

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Chris Cuomo** <cuomo@uga.edu>
Date: Nov 16, 2006 2:23 PM
Subject: Gender Equity at UGA, letter
To: Janet Frick jfrick@uga.edu

Dear Janet,

I ask that you share the following with the Executive Committee of the University Council. If there is not time for you to discuss in your meeting, I do not mind if you print this out to distribute. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Many women faculty have sought me out in the last couple of days, to express their anger over the article in this week's *Columns* about the salaries of female faculty at UGA. One untenured (and underpaid) professor forwarded me the following letter, which eloquently sums the views of many others:

Dear Columns Editors:

I am disturbed by the self-congratulatory tone of "Study finds UGA female faculty salaries better than counterparts" (11/13 page 1). In fact, what the data indicates is that UGA fails to practice gender pay equity. This is hardly news to celebrate.

According to the Columns' report, the survey in question actually indicates that UGA pays female faculty, on average, 85.2% of what male faculty make. That this represents structural inequity is obvious; what's shocking is that UGA chooses to boast about it.

The story's premise--- that the survey is good news for UGA in that we are 'better,' comes from a perverse reading of the data. Nationally, female faculty earn an average of 78.1 percent of what male faculty in comparable positions earn. It is only in comparison to a universe of other offenders that UGA looks 'better.'

I understand that Columns is a university publication and that the public relations office is entrusted with promoting the institution. But this was the wrong story to spin. It insults the intelligence of the female faculty. The data indicates that the university discriminates against us: are we supposed to applaud the administration for doing so at a rate of 7% less than the national average? Are we to tell our female students that they should be grateful to work for an institution that pays women less than men, because other places are worse? Should we overlook the part of the story that reports that UGA has LESS women faculty (30.9) than the national average (34.4)?

Finally, President Michael Adams should clarify his remark, "I'm pleased to see that UGA fares well compared to our peers." Does President Adams believe that pay is equitable at UGA, despite the report's conclusion that females make 14.8% less than men? Does he believe that level of pay discrepancy is "faring well?" A university president must demonstrate that he understands that gender equity is crucial for the success of the University and the community it serves.

Failure to see the problem is part of the problem. I hope President Adams makes it clear where he stands.

*Signed,
A Female Assistant Professor*

I am new to UGA, but because there is not an active Faculty Women's Caucus at the moment, as Director of Women's Studies I have been in the position to hear many complaints from faculty and staff about gender equity in wages. Surely people on the faculty benefits committee don't believe that 85% is "doing well."

Can we use the opportunity provided by the publication of this data to spark up-to-date conversation and action about gender equity on campus? I know there are many terrific faculty members who've worked on this issue here before, and I'm sure they will provide expertise and advice. Although we are an academic department and not an advocacy organization, the Institute for Women's Studies would be happy to facilitate such a conversation, and to help with research needs in any way we can.

To give you a sense of the feelings of women faculty, when I sent the letter above to the Women's Studies listserv for comment and response, I received a flood of feedback. Faculty requested retraction from Columns, or a 'forum page' where letters could be posted; a clarification from President Adams, including a statement recognizing that pay inequity is a REALITY and a problem; and a public display of the data the AAUP and UGA have collected on this matter. Faculty and Staff also expressed their desires that the issue of pay equity for women be connected to other issues female faculty face, such as lower numbers overall, and tenure and promotion, and that it also be connected to other pay equity issues on campus, such as low wages of administrative and custodial staff.

Thanks very much for distributing this information, and please let me know what I can do to help further things along.

Sincerely,

Chris Cuomo
Director, Institute for Women's Studies