



Falling Behind: Sociology and Other Social Science Faculty Salaries, AY 2010 - 2011

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Between academic year (AY) 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, faculty members lost purchasing power because average faculty salary increases were less than the rate of inflation. Overall median faculty salaries climbed 1.1 percent, while inflation increased 1.5 percent between December 2009 and December 2010, according to findings from the National Faculty Salary Survey (NFSS), which the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR 2011) conducts annually. Along with providing overall salary data, the NFSS includes more specific data that allows for comparisons among social science disciplines. In this research brief, we will examine salary trends (from AY 2005-2006 through AY 2010-2011) in both current (real) dollars and 2010 constant (inflation-controlled) dollars, or purchasing power for all sociology, economics, political science, and anthropology faculty. We also present the differences between public and private institutions. For sociologists, we further compare changes in salaries by rank. The research brief will begin with a description of changes in sociology salaries and then examine the differences among the social science disciplines. It examines both actual salaries and rates of growth or decline in salaries. It is important to note that this brief focuses only on the salaries of full-time ranked faculty. It

does not include salaries of instructors and part-time faculty, or the actual earnings of full-time faculty, who may have been subjected to furloughs and other cost-cutting measures.

Simply put, the NFSS findings mean that in AY 2010-2011 faculty members could not afford to purchase the same market basket of goods that they could in the previous year. Purchasing power, as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), is based on change in the Consumer Price Index, the difference in the price of a market basket of goods including food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical expenses, and other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. While minimal, the growth in overall salaries across all disciplines between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011 can be attributed to raises awarded to faculty at private institutions (2.0 percent). Faculty at public institutions, on the other hand, saw no growth in median salary for the second consecutive year (CUPA-HR 2011). Stagnating salaries has prompted both concern for public institutions' ability to recruit well-qualified candidates, and for departments to retain existing faculty whose salaries dip below what is offered to new faculty (a process known as salary compression) (Brainard 2011).

¹ We would like thank Dan Fowler for additional editing.

² The CUPA-HR data are provided in unweighted form. We would like thank Dr. Ray Sizemore, Research Director at CUPA-HR, for providing us with the weighted data that accounts for the size of each department included in the survey.

SOCIOLOGY FACULTY SALARIES

OVERALL SOCIOLOGY SALARIES

As with other disciplines, sociology faculty salaries in current dollars increased between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, but failed to keep pace with inflation in the last two academic years. The median salary of \$69,398 (in current dollars) earned

by ranked faculty in AY 2010-2011 was a mere 0.7 percent more than they earned in the previous year (see Table 1). Similarly, overall median salaries at the full, associate, and assistant levels only increased between 0.7 and 0.8 percent during this period.

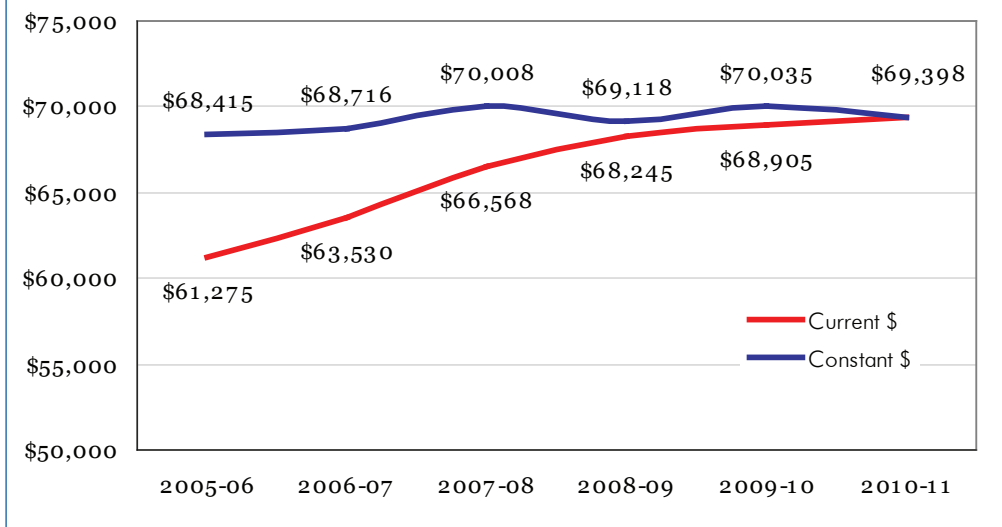
Although faculty salaries in current dollars increased each year over the last five years, salary

