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Public Affairs

Differences in Salaries

Word Count: 1,075

At Nicholls, the average salary of tenure-track instructors in the College of Business Administration on average is almost $30,000 higher than the average salary of tenure-track instructors in the College of Arts and Sciences.

According to the budget, an assistant professor in the College of Business earns an average of $30,000 more than an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences. An associate professor earns an average of $32,000 more and a professor earns on average $24,000 more.

According to Dr. Shawn Mauldin, dean of the College of Business, the College of Business Administration competes in a national hiring market for professors because there is a demand for doctorate degrees in business. This drives up the salaries of business faculty, Mauldin said.

Mauldin agreed that the salary differences between the two colleges is unfair, but noted that today if there is a specialty job in any job market that is in higher demand, the professors will make significantly higher salaries than people who have jobs less in demand.

Dr. John Doucet, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a distinguished service professor, said the university has to “play the market” for professors in the College of Arts and Sciences just like the College of Business.

“We will not attract scientists or accountants or other specialists with very low salaries, and we will not be able to afford other faculty if we offer those people very high salaries. So inevitably, there will be different average salaries across disciplines,” Doucet said.

Doucet would not comment on whether or not he thought it was fair that some of his tenure-track instructors make less than instructors in the College of Business, but said that he thinks the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences deserve higher pay. He added that his professors are hard-working individuals teaching, researching and doing service work for salaries less than they can earn elsewhere. However, when individuals accept job offers, they also accept the pay that is offered to them by the University, Doucet said.

A person usually becomes an assistant professor when he or she completes a doctorate, which usually takes six to eight years of study. To become an associate professor, there is a five- to six-year window for tenure.

“When professors go from an assistant to an associate professor, they may receive tenure and a $2,000 increase in their salary, but tenure is more about providing job security,” Mauldin explained.

It usually takes up to another five years for an associate professor to become a full-time professor and the entire process, from assistant professor to professor, may take 10 to 12 years depending on what discipline he or she is in.

According to Nicholls’ 2013-2014 Nicholls Operating Budget, there are 10 assistant professors, seven associate professors and six professors in the College of Business.  The average salary of an assistant professor in the College of Business is $69,859; the average salary for an associate professor is $87,543; and the average salary for a professor is $88,999.

In contrast, there are 26 assistant professors, 30 associate professors, and 15 professors in the College of Arts and Sciences.  The average salary in this college for an assistant professor is $40,306, the average for an associate professor is $55,949, and the average of a professor’s salary is $64,514.

The dean of the College of Business makes $140,200 and the dean of Arts and Sciences makes $121,500. Both deans are on a 12-month contract. According to the budget, the dean of Arts and Sciences has been at the university longer than the dean of the College of Business.

The highest salary in the College of Business is earned by Xiaoyan “Tony” Chu, assistant professor of accounting. He is paid $110,000 on a 9-month contract. Chu has worked at Nicholls for one year and makes $13,139 more than Michael Chiasson, the head of the Department of Accounting, who has worked here for 19 years and is a full-time professor. Chiasson makes $96,861 on a 10-month contract.

“In business, it’s strictly supply and demand of faculty,” Mauldin said. “Unfortunately, if someone comes and stays five or 10 years, somebody that may come to the university, even if they are not right out of school, is going to demand a higher salary because of market situations.”

Mauldin said he does not think that it is fair that there is faculty that come to the business school making more than someone who has been in the department for 10 or 15 years doing an excellent job. “But that’s just the way it is. Salary compression is something that all business schools deal with. It is not just unique to Nicholls,” Mauldin added.

“Nicholls is not able to keep up with salary increases internally. Some schools do, but most schools have a difficult time doing that,” Mauldin explained. He said that some faculty who are not happy with their current job will often move on. They may significantly increase their salaries if they do so.

According to Nicholls Vice President of Academic Affairs, Laynie Barrileaux, Nicholls uses a concept based on data collection by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to determine what the salaries of incoming faculty will be. The SREB shows what the average market rates are nationally. “The SREB is used as a guide to decide who gets paid what,” Barrileaux explained.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Ramaraj Boopathy, a distinguished service professor in biological sciences, makes the highest salary at $95,000 a year on a 9-month contract. Doucet would not to comment on exact salaries of faculty members in his college for ethical reasons, but he said that some of the reasons why one faculty member may make more than another include entrance salary, years of service, special expertise, special duties, administrative duties and  awards for extraordinary achievements, promotions or receipt of endowed positions.

Similar to the business college, some professors in the College of Arts and Sciences make a higher salary than someone who has been here longer.  The budget reports that Dr. James Stewart, head of the department of Mass Communication and a professor of mass communication, has been at the university for 23 years and makes $65,758 on a 10-month contract while Dr. Lloyd Chiasson, professor of print journalism, has been here 22 years and makes $71,071 on a 9-month contract.

Chiasson said he was the only professor in the department for a long time. He said that the reason he makes more is because he is a distinguished service professor in the department, has been a professor longer than Stewart and that he came in with a higher salary because he had experience at other universities.

Differences in salaries among disciplines is not unique to Nicholls. Colleges, like any job market, have to compete to get quality employees who meet the standards and expectations of the establishment.

“This phenomenon of salaries in different disciplines is nationwide,” Doucet said. “The markets have different values and so there are different salaries for faculty specializing in different areas.”