Helping Students Learn

HOT: Bargaining for the Common Good in Higher Education

Yes, “right to work” laws really do mean “right to work for less”

What do we want to see in the next Higher Education Act?

Real solutions to gun violence on campuses
The latest trend at the table is bargaining for the common good in higher education.

State of the States

How NH staff put their new contract to use.

Opinion

NEA leads effort to protect student loan forgiveness (and wins!)

When Secretary of Education Betsy Devos Proposed Eliminating the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, a 10-year-old program that makes college more affordable for many educators, NEA leaders said no way. In 2017, NEA led the formation of a bipartisan House caucus to protect PSLF, and thousands of NEA members appealed to their members of Congress to protect this critical college affordability measure. Their efforts paid off this spring, when the House and Senate passed a $1.3 trillion omnibus budget package that includes the first-ever discretionary appropriation of $850 million for PSLF. The bill also provides a technical fix to the program, modifying eligibility for borrowers who were unaware they were enrolled in an ineligible repayment plan but otherwise are eligible for loan forgiveness. The budget also boosts the maximum Pell Grant award by $175 a year.

Our priorities for the next Higher Education Act

When Will Congress Take Up the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)?

The act, which is the “single most important piece of legislation pertaining to higher education,” says NEA Senior Policy Analyst Mark Smith, was due for reauthorization in 2014. We’re still ready—and waiting. Two years ago, NEA, AFT and AAUP issued a joint statement, focusing on what the unions want to see in the next HEA, including measures to invest in access and affordability; quality and accountability; and teacher preparation. Another statement is in the works, which will maintain focus on those issues but also include our growing concerns over working conditions for faculty and staff, safe campuses, and re-investment in post-secondary education for the 21st century. “The working conditions of faculty are the learning conditions of students. Improving working conditions results in improving learning conditions,” notes Smith. A key issue is the national lack of support for contingent faculty, who comprise about 75 percent of college and university faculty in the U.S. NEA also is calling for increased availability of mental-health counselors on campuses, strong protections against sexual assaults on campuses, and specific steps to reduce shootings.
Once again, the NEA Higher Education Advocate delves deeply into the subject of faculty pay, specifically full-time faculty pay. In this 2018 issue of the special salary issue, the available data teaches us a few things:

Full-time faculty get paid more, on average, when their union negotiates on their behalf. There is real value—like calculable dollars—in fighting for strong unions. Another thing, in terms of pay, it's good to be a man, and to teach at a historically white institution. On average, women faculty still get paid less, while faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities face a growing pay penalty, compared to faculty at other land-grant institutions. As always, the special issue includes average salaries for full-time faculty of varying ranks at every public institution in U.S.—to see all of it, visit nea.org/advocate. For a few choice excerpts, turn the page.
The union difference

In states where collectively bargained faculty contracts are present, as noted by Sue Clery in a recent chapter of the NEA Almanac of Higher Education, faculty at institutions with union contracts earned an average of more than $7,000 above faculty without contracts, for a 9 percent difference (see Table 1, at right). Community college faculty in collective bargaining institutions had the largest differential, earning nearly $18,000 more than their non-bargaining colleagues ($76,177 and $58,314, respectively, a 31 percent difference). Meanwhile, faculty at comprehensive institutions with contracts earned about $13,000 more than those without contracts, or a 20 percent difference. A salary advantage also existed for faculty in research universities with contracts, albeit not as large: $8,000, or a 9 percent advantage over faculty in research universities without contracts. The public liberal arts sector is very small, constituting only 1 percent of faculty; as such, interpretation of data for this sector should be done with caution as the number of institutions and faculty represented is small.