TABLE 1. MEDIAN SOCIOLOGY FACULTY SALARIES BY RANK IN CURRENT DOLLARS, AY 2005-06 - AY 2010-11

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Full Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Associate Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Assistant Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>All Faculty Ranks</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>% Inflation</i>
2005-06	\$77,413	N/A	\$57,897	N/A	\$48,515	N/A	\$61,275	N/A	3.4
2006-07	\$79,756	3.0	\$60,494	4.5	\$50,340	3.8	\$63,530	3.7	2.5
2007-08	\$84,427	5.9	\$63,172	4.4	\$52,104	3.5	\$66,568	4.8	4.1
2008-09	\$85,973	1.8	\$65,023	2.9	\$53,736	3.1	\$68,245	2.5	0.1
2009-10	\$86,863	1.0	\$65,351	0.5	\$54,500	1.4	\$68,905	1.0	2.7
2010-11	\$87,428	0.7	\$65,842	0.8	\$54,925	0.8	\$69,398	0.7	1.5
Overall % chg	12.9%		13.7%		13.2%		13.3%		N/A

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
Calculations based on weighted data.

FIGURE 1. MEDIAN ANNUAL SALARIES OF RANKED SOCIOLOGY FACULTY IN CURRENT AND 2010 CONSTANT DOLLARS, AY 2005-2006 - AY 2010-2011



Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
Calculations based on weighted data.

TABLE 2. MEDIAN SOCIOLOGY FACULTY SALARIES BY RANK IN 2010 CONSTANT DOLLARS, AY 2005-06 - AY 2010-11

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Full Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Associate Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Assistant Professor</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>All Faculty Ranks</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>% Inflation</i>
2005-06	\$86,433	N/A	\$64,643	N/A	\$54,168	N/A	\$68,415	N/A	3.4
2006-07	\$86,266	-0.2	\$65,432	1.2	\$54,449	0.5	\$68,716	0.4	2.5
2007-08	\$88,790	2.9	\$66,436	1.5	\$54,796	0.6	\$70,008	1.9	4.1
2008-09	\$87,072	-1.9	\$65,854	-0.9	\$54,423	-0.7	\$69,118	-1.3	0.1
2009-10	\$88,288	1.4	\$66,423	0.9	\$55,394	1.8	\$70,035	1.3	2.7
2010-11	\$87,428	-1.0	\$65,842	-0.9	\$54,925	-0.8	\$69,398	-0.9	1.5
Overall % chg	1.2%		1.9%		1.4%		1.4%		N/A

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
 Calculations based on weighted data.

growth slowed significantly across ranks between AY 2007-2008 and AY 2010-2011, with faculty receiving smaller raises each year. The decline was most dramatic at the top, with full professors experiencing the least growth. Although the drop did not begin for them until AY 2008-2009, salary increases for full professors shrank at an average of about 1.7 percent per year during this three-year period. In contrast, the decline in salary growth was more gradual among associate and assistant professors. For them, however, it began one year earlier. On average, salary increases shrank by about 1.1 percent for associate professors and 0.9 percent for assistant professors during this four-year period.

Despite the average 13.3 percent increase in median sociology faculty salaries across all ranks between AY 2005-2006 and AY 2010-2011, buying power remained stagnant during this period since the median overall salaries of ranked faculty increased only 1.4 percent in 2010 constant dollars (see Table 2). In other words, the market basket of goods that professors could purchase was essentially the same throughout this period.

