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) positions at CSU create a tenuous professional existence and leave teaching faculty in a desperate limbo, often never knowing what next year's teaching schedule, pay, or classes will look like. Unclear work schedules and rising inflation have compounded the difficulty of my job teaching as an NTTF at CSU. I teach 12 credits per term, 4 classes, and have between 50-75 students. Each week for each class, I can expect two hours of prep, two hours of class time, and three to five hours grading, sometimes more. Some semesters I have two preps, some I have four, which multiplies the workload. Additionally, I attend meetings and do committee work, two to four hours per week. Sundays are the worst: I put in an 8-to-9-hour day to prepare and grade. On average, I work 65-75 hours per week. My take home pay is \$4,150 per month, or around \$1,000 per week.

I take second and third jobs, but these can conflict with my teaching schedule. So, the scramble begins—my effort, energy and focus turn away from the deep concentration necessary to build meaningful learning for my students. Almost all AAUC

courses are taught by non-tenure track faculty like me. Increasingly, I try to obscure my side-hustle from my boss, who expects me to attend professional development seminars, give presentations, and do research and service, even though I can hardly live on my CSU wage. When I mention to administration my burdensome CSU workload, the response is, “work less,” as if the skill of teaching is done with eyes closed, as if the art of classroom learning can manifest with a wave of my hand.

With gas prices up 17.5% this year, I cut back on driving. In spring, I reduce grocery spending because CSU takes more out of my check in April and May to cover health insurance benefits through the summer. Food prices are up 10.5% in 2022, and I consider visiting the CSU food pantry, but worry my students will see me. I hear friends talk about their vacation plans. When asked mine, I can never say. I have no idea if I will get a class, what the schedule is or how much I will get paid or how I will arrange and pay for childcare.

Living in Fort Collins is becoming increasingly difficult. I often don't have enough money to cover my minimum expenses: one needed home repair or medical need would cause financial disaster. My professionalism is diluted by the energy it takes to fabricate a living existence. I have less time for my CSU work, so my classes are less energetic, planned, and well-designed than they should be. How can CSU expect NTTF, who teach 2/3 of student credit hours, to sustain this workload and salary? It seems CSU is in a race to the bottom: they say they want meaningful teaching, but they don't want to pay for it. I want to continue teaching, but

my talents would be better respected elsewhere. I'm on the edge, and I feel the cliff giving way.

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