While full-time faculty pay finally has returned to 2007, pre-Great Recession levels (see Figure 1 below), a brewing storm looms. This spring or summer, the Supreme Court will decide the anti-union case *Janus v. AFSCME*, in which big-money, corporate lobbyists have made clear their intention to weaken public-sector unions and make it more difficult for workers to bargain collectively. The data here, collected and presented by Coffey Consulting, LLC, shows how the historic right of American workers to sit down together and bargain collectively makes a difference in their salaries, specifically. (It also, of course, makes a big difference in many other areas of faculty and staff contracts, including academic freedom, class sizes, student services, and more.) To find out more about the *Janus* case and to pledge your support for unions, see neatoday.org/janus.


*No IPEDS data collected for 2000 – 2001
How “Right to Work” laws suppress salaries

As of 2016, 26 states have so-called “Right to Work” laws, where unions are prohibited from including “union security clauses” in contracts that require all employees in the bargaining unit to either join the union or pay fair-share dues. “Right to Work” laws make it more difficult for unions to organize and can affect employee salaries. Not surprisingly, faculty at institutions in more union-friendly states without “Right to Work” laws earn significantly more on average than faculty in states with “Right to Work” laws: $9,518 more at public 2-years and $8,029 more at public 4-years.

### TABLE 1. AVERAGE SALARIES FOR FACULTY ON 9/10-MONTH CONTRACTS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, BY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING STATUS AND SECTOR: 2016–2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States containing institutions with collective bargaining agreements</th>
<th>States not containing institutions with collective bargaining agreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions with faculty contracts</td>
<td>Institutions without faculty contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>$86,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year institutions</td>
<td>76,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal arts institutions</td>
<td>74,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive institutions</td>
<td>78,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Doctoral-granting institutions</td>
<td>95,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on 100 percent of NEA’s public institution faculty salary universe (1,568 public institutions) reporting complete data.


### TABLE 2. AVERAGE FULL-TIME FACULTY SALARIES FOR FACULTY ON 9/10-MONTH CONTRACTS, BY INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR AND STATE, 2016–2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Public 2-year Institutions</th>
<th>Public 4-year Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>52,230</td>
<td>71,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>50,610</td>
<td>71,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>502,46</td>
<td>83,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>56,587</td>
<td>74,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>58,811</td>
<td>80,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>64,275</td>
<td>94,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>77,811</td>
<td>107,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>51,801</td>
<td>74,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>70,404</td>
<td>88,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>74,513</td>
<td>87,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>63,198</td>
<td>84,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>48,695</td>
<td>72,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>78,862</td>
<td>80,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>65,004</td>
<td>90,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>59,944</td>
<td>85,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>49,900</td>
<td>80,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>57,817</td>
<td>72,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>51,138</td>
<td>76,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>59,426</td>
<td>81,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>56,979</td>
<td>75,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>62,157</td>
<td>89,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>80,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>60,616</td>
<td>90,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>80,163</td>
<td>76,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>48,708</td>
<td>71,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>57,981</td>
<td>83,966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Right to Work *


† Does not apply/No institutions reported.

*right to work effective Aug 28, 2017, before IPEDS salary data collected.
Wise Instructional Choices in an Evidence-driven Era

Everywhere you turn, colleagues are talking about evidence-based teaching. But even when the evidence is convincing, it can be tough to choose a strategy and begin using it well. This navigational guide will help you get started.

It’s true—we have an unprecedented body of evidence about effective college-level teaching. A wide range of techniques, focusing on active learning, lure with catchy titles and clever acronyms: Think-Pair-Share, JiTT (Just in Time Teaching), Peer Instruction, POGIL (Process-oriented Guided Inquiry Learning), and Flipped Classrooms, to name a few.

We all care about our students and want them to learn. Across disciplines, but especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, institutions are undertaking strategic initiatives, course redesigns, and curriculum transformation projects with evidence-based instructional strategies at their core.

Whether your motivation stems from curiosity, a desire to help students, participation in an institutional initiative, or some combination, navigating the available practices and strategies can be overwhelming. How do you choose? What lies between choosing and implementing? And, what can do you do if your chosen strategy doesn’t seem to work?