Additionally, new assistant profes-

sors were awarded salaries that were slightly more (\$735), than already working assistant professors in AY 2005-2006, during a strong job market. As with all assistant professors, the growth rate for new assistant professors declined in the last two years, when the job market tightened due to the economic recession. Between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, new assistant professors experienced the smallest increase in salary (0.4 percent) (see Table 3). In AY 2010-2011, new assistant professors earned a median annual salary of \$53,500 (in

TABLE 3. Salaries of New Assistant Sociology Faculty (in current and 2010 constant dollars), AY 2005-2006 - AY 2010-2011

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Current \$</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>2010 Constant \$</i>	<i>% chg</i>
2005-06	\$49,250	---	\$54,989	---
2006-07	\$50,000	1.5	\$51,081	-1.7
2007-08	\$50,833	1.7	\$53,460	-1.1
2008-09	\$52,667	3.6	\$53,340	-0.2
2009-10	\$53,265	1.1	\$54,139	1.5
2010-11	\$53,500	0.4	\$53,500	-1.2
Overall % chg	8.6%		-2.7%	

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
 Calculations based on weighted data.

current dollars), which was about 2.7 percent or \$1,425 less than the annual salary veteran faculty at this rank took home.

2011, and there were losses in purchasing power for sociology faculty across all ranks, with one exception.

SOCIOLOGY SALARIES AT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Typically, median sociology faculty salaries are higher at private institutions than at public institutions, and this gap widened slightly between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, as overall salary increases at private institutions outpaced those at their public counterparts. In AY 2010-11, the median salary for all full-time sociology faculty at private institutions in current dollars was \$70,799 (a 0.9 percent increase from the previous academic year), while the median salary at public institutions was \$68,688 in current dollars (a 0.1 percent increase from the previous year) (see Table 4). At both public and private institutions, however, the change in median faculty salaries did not keep pace with inflation between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-

Private Institutions

Assistant sociology professors at private institutions not only received the greatest raise of all ranked faculty at both public and private institutions between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011 (2.5 percent in current dollars), but they were also the only group whose salary increase outpaced inflation (by 1.0 percent in constant dollars). Associate-level faculty members in these departments received the second largest raises, as their median salary increased from \$66,383 in AY 2009-2010 to \$67,398 in AY 2010-2011, a 1.1 percent jump in current dollars. However, their salaries were virtually stagnant in constant dollars (-0.6 percent). In contrast, the median salary of full professors at private institutions fell in both current and constant dollars during this period.

TABLE 4. COMPARISON OF MEDIAN SOCIOLOGY FACULTY SALARIES AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN AY 2009-2010 AND AY 2010-2011 (IN CURRENT AND 2010 CONSTANT DOLLARS)

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS						
Faculty Rank	Current Dollars			2010 Constant Dollars		
	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg
Full	\$89,300	\$89,055	-0.3	\$90,768	\$89,055	-1.9
Associate	\$66,683	\$67,398	1.1	\$67,777	\$67,398	-0.6
Assistant	\$54,500	\$55,884	2.5	\$55,394	\$55,884	0.9
All Ranks	\$70,161	\$70,779	0.9	\$71,313	\$70,779	-0.7
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS						
Faculty Rank	Current Dollars			2010 Constant Dollars		
	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg
Full	\$86,023	\$86,482	0.5	\$87,434	\$86,482	-1.1
Associate	\$65,150	\$65,205	0.1	\$66,129	\$65,205	-1.4
Assistant	\$54,702	\$54,318	-0.7	\$55,599	\$54,318	-2.3
All Ranks	\$68,625	\$68,668	0.1	\$69,751	\$68,668	-1.6

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
 Calculations based on weighted data.

Public Institutions

At public institutions, no raises were greater than the rate of inflation, and all ranks of sociology faculty members lost purchasing power. Within public institutions, full professors received the largest increase in median salary (0.5 percent in current dollars) between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, and suffered the smallest loss of purchasing power. Assistant-level faculty members in these departments fared much worse, as their

median salary actually decreased 0.7 percent in current dollars during this two-year period.

SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY SALARIES

OVERALL SOCIAL SCIENCE SALARIES

Economics is typically the highest paid social science discipline. Therefore, not surprisingly, economics faculty members experienced the

TABLE 5. MEDIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY SALARIES IN CURRENT DOLLARS, AY 2005-06 – AY 2010-11

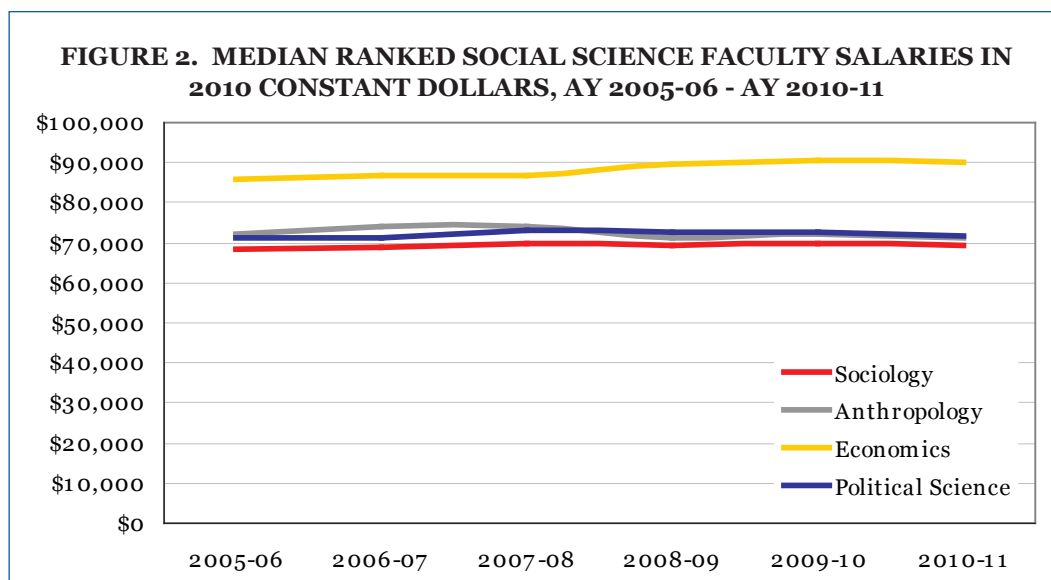
<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Sociol.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Anthro.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Econ.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Poli. Sci.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>% Inflation</i>
2005-06	\$61,275	N/A	\$64,603	N/A	\$76,880	N/A	\$63,784	N/A	3.4
2006-07	\$63,530	3.7	\$68,482	6.0	\$80,376	4.5	\$65,924	3.4	2.5
2007-08	\$66,568	4.8	\$70,315	2.7	\$84,041	4.6	\$69,366	5.2	4.1
2008-09	\$68,245	2.5	\$70,258	-0.1	\$88,386	5.2	\$71,580	3.2	0.1
2009-10	\$68,905	1.0	\$70,997	1.1	\$89,299	1.0	\$71,496	-0.1	2.7
2010-11	\$69,398	0.7	\$71,105	0.2	\$90,144	0.9	\$71,742	0.3	1.5
Overall % chg	13.3%		10.1%		17.3%		12.5%		N/A

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
 Calculations based on weighted data.

TABLE 6. MEDIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY SALARIES IN 2010 CONSTANT DOLLARS, AY 2005-06 – 2010-11

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Sociol.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Anthro.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Econ.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>Poli. Sci.</i>	<i>% chg</i>	<i>% Inflation</i>
2005-06	\$68,415	% chg	\$72,130	% chg	\$85,838	% chg	\$71,216	% chg	3.4
2006-07	\$68,716	0.4	\$74,072	2.7	\$87,326	1.7	\$71,305	0.1	2.5
2007-08	\$70,008	1.9	\$73,948	-0.2	\$89,182	2.1	\$72,950	2.3	4.1
2008-09	\$69,118	-1.3	\$71,150	-3.8	\$89,517	0.4	\$72,495	-0.6	0.1
2009-10	\$70,035	1.3	\$72,162	1.4	\$90,764	1.4	\$72,669	0.2	2.7
2010-11	\$69,398	-0.9	\$71,105	-1.5	\$90,144	-0.7	\$71,742	-1.3	1.5
Overall % chg	1.4%		-1.4%		5.0%		0.7%		N/A

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
 Calculations based on weighted data.



Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
Calculations based on weighted data.

greatest overall salary increase in current dollars and constant dollars between AY 2005-2006 and AY 2010-2011. During this time, the median economics faculty salary increased 17.3 percent in current dollars and 5.0 percent in constant dollars. There were relatively small salary differences among sociology, anthropology, and political science faculty members, though sociology faculty did have the lowest median salaries. In AY 2010-2011, all ranked faculty earned a median salary of \$69,393 in sociology, \$71,105 in anthropology, \$71,742 in political science, and \$90,144 in economics (see Table 5). Median faculty salary growth in all of these disciplines slowed significantly over the last five years, with anthropology faculty facing the steepest decline. During this five year period, anthropology faculty experienced the lowest overall current dollar increase (10.1 percent) and a negative constant dollar growth (see Table 6). In addition, all ranked faculty saw decreases in salaries during the last two academic years when compared to the rate of inflation. Figure 2 shows that that purchasing power was essentially flat across social science disciplines.

SOCIAL SCIENCE SALARIES AT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The difference in faculty pay at public and private institutions was more substantial in the other social sciences than it was in sociology, for the most

part. While the median salary for ranked sociology faculty in AY 2010-2011 was about 3.1 percent higher at private institutions, it was about 11.0 percent higher in anthropology departments and 7.2 percent higher in political science departments (see Table 7). Economics was the anomaly, as faculty members in this discipline earned slightly higher salaries at public institutions during this period (\$89,942 compared to \$89,668 in current dollars at private institutions). In addition, median salaries of sociology, anthropology, and political science faculty across all ranks were more similar among at public institutions (about \$69,000) than they were at private institutions (ranging from \$70,779 to \$77,391). In AY 2010-2011, anthropologists at private institutions reported the highest median salary of these three disciplines in current dollars.

Median salary increases of all ranks of faculty in anthropology, political science, and sociology were less than 1.1 percent in current dollars at both private and public institutions between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, thus failing to keep pace with inflation. Economics faculty members in private institutions were the only group to experience a decline in median salary during this period. Their counterparts at public institutions received the largest raise of all groups (1.1 percent), though the increase was still less than the rate of inflation. When viewed in 2010 constant dollars, median

TABLE 7. MEDIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY SALARIES AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN AY 2009-2010 AND AY 2010-2011 (IN CURRENT AND 2010 CONSTANT DOLLARS)

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS						
Discipline	Current Dollars			2010 Constant Dollars		
	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg
Sociology	\$70,161	\$70,779	0.9%	\$71,312	\$70,779	-0.7%
Anthro.	\$77,120	\$77,391	0.4%	\$78,385	\$77,391	-1.3%
Economics	\$90,601	\$89,668	-1.0%	\$92,087	\$89,668	-2.6%
Poli. Sci.	\$74,304	\$74,815	0.7%	\$75,523	\$74,815	-0.9%
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS						
Discipline	Current Dollars			2010 Constant Dollars		
	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg	AY09-10	AY10-11	% chg
Sociology	\$68,625	\$68,668	0.1%	\$69,751	\$68,668	-1.6%
Anthro.	\$69,279	\$69,742	0.7%	\$70,415	\$69,742	-1.0%
Economics	\$89,005	\$89,942	1.1%	\$90,465	\$89,942	-0.6%
Poli. Sci.	\$69,641	\$69,806	0.2%	\$70,783	\$69,806	-1.4%

Source: CUPA-HR National Faculty Salary Survey, 2005 - 2010
Calculations based on weighted data.

salaries in all social science disciplines at both private and public institutions declined.

CONCLUSION

This research brief focuses on changes in the salaries of sociology faculty members and also looks at their salaries in comparison to those of faculty in other social science disciplines, including economics, anthropology, and political science. Between AY 2009-2010 and AY 2010-2011, social science faculty members, on average, lost purchasing power because faculty salary increases were less than the rate of inflation. Across all four social science disciplines at both public and private institutions, faculty members experienced salary decreases in constant dollars (inflation-controlled dollars), although losses were greater at public institutions. In sociology, all ranks of faculty members lost purchasing power, but assistant professors at public institutions lost the most. Additionally, with the exception of economics faculty members, salaries for faculty at private institutions were higher than those at public institutions. There was also

a much tighter median salary range for sociology, anthropology, and political science faculty members at public institutions than there was at private institutions. Looking forward, next year's salary brief will investigate whether inflation continues to outpace salaries and whether salary differences between faculty at public and private institutions, and across disciplines and ranks begin to diminish.

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