Here’s your chance to step back from the alphabet soup of methods and answer the underlying questions that will help you make wise instructional choices that take into account your teaching context, authenticity, and interests. The following pages will guide you through key steps toward navigating the terrain of evidence-based teaching.
Your Instructional GPS

You wouldn’t set out on a road trip without taking your GPS-enabled device. In our classrooms, we also need navigational assistance. When it comes to evidence-based teaching, our internal compasses may not be as reliable as we think.

The sections that follow here will help you develop your instructional GPS. Rather than dictate methods to use (see Resources for suggested approaches), this sequence will help you evaluate teaching methods and decide what to use and how to use it.

Foundational questions

In your own discipline, you have go-to questions that you instinctively run through when faced with a new artifact, problem, text, or piece of evidence. You likely developed your reflexes for productive questioning of evidence-based teaching methods, too.

Research about adoption of evidence-based teaching suggests most faculty are familiar with such techniques and may be convinced they’re worth trying, but long-term implementation lags behind. To make these techniques something you can see yourself doing and that you are willing to stick with, it helps to prepare as follows.

Over the past decades, I’ve seen our collective approach to university teaching transform from one based on private wisdom to one where teaching practices are routinely studied and discussed. I’ve also seen the volume of findings become almost paralyzing for some instructors. Others feel compelled to adopt certain practices, even with a strong underlying sense of antipathy. Ultimately, I’ve concluded that, while we need good evidence, we must realize that teaching is more than can be summarized in any chart. Evidence-based pedagogies are enacted via human instructors, in relationship with students—all with unique personalities, interests, passions, and aspirations. The teacher, as an authentic, individual human being, matters very much.

I now encourage instructors to pick methods that will enable their best expression of enthusiasm and authenticity with students. Methods vary in the amount of lecture, the types of interactions with students, the amount and kind of preparation, and the distribution of your time. Ideally, you should feel like yourself in the classroom. I believe that the more you choose evidence-based methods that feel meaningful and compatible, the more effective, enjoyable, and sustainable teaching will be.

Meet Author

Cassandra Volpe Horii (cvh@caltech.edu) is the founding director of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Outreach at the California Institute of Technology and the current president of the POD Network in Higher Education. With a background in physics and atmospheric science, she has focused on the research and practice of educational development—improving teaching and learning through faculty development, course and curriculum development, and organizational development—for over 15 years. Her research interests include preparing future faculty as mentors of undergraduate research, organizational structures in support of systemic educational change, and innovative instructional consultation methods. She is active in several national STEM education efforts and has taught courses in STEM pedagogy, sustainability, expository writing, and atmospheric chemistry.
Q1: WHY USE THIS METHOD?
Evidence-based methods are often presented with research that shows impressive results, including demonstrable gains in student learning; extra benefits for first-generation and underrepresented students; improvements in attitudes toward the subject matter; or improved academic persistence and success. Most such methods are based on types of active learning—the deliberate, guided engagement of all students in some form of dynamic reasoning, discussing, creating, or processing. However, without further reflection, it is not always clear what kinds of learning a technique is best suited for and whether it aligns with your context and goals.

For example, let’s say evidence-based method A involves students working in pairs on conceptual questions for a few minutes, while B has them working in teams of four for 20 to 30 minutes.

Method A comes with several special affordances, or “why use this” attributes. These include engaging every single student, getting students to practice articulating their reasoning, and giving the instructor a natural segue back into whole-class engagement, such as elaboration, explanation, and synthesis by the instructor. Method A is also feasible in any seating arrangement.

Method B, on the other hand, with its extended interaction and larger group structure, provides practice in teamwork and flexibility within groups. It more readily allows for engagement with complex issues and multi-step reasoning. It works best if students can see each other, sitting around a shared workspace. So depending on your space and goals—especially whether collaboration skills and in-depth analysis are important for your course or discipline—method B may be a better match.

As you encounter new methods and ask “why use this?” consider what the method makes possible and how it matches the goals you have for student learning.

AS YOU ENCOUNTER NEW METHODS AND ASK “WHY USE THIS?” CONSIDER WHAT THE METHOD MAKES POSSIBLE AND HOW IT MATCHES YOUR GOALS...

Q2: WHAT ASPECTS ARE ESSENTIAL?
Evidence-based practices often can look like faits accomplis—not surprisingly because those people writing about them have been through implementation and want to share the finished product. That means they may appear as all-or-nothing packages, perhaps with an end point so far from your current ways of teaching that it’s difficult to see how you would get there.

Keeping a critical eye on the essential elements can help you maintain a mindset of incremental adoption. In fact, experts maintain that integrating new methods a little at a time into your teaching is both more realistic and more sustainable. It also allows you to build on a strong foundation.

Some researchers are now starting to think about, and advocate for, the concept of fidelity of adoption with respect to evidence-based pedagogies. That is, in order to maintain the effectiveness of the method, we need to separate out the features that are essential from the ones that happen to be along for the ride or are unique to a certain place or instructor.

You can also look for the minimum increment for any technique—i.e., while maintaining its fidelity, does this method require a minimum of five minutes per class, or 20? To affect student learning, do you need to repeat it every class or once a week? Again, this approach supports realistic adoption and enables you to match a technique’s smallest effective dose with a portion of your class.

Context matters
Let’s acknowledge the reality of higher education today—our contexts differ widely, and what is possible in one setting may be unreasonable elsewhere. This includes the expectations you face in your instructional role, whether those involve a heavy research commitment, a high course load, a wide variety of course preps, advising duties, and more.

BEST PRACTICES > REUSE AND EXPLAIN

Two pitfalls—reinventing the wheel and jumping in without setting student expectations—have the potential to derail evidence-based teaching methods. Here’s how you can avoid them. First, set aside the belief that all of your teaching materials need to be original. In teaching, you can and should use what others have already developed and tested. See the Resources section for suitable materials; ask colleagues for more (they likely will be flattered); and draw on published collections of classroom activities. Ask to visit colleagues’ classes and watch them in action. Use video examples, such as Instructional Moves (see Resources), to see a wider range of classroom cases than are available on your own campus. Second, explain the method to students. Tell them what you’re doing, why it will help them learn and succeed, and how they are expected to participate. Since evidence-based methods may represent a change for students, too—new study habits, new behaviors in class, new expectations all around—a clear and enthusiastic explanation is essential. Then, revisit the what, why, and how with students periodically. Be sure to point out when they succeed, how they can improve, and when you see a positive difference in their learning.
service on committees, or teaching in multiple departments, programs, or institutions.

As you enter any changes, it’s helpful to consider the constraints and possibilities of your context. For example, if you’re juggling multiple course preps, you might choose a teaching method that is flexible enough to work in all of your classes. If you’re teaching on multiple campuses with different technology systems, choosing something low-tech and transportable may be your best bet.

Use all available resources: instructional support staff, faculty development programs, course redesign workshops, technology assistance, peer mentors, release time, and grants. If you cannot find such support, the concept of minimum increment is even more important, and techniques that save you time while helping students learn are worth examining.

With a variety of options available, choose evidence-based methods and implementation timelines that are in sync, not at odds, with your identity and context.

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

**LAY THE GROUNDWORK**

When your instructional GPS is activated, these “what ifs” are less likely to be problems. Here are some additional tips.

**What if my course evaluations suffer?** First, don’t assume they will! If you’re making small changes, using tested materials, and explaining the method clearly to students, course evaluations are likely to hold steady or improve.

A proactive step you can take is to get early feedback. Two or three weeks into class, have students fill out an anonymous survey about their experience in the course. It’s useful to phrase the questions in terms of learning, rather than satisfaction—the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) survey has examples you can use or adapt. Open-ended questions can also give you a sense of their perceived successes, areas of confusion, and practical ways to help. Teaching centers offer expert class observations, feedback-oriented student focus groups, and assistance interpreting survey results. Early feedback will help you make adjustments and address points of student confusion.

If course evaluations are especially high stakes on your campus, you may want to talk with your chair or dean ahead of time. Let them know your plans, how the method you’ve chosen can support students, how it connects with institutional goals, and your commitment to getting feedback. Knowing that your chair or dean has your back can help allay your fears and open up a positive dialogue about teaching.

**What if it doesn’t work?** First you need to think about how you will know if it does work. Be realistic. If you’re implementing small changes, you may not see dramatic learning gains at first. You can hold certain assessments stable from one term to another to have a comparison point. Pre/post tests and surveys capturing student attitudes may also be useful. Consider qualitative changes too—classroom community, teamwork, overall engagement. Give yourself just a few meaningful data points. This approach will keep you from jumping to conclusions based on limited student feedback or a few non-optimal outcomes, as well as diagnose what to tweak if you need to make adjustments.

Finally, be kind to yourself and keep the big picture in view. If something goes wrong, maintain your sense of humor, explain to students what happened, make a change, and try again. Maybe you’ve given students the wise advice that failure is part of learning. As it turns out, that same advice applies to evidence-based teaching.

**KEEPING A CRITICAL EYE ON THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS CAN HELP YOU MAINTAIN A MINDSET OF INCREMENTAL ADOPTION.**

**REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

Resources marked * contain extensive materials from a variety of disciplines.


*Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative at the University of British Columbia, http://cweii.ubc.ca/.*


*Instructional Moves, https://instructional-moves.gse.harvard.edu/. Features a wide range of academic disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences.*


*PhysPort: Supporting physics teaching with research-based resources. https://www.physport.org/*

Student Assessment of their Learning Gains (SALG) instrument. https://salgsite.net.


UNION WORK

Bargaining for the Common Good

Our K12 brothers and sisters are doing this well. Higher ed is next.

The story around parking at UMass Boston is decades long, and rife with buried trash, political corruption, and imprisoned public officials. The latest twist is this: The university is building a new garage, and it intends to charge everybody—students, custodians, faculty alike—$15 a day to park.

“For students, across the school year, it adds up to almost the cost of an additional class, and the university is saying that they can add that cost to their tuition bills... so, more debt!” says Annetta Argyres, a UMass Boston faculty union leader. “Also, consider our classified employees, who are our lowest paid employees. They are required to be on campus five days a week, 50 weeks a year. It adds up to an enormous amount of money, far more than any raises on the table.”

A possible solution is this: A growing movement around “bargaining for the common good.”

In common-good efforts, unions partner with community groups—students, parents, racial-justice organizations, etc.—around contract demands that benefit not just the members of the bargaining unit but also the wider community. Explains Marilyn Sneiderman, director of the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization at Rutgers. Since 2012, several K-12 NEA-affiliated unions, most notably in St. Paul, have used this strategy to win contract provisions that include more school counselors and librarians, and less standardized testing.

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The Growing Problem of Decreasing State Funds for Higher Ed

Even more than their K12 counterparts, public colleges and universities have relied on state legislatures to pay for the costs of providing a high-quality higher education to their students. As state funds have decreased over the past 25 years, a NEA Research project shows how the burden has shifted to students and families. But even skyrocketing tuitions can’t cover the increasing costs of college. NEA Research also has found that states have turned to other strategies: 20 states have laid off university or college staff; 17 have laid off faculty; more than a dozen have cut academic programs.

For more details, visit nea.org/ImpactOnHESpending

The Shifting Burden: From States to Families

Notes: Data adjusted for inflation using the Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA). Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment equals student credit hours to full-time, academic year students, but excludes medical students. Educational appropriations are a measure of state and local support available for public higher education operating expenses including ARRA funds, and exclude appropriations for independent institutions, financial aid for students attending independent institutions, research, hospitals, and medical education. Net tuition revenue is calculated by taking the gross amount of tuition and fees, less state and institutional financial aid, tuition waivers or discounts, and medical student tuition and fees. Net tuition revenue used for capital debt service is included in the net tuition revenue figures above.

Cost-cutting Strategies*

* As of this writing, no information was found for IN, NH, NJ, ND, and UT

20 states have laid off university or college staff; 17 have laid off faculty
Congratulations!

AT THE 2018 NEA HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN MARCH, MANY WERE HONORED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

For his decades of service in the U.S. Senate, Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois received the Friend of Higher Education Award from NEA’s National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Durbin authored the original Dream Act, and was the first member of Congress to call for the establishment of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. He also has been a fierce protector of Pell Grants, and has fought against the abuses of the for-profit college industry. Last year, he introduced legislation to make adjunct faculty eligible for student loan forgiveness.

“She is fighting for you,” NCHE President DeWayne Sheaffer told the hundreds of NEA Higher Ed members at the Chicago conference. “But most of all, she is fighting for her students.” For those efforts, former United Faculty of Florida (UFF) President Elizabeth Davenport, Ph.D., J.D., received NCHE’s James Davenport Memorial Award for her service to her union and to the mission of higher education. Davenport, who also served as president of her UFF-affiliated faculty union at Florida A&M University, recently accepted a job at Alabama State University where her efforts will continue to be focused on mentoring students of color.

“I am a guerilla educator,” said Dr. Loretta Ragsdell, a faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago and president of its part-time faculty union. “I educate in every opportunity—the grocery store, the laundromat, Macy’s! If there is something I can share, I’m going to share it.” In recognition of her passion for education, which has taken her career from preschool classrooms to college, where she currently teaches writing and English, Ragsdell received NCHE’s inaugural Higher Educator of the Year Award. “Some people were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. I like to think I was born with a textbook in one hand and a lesson plan in the other.”

“At the core of this debate is a key question: what is the central purpose of a college education?” asks Alec Thomson, professor of political science at Michigan’s Schoolcraft College, in his 2017 Thought & Action article, “Dual Enrollment’s Expansion: Cause for Concern.” For his efforts, which get to the heart of what happens in college classrooms today, Thomson won the annual NEA Art of Teaching Prize. Meanwhile, University of Texas authors Patricia Somers, Jessica Fry, and Carlton Fong took on one of the hottest topics on campuses: campus-carry laws and how they especially affect women. For their article, “Duck and Cover, Little Lady: Women and Campus Carry,” Somers and her co-authors won the annual NEA Democracy in Action Prize. To read their award-winning articles, visit nea.org/thoughtaction, or order a free copy of the Summer 2017 issue of Thought & Action at www.subscribenea.com. Use the special code NEAHIGHERED.

SUMMER READING

The Salary Issue

 Forget that beach novel. There will be nothing more captivating on your summer reading list than the annual Special Salary Issue of the NEA Higher Education Advocate. Wondering if you could earn more at the community college down the road? This year’s issue includes average salary data for full-time faculty of varying ranks at every public college and university in the U.S., as well as average stipends for graduate assistants in dozens of fields.

It also explores salary trends in every state, the gender gap, and the growing disparity between faculty pay at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and predominantly white land-grant institutions.

Check it out at nea.org/advocate.
After six long years, pay raises for Chicago faculty

This spring, after six years working without a contract, part-time faculty at the City Colleges of Chicago settled their long-standing dispute with a new 2012-2020 contract that provides yearly retroactive bonuses ranging from 2 percent in 2012-13 to 10.4 percent in 2016-17. By 2019, a CCC adjunct with a master’s degree and seven years of experience will earn about $2,900 per three-credit class. The new contract also provides greater opportunities for part-time faculty to teach additional classes, and establishes a $100,000 fund for their professional development.

Florida lawmakers aim to kill unions—but we’ll see...

A new state law requires Florida’s K12 education unions to have at least 50 percent of eligible teachers as dues-paying members, or face decertification. The aim is to weaken the Florida Education Association (FEA), especially in this epic election year, but the law has rallied educators, including United Faculty of Florida members. “We saw this coming and know it’s driven by politics, plain and simple,” FEA President Joanne McCall said. “But it’s going to help us, so I say to the Republican leadership, thank you very much.”

Welcome Southwestern Michigan College faculty!

Full-time faculty members at Southwestern Michigan College voted this spring to unionize. The roughly 60 faculty recently have felt overlooked in campus decisions. For example, administrators didn’t consult faculty in a decision to lengthen the fall semester and shorten winter break. The lack of a powerful faculty voice was more an impetus to unionize than anything else, including pay, union organizers said.

Keane State staff put their new contract to work

Nearly 300 staff members at Keane State College voted in April 2016 to unionize—and just in time. “It was clear we were in a pivotal moment and needed to do something,” said Kim Gagne, president of the Keane State College Staff Association (KSCSA). Faced with declining student enrollment, last year Keane State officials announced $5.5 million budget cuts, and an immediate need to trim their workforce. This spring, more than three dozen staff members voluntarily accepted buyouts, while other staff members transition to new roles on campus. But the process has been mediated by the three new NEA-affiliated staff unions, who have put their solidarity, unified voice, and contracts to work. “We’re working directly with employees whose responsibilities might be most impacted by these changes, and working to make sure the process is inclusive and that staff voices are heard,” said Gagne. For example, current staff employees can apply first for vacant positions. What college officials and union leaders know is this: “We all have the same goal,” said Gagne. “We want this to be a great place for our community, and for our students, and we also want it to be a great place to work.”
The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust and Plan (collectively Trust), Employer Identification Number 53-0115260, providing information on the insurance programs sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA) including the NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, and NEA Complimentary Life® Program for the period beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2017. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

**BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust, was $202,780,456 as of August 31, 2017, compared to $196,957,926 as of September 1, 2016. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of $5,822,530. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of $124,864,590 including participant contributions of $106,915,282, a net appreciation in the market value of investments of $12,942,774, and earnings from investments of $5,006,534. Trust expenses were $119,942,060. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

**INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. Because it is a so called “experienced rated” contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2017, made under such “experienced-rated” contract were $65,390,722 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $59,854,783. The total number of participants was 525,072.

**INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAMS**

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D and NEA AD&D Plus claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. Because it is a so called “experienced rated” contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2017, made under such “experienced-rated” contract were $5,365,312 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $4,011,126. The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America which allocates funds toward group insurance certificates for the NEA AD&D Advantage Program. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2017, was $22,910. The total number of participants was 199,291 in all AD&D Programs.

**INFORMATION FOR NEA COMPLIMENTARY LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA Complimentary Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA Complimentary Life Insurance Program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. Because it is a so called “experienced rated” contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2017, were $1,459,546 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $1,246,890. The total number of participants was 3,196,793.

**YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

As a participant, you have the legally protected right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N–1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.
NEA Financial Report

FROM NEA SECRETARY-TREASURER PRINCESS MOSS

I am so proud of this organization—and I am so proud of every one of you—the faculty and staff who protect public education and play an essential and critical role in student success. Throughout our history, we have proven that we are a powerful force for social justice, equity and a strong voice for our members’ rights.

Today, we are faced with an increasingly growing hostile force that is trying to undo many of the things that we and the labor movement have fought so hard for so many decades to win. But we will not stand by and allow anyone to strip away our rights, silence our voice, or diminish the power of unions without a fight.

Our brothers and sisters in West Virginia recently showed us that workers have power and that when we fight back, we can win. The power of organized labor has never been derived from laws on the books or leaders who speak from a bully pulpit. Our power is generated through the sheer determination, confidence, and solidarity of workers who refuse to back down.

I truly believe that public employee unions are the last stronghold of organized labor in this country. Now more than ever, we need your input, your engagement, your activism, and your willingness to do whatever it takes to save public education, and that includes protecting and preserving our members’ access to a high-quality, higher education.

As your NEA Secretary-Treasurer, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you and provide a financial overview of NEA’s audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2017. An essential component of sound financial stewardship is to implement responsible financial management practices that are essential to the long-term sustainability of an organization. This is precisely what we have done and will continue to do at the national level.

In our ongoing effort to be fiscally responsible, we have managed to halt the decline in membership this year. Despite the difficult economic climate and other challenges, the Association’s fiscal vigilance has allowed it to achieve a positive financial outcome for the 2016 – 2017 year. Achieving positive results during an increasingly difficult time is not to be taken lightly, it is indeed something in which we can all take great pride.

During the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year, we had a membership gain of 17,643 members. Our General Operating Fund Unrestricted Net Assets increased by $3,750,031 and our Consolidated Net Assets increased by $10,417,019.

This increase in our Net Assets is a positive indicator of our fiscal health and enables us to continue to advocate for our members, our students, and for public education.

The auditor’s opinion letter stated that their work was performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. It is an unmodified opinion, which is sometimes referred to as a “clean opinion,” issued without any qualifications or comments. An unmodified opinion is the highest form of assurance we can receive from our independent audit firm.

The Consolidated Statements of Financial Position represent the assets, liabilities, and net assets of NEA and its wholly owned subsidiaries as of August 31, 2017. The General Operating Fund Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets reflects NEA’s total revenue and expenses by strategic goals and core function areas for the year ended August 31, 2017.

The chart on the opposite page shows a breakdown of how the $189.00 Active Professional dues and $115.50 Active ESP dues for 2017 – 2018 are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve NEA’s mission.

NOTE: A complete copy of the NEA audit report is available upon request.
FOR FAR TOO MANY in our country, the 17 deaths at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, has reopened the wounds of those who have felt the loss and trauma of gun violence. And yet, as a society, when these events become common, we can become desensitized to a point of turning this tragedy into a mere political debate.

As a former research associate for the VT Family Outreach Foundation, I know firsthand from those in my life who experienced such loss at Virginia Tech in 2007 that the trauma of gun violence is not felt just by immediate loved ones, but by victims’ friends, neighbors, educators, and anyone who knew them, leaving rippling effects that revictimize and open their wounds when similar tragedies occur. To anyone who has lived through such an experience, I want you to know that you are not alone, and that there are so many of us who stand with you in healing power.

This unique time in modern history has shown us one thing in recent weeks—this is not a moment, this is a movement. Our strength, as educators and union members, is in our collective voice, and if we engage, act, and advocate for ourselves and our students, we can ensure that this movement reaps benefits and true change for decades to come.

Rather than arming teachers, true solutions to gun violence in our schools and on our campuses should focus on expanding mental health services in schools, funding and training threat assessment teams, supporting stricter gun control laws and background checks while attacking the underlying issues that give rise to such violence in the first place. Challenge your students to engage in critical thinking, and do not shy away from fostering discussion in a meaningful way to allow them to draw their own conclusions and learn to disagree in a constructive way. Our job as educators is to expand and challenge the existing worldviews of our students, and to continue to cultivate the next generation of leaders, adequately equipping them with the skills they will need to succeed.

Mobilize with your colleagues to attend city and county council meetings, statewide education board hearings, and to meet with your elected representatives at the local, state and federal level. Attend their town halls and request meetings at their office so we can show them that enough is enough. If they are hesitant to act in a way that preserves the safety and sanctity of our educational system in this country, we will be here to hold them accountable. Call, write, and show up in your communities, because when we raise our collective voice, we will not be ignored or silenced.

There is strength in our numbers, and our collective voice can lead to long-lasting change if we work as a unit. The time to act as leaders and own our piece of control is now. Together, we can be the change.

In solidarity.

Adela Ghadimi is a Ph.D. student in public policy at Florida State University, and president of the United Faculty of Florida-FSU-Graduate Assistants